

Parrots and Butterflies:

*Students as the Subjects of
Socio-Ecological Education*



PARROTS AND BUTTERFLIES:
STUDENTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF
SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

by

Marcia Diane McKenzie
B.Sc., University of British Columbia, 1995
M.Ed., Brock University, 2000

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the
Faculty of Education

© Marcia Diane McKenzie 2004
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
May 2004

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part,
by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

NAME Marcia Diane McKenzie
DEGREE Doctor of Philosophy
TITLE Parrots and Butterflies: Students as the Subjects of
Socio-Ecological Education

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair Kieran Egan

~~Mark Ferris, Assistant Professor~~
Senior Supervisor

Heesoon Bai, Associate Professor
Member

Charles Bingham, Associate Professor
Member

Charles Bingham, Faculty of Education
External Examiner

Dr. Noel Gough Faculty of Educ Deakin University 221
Burwood Highway, Burwood, Victoria 3125/Australia
Examiner

Date May 27, 2004

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



Partial Copyright Licence

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada

Abstract

This study explores the terrain of socio-ecological education through poststructuralist perspectives on the discursive formation of subjectivity.

Weaving together research involving secondary aged students and teachers from three school contexts, it examines discourses of education, socio-ecological (in)action, and subjectivity. This analysis of discourse and the ranges of subject positions that are correspondingly available to students at the three schools, suggest that each group of students is to some extent “parroting” discourses common to their context. In some cases prevalent discourses appear to work against the stated objectives of the programs, while others may be congruent with program aims, but take narrow or contradictory approaches to socio-ecological concerns. Discussion of a “pedagogy of positioning” suggests how educators and researchers might promote discourse itself as a tool in students’ (and our own) explorations of socio-cultural constitution, enabling the exertion of some degree of agency in which subject positions are taken up. In this there seems a potential for supporting more consistent and powerful forms of activism, which do not entail an erasure of diversity: students as parrots *and* butterflies.

Dedication

To Dale, Jean, Nancy, and John McKenzie.

It is your unwavering love and trust that
make it possible for me to dream.

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the culmination of four exciting years of exploration and learning, and I am very grateful for the rich and supportive environment that has been offered by the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. In particular, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Mark Fettes, for his companionship and insight. I would also like to acknowledge the many other SFU faculty members who have provided encouragement and critique, including Drs. Heesoon Bai, Kieran Egan, Charles Bingham, Suzanne de Castell, Jack Martin, Phil Winne, Allan MacKinnon, Peter Grimmett, and Kelleen Toohey. In addition, I am very thankful for the ongoing support of fellow students and staff at SFU, as well as of other colleagues and friends, including Sean Blenkinsop, Kate Nickerson-Crowe, Connie Russell, MJ Barrett, Daniel Vokey, Paul Hart, and Noel Gough.

I would also like to thank the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada, Simon Fraser University, and private donors for their generous funding of this research through various fellowships.

This research was possible because of the enthusiasm and assistance of the dedicated educators and students at the three schools involved in the study. I am very grateful for their interest and generosity. It has been a great gift to see the hopeful work that is being done in these programs.

And to all my family and friends – thank you for believing in me, thank you for celebrating with me. You have all helped me to stay focused, and to remember to enjoy the sunshine with loved ones. Thank you especially to my parents for such constant support, always, and for teaching us the value of this. I cannot adequately put into words the sense of possibility that is afforded by being held loosely, and yet ever so closely, but consider it largely responsible for all my great adventures, including this one. And finally, thank you to Nicholas Blenkinsop, who has been my moral and intellectual muse since our meeting five years ago, and whose love, cooking, and inspiration are a part of every page of this thesis.

Table of Contents

Parrots and Butterflies.....	frontispiece
Approval Page.....	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures	xi
Preface	xiii
Chapter One: Arriving at Subject Positions	1
Introduction.....	1
A Discursive Approach	8
Forms of Discourse	11
Power/Knowledge	13
The Discursive Formation of Subjectivity	14
Subject Positions	18
In the Context of Socio-Ecological Education	19
Chapter Two: “Post” Methodologies	22
Methodological Issues	22
Representation	24
Legitimation	31
Politics	37
The Study at Hand	40
Research Methods.....	41
Research Settings	43

Chapter Three: Discourses of Education	49
Neutrality.....	50
“The Solid Facts”	50
“They Just Want to Teach You What’s Important”	54
“We’re Supposed to Have the Same Values”	60
Critique	62
“Be Problem Solvers”	63
“Don’t Sit Back and Be Spoon Fed”	65
Where Discourse is Silenced	68
Achievement	69
“Do What You Want to Do”	71
“Just Live a Steady Life”	72
“I Am an Individual and I Can Do Anything”	74
“Success Doesn’t Mean Earning Lots of Money”	77
Diversity.....	80
“It’s Not Fair that We Live So Well and They Live in, Like, Nothing”	82
“We Want to Have a Microcosm of Society in Each Classroom”	83
“We’re All Supposed to Come Here with the Ideals”	84
“Am I Really Westernized?”	88
Consistency.....	94
“Nothing’s Perfect”	95
Chapter Four: Discourses of Socio-Ecological (In)Action.....	101
Knowing.....	101
“I Think I Missed that Class”	102
“It’s an Eye Opener”	105
“It’s Kind of A Way of Thinking”	110
“I Have the Easy Road”	117
“We Bash the Hell Out of the Media”	119
“That Spiral of Despair”	122
Activism	125
“Ulterior Motives”	125
“Obviously You Can’t Change the World, but You Can Help It”	129
“Every Little Thing Counts”	134
“You Have to Climb the Ladder of Power to Impact the World”	139
Chapter Five: Discourses of Subjectivity	146
Constitution.....	147
“Even the Little Butterfly Flapping its Wings Could Influence Me”	148
“I View the World Totally Differently When I’m Back Home”	153

Authenticity	155
“I’m Pretty Stable in Terms of Who I Am”	156
“In This Class You Can Be Who You Are”	158
Agency	163
“I Should Try Better, But I Just Don’t”	163
“Going Where You Want to Go”	165
“What Do I Take and What Do I Push Away From?”	168
Chapter Six: Pedagogies of Positioning.....	173
Subject Positions	174
A Pedagogy of Positioning.....	179
Final Words	191
Appendices.....	193
Appendix A: SFU Ethics Approval.....	193
Appendix B: Validity Check List.....	194
Appendix C: Participant Introductory Letter.....	196
Appendix D: Participant Information Document.....	197
Appendix E: Participant Consent Form	199
Appendix F: Parental Consent Form	201
Appendix G: Educator Consent Form.....	203
Appendix H: Interview and Focus Group Guide	204
Appendix I: Survey	207
References.....	209

List of Tables

Table 1. The “Four Pillars” of the Kirkwood Montessori Program	46
Table 2. Activities at Lawson College	48

List of Figures

Figure 1. Hillview Poster	51
Figure 2. Lawson Magazines	53
Figure 3. Kirkwood Classroom	58
Figure 4. “Special Needs Dance” Activity at Lawson College	61
Figure 5. <i>Physics World</i> Comic (1988)	63
Figure 6. Student Art at Hillview School.....	68
Figure 7. Economics Class at Lawson	70
Figure 8. The Neighbourhood around Hillview School	73
Figure 9. A Montessori Class	75
Figure 10. Getting Ready for an Art Exam at Lawson College	79
Figure 11. Anthropology Class at Lawson College.....	81
Figure 12. Class at Hillview School	82
Figure 13. Environmental Systems Class at Lawson College.....	89
Figure 14. Working on a Project in the Lawson College Cafeteria	90
Figure 15. A Campfire in “Wilderness” Activity at Lawson College.....	93
Figure 16. Eco-action Project at Lawson and Neighbouring Yacht Club.....	96
Figure 17. Environmental Systems Class at Lawson College.....	98
Figure 18. Hillview School Front	103
Figure 19. Interior Courtyard at Hillview	103
Figure 20. Montessori Students.....	105
Figure 21. Hillview Students	108
Figure 22. Hillview Classroom Wall	109
Figure 23. Montessori Classroom Quilted Mural.....	110
Figure 24. Lawson College Surroundings and Students.....	115

Figure 25. “College Service” Activity at Lawson College.....	116
Figure 26. Global Education Students at Work in Soup Kitchen	117
Figure 27. Hallway Art at Kirkwood.....	121
Figure 28. Hillview Students Making Jello at the Soup Kitchen.....	131
Figure 29. Sign Posted on Toilet at Lawson College.....	138
Figure 30. Peace Pole Garden Created by Montessori Students	139
Figure 31. Art Installation at Lawson College	155
Figure 32. Montessori Peers.....	156
Figure 33. End of the Year House Soccer Match at Lawson College.....	170

Preface

Growing up as an adolescent in the large urban centre of Toronto in the eighties, I was apprentice to multiple discourses of Canadian culture, such as those around diversity, wilderness, stratification, leisure, gender, industrialisation, and consumerism. Somewhere in between winters as an urban youth with attendant material concerns, and quiet summers spent exploring the forest and waters of Ontario, I developed a sense of myself as being able to work at taking up or pushing away from different identities – identities which caused me to view myself, and the world that encompassed me, in different ways. Two decades later, I continue to struggle with my multiplicity, trying to embrace “discomfort” (Boler, 1999) and to see the ways of understanding the world that underlie my choices, or lack thereof.

In tracing a path to my taking up of this current research, it begins in my mind with these experiences. At least for now, I view them as leading me to work as an outdoor educator for a number of years and to initiate a program of research

exploring curricula that challenge students to intentionally consider how they engage with the world (e.g., McKenzie, 2003; McKenzie & Blenkinsop, in press).

Through these involvements, I have become concerned that many North American formal education programs, while questioning some aspects of dominant (e.g., oppressive, anthropocentric) discourses, leave many other discourses unchallenged. Correspondingly, many programs seem to take a band-aid approach to socio-ecological issues, focusing on outward manifestations of problems by sending money to less developed countries or starting recycling programs, rather than examining underlying and systemic causes which often start much closer to home in the discourses through which we understand and act in the world.

Connected to this, I have worries about the narrow terminology that is used to create the segmented fields of “global education” and “environmental education” in which many researchers and educators work. These terms and their division into separate fields suggest particular views of the world which both affect and are affected by the forms that research and pedagogy takes in these areas. For example, consider the implications of the calling into being, or interpellation (Althusser, 1971) of the more-than-human world (Abram, 1996) using the anthropocentric term, “environment.” And what of “global” education’s

tendency to focus on social issues that are viewed as both existing and being felt somewhere “out there,” in some other place on the globe? How does the very fact that these fields are considered distinct, comment on our perceptions of the (lack of) interrelationships between social and ecological issues?

Instigated by these concerns, this thesis explores the terrain of socio-ecological education through poststructuralist perspectives on the discursive formation of subjectivity. Weaving together research with students and teachers from three school contexts, I seek to open up what it means to engage students in education concerned with social and ecological issues: What sorts of discourses constitute students’ knowing and how do they produce the socio-ecological subject positions, or ways of being in the world, that are available to students?

Chapter One: *Arriving at Subject Positions*

Introduction

How do students see the worlds they inhabit? And how does their seeing affect their potential for action in relation to social and ecological issues? Responses to variations on these questions have implicitly and explicitly framed the work of a wide range of researchers and teachers in the international fields of global and environmental education over the past several decades. For some, the questions have remained largely unasked and the answers obvious: Students (should) see the world as we do, and thus (learn to) act in it, as rational, fact-gleaning individuals who have the potential to positively contribute to managing the many social and environmental problems we are faced with in an increasingly “developed” and interconnected world. The prevalence of this type of perspective in both global and environmental education over the past several decades, often aligned with variations on the concept of “sustainable

development," is well documented in recent reviews of these fields (e.g., Gaudelli, 2003; Hart, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Tye, 2003).

Some researchers and educators have begun to ask these questions more explicitly, exploring in various ways how students view the world and how this relates to their (lack of) potential socio-ecologically related action, although typically from similarly normative, "sustainable development" viewpoints. As a recent and extensive review (Rickinson, 2001) of empirical research on "learners and learning in environmental education" suggests, close to 100 international studies since 1993 have focused on "environmental knowledge," "environmental attitudes and behaviours," "environmental learning outcomes," and "perceptions of nature." With notable exceptions, the bulk of this work is "positivist in nature... underpinned by a passive view of students... [and has] a strong tendency to focus on knowledge and understanding about the science of environmental issues and the learning outcomes of various science-based environmental education programmes" (pp. 216-217).

Similarly, many of the empirical studies in the field of global education have focused on measuring students' "global awareness," or "global concern," and indicate a field which has often sought to remain apolitical in a desire not to rock

the boat of national norms of globalization and development (Gaudelli, 2003).

The definition of global education included in the 1991 U.S. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Yearbook exemplifies the prevalence of this perspective:

Global education involves learning about those problems and issues which cut across national boundaries and about the interconnectedness of systems – cultural, ecological, economic, political, and technological. Global education also involves learning to understand and appreciate our neighbours who have different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the eyes and minds of others; and to realize the world need and want much the same things. (Tye, 1991, p. 5)

As this definition suggests, global education is commonly viewed as “learning about” issues and cultural difference, often with the underlying suggestion that Western style “development” is “the solution,” given that “other peoples of the world need and want much the same things” as North Americans do. The ways that North American “wants” tie in to social and ecological problems is much less frequently a focus (Pike, 2000).

Framing the work of another very loose grouping of researchers and educators is a “critical” response to questions such as, “How do students see the worlds they inhabit, and how does their seeing affect their potential for action in relation to social and ecological issues?” This work tends to take a more systemic approach to global and environmental issues, going beyond factual knowledge and

feelings of concern, to more extensive socio-political critique and activism.

Although diverse in their theoretical perspectives and prescriptions for achieving a “more just and sustainable world” through education (Hart, 2003), a number of theorists whose work is applicable to both the fields of global and environmental education, such as Chet Bowers (e.g., 1995, 1997, 2001) and Nel Noddings (e.g., 1984, 1992), can be included in this grouping. A range of other more field specific “critical” work includes that by William Gaudelli (2003), John Fien (1993), Connie Russell and Anne Bell (1996), as well as that of many others.

However, it seems that the work of most researchers and educators, including many of those I have already mentioned, is not conclusively framed by the rough groupings I have described, but instead implicitly draws on at least some aspects of each. Paul Hart (2003) alludes to this view of things in the context of the practice of environmental education:

How we see environmental education is very much a matter of perception. Whether or not we agree with the case for socially critical liberal/progressive or vocational/neoclassical orientations to environmental education depends on our worldviews, or the ideas and values of wider paradigms of social beliefs. Many so-called environmental educators have not examined closely the assumptions that underlie their belief systems and have not engaged in ideology critique. Those that have, find themselves caught in the warp between a spectrum of ideas ranging from the dominant technocratic worldview to more ecosocialist or socially critical worldviews...Tensions between the values and practices of environmental education, reflecting the broader ideas of social reproduction versus social transformation in education, create dilemmas for practitioners. (pp. 37-38)

I propose that we may all be in this “warp” – practitioners, researchers, and students alike. Caught between multiple priorities such as relying on science and technology, critiquing technocratic world views, living in a safe and comfortable way, being ethical, going on trips, reducing our consumption, and endless other conflicts of our desires and felt-responsibilities, a careful look might suggest that none of us strictly adhere to any one consistent view of the world, or of socio-ecological education. Perhaps not as acutely felt in other times and places through human history, the largely unconscious pushing and pulling between different world views is a hallmark of a “postmodern” age in which tradition is increasingly unseated by diversity, media, controversy, change, and seemingly endless choice (Bauman, 2000; Borgmann, 1992).

It is this behind the scenes view of how multiple discourses, or understandings, affect “how students (and all of us) see and act in the world” that provides a framework for the current study. Although no doubt still embodying normative views of the world, and indeed being critical of many socio-cultural norms that appear to be harmful to the planet and the human and other than human beings who inhabit it, I group this research with a small body of other empirical and theoretical work which has brought poststructural discourse theory to the study

of socio-ecological education. In the field of environmental education, Deirdre Barron (1995), Anne Bell and Connie Russell (2000), Annette Gough (1997, 1999), Noel Gough (1991, 1993, 1999), Cheryl Lousley (1999), and Hilary Whitehouse (2001, 2002), have to different extents brought discursive approaches to their work. A recent overview of research in the field of global education did not indicate any work informed by poststructural perspectives on discourse (Gaudelli, 2003), although these perspectives certainly inform work in the areas of multicultural and post-colonial education (e.g., Willinsky, 1998).

According to recent reviews, there are relatively few empirical studies which have focused on elementary and secondary school students' perspectives, both within the global and environmental fields (Gaudelli, 2003; Rickinson, 2001), and within education more generally (Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Ruddick, Day, & Wallace, 1997). Research on students' perspectives that is informed by poststructural theory is even rarer (e.g., Davies, 1993, 2003; McLeod, 2000; Walkerdine, 1989, 1997, 2001) And although several researchers have called for work that attends to the discursive constitution of students' dispositions for environmental action (Conley, 1997; Gough, N. 1999; Gough, A., & Whitehouse, 2003), Barron's (1995), research on five-year-olds perspectives on the Dr. Seuss book, *The Lorax*, appears to be the only study that has specifically explored the

discursive formation of multiple worldviews, or subjectivities, in students in relationship to socio-ecological education (Rickinson, 2001).

The current study, then, construes the questions of how students see the world they inhabit, and how this seeing affects their potential for action in relation to socio-ecological issues, in a manner quite unfamiliar to the fields of global and environmental education. It seeks to draw attention to the ways of seeing that underlie the various askings of these questions by myself and other researchers and educators. It explores, through interviews, photographs, and documents from three contexts in which students are involved in forms of socio-ecological education, the sorts of discourses these students are versed in, and indicates the kinds of positions, or places from which to act, that these discourses make available to students. In these ways it suggests ways of undertaking research and teaching that are other than those recommended by much previous work in global and environmental education.

Part I of the study lays the groundwork for the analysis, outlining my working perspectives on discourse and subjectivity, as well as implications for the methodology of this research. In Part II, I undertake a discourse analysis of research “data” from three specific contexts in British Columbia: a Grade 12

“Global Education” class in a public high school in the Fraser Valley, a Grade 8-10 Montessori Program in a public secondary school on the east side of Vancouver with a peace and environmental education focus, and a two-year International Baccalaureate program at a United World College on Vancouver Island. Finally, Part III discusses this study in relationship to current and future efforts in education and research, suggesting the possibility of a socio-ecological pedagogy of positioning.

A Discursive Approach

In reading through a range of work in the social sciences and humanities which is centrally concerned with “discourse,” it is clear that many different meanings are ascribed to this term. Some theorists (e.g., MacLure, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Lee & Poynton, 2000) make a tentative distinction between two broad discourse traditions: one originating in Anglo-American linguistics, with the other rising from European philosophical thought and associated with poststructuralism. The former tradition can be understood as viewing discourse as “language in use” (Cameron, 2001), or as “what people actually say and do” (Lee & Poynton, 2000); and research of this variety typically involves the micro-analyses of texts,

such as is seen in conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis.

Underlying much of this work are assumptions which suggest that,

[L]inguistic discourse analysis still operates largely within a structuralist mode of knowing and acting, where the boundary between language and the 'real world' is secure, and where discourse is conceptualized as rule-governed, systematic and logical. Conceptual 'mastery' of discourse is, therefore, possible in principle, both for linguists and lay speakers... the notion of the coherent, humanist self also persists more-or-less intact in many linguistic models of discourse. (MacLure, 2003, p. 182)

Although at times also considering the details of specific texts, discourse as conceived in the latter tradition has developed through the critique of the very assumptions described above. Evolving out of earlier work in philosophy and structuralism (e.g., Heidegger, Nietzsche, Saussure, Levi-Strauss, and others), the loosely connected body of theory that is often described as "poststructuralism" can perhaps best be defined by these assumptions it calls into question.

Although pursuing different approaches, and in some cases reluctant to be associated with "poststructuralism," germinal poststructural theorists such as Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, and Lacan share a common critique of the rationalist, humanist world view that is the legacy of the seventeenth century "Enlightenment" (MacLure, 2003). In calling this world view into question, they are sceptical of the existence of a "real world" that consists of universal truths that are objectively knowable, and of language as transparent and representative

of the “real.” Correspondingly, the view of “the individual” as unified, rational, and stable is also disrupted.

As part of the shift away from this post-Enlightenment approach, theorists have proposed possible alternatives for conceiving of our understandings of the world and our relationships within it. A broader notion of discourse has emerged in this process, developed in large part through the work of Michel Foucault.

Instead of simply “language in use,” discourse in Foucauldian terms signals a much less certain world comprised of multiple swirling and shifting matrices of power and knowledge, through which we are constituted and reconstituted each time we speak or act. James Gee (1999) has termed discourse viewed in this way, “Big D” discourse, as opposed to the “little d” discourse with which those working in the linguistic tradition engage.

It is this second variety of “discourse” on discourse which frames my own seeing in the project at hand. This way of viewing the world suggests how educators and researchers are at risk of encouraging ways of understanding and being in the world that actually run counter to their pedagogical intent, and is a productive lens with which to consider alternative approaches to those currently more common in the fields of global and environmental education. In my

explorations of poststructuralism and discourse theory, I have found poststructural feminist work to be particularly helpful in developing a theoretical and methodological framework for my research. Whereas Foucault focused on the theoretical tracing of historical genealogies of discourse, poststructural feminist work brings discourse theory to empirical work with an intention of political advocacy, and thus includes a focus on poststructural notions of agency. Although this research does not have an explicit feminist agenda, it draws extensively on the insights of this innovative body of work which combines poststructural theory with pragmatic details of activist research and teaching. Let us now look more closely at the theory which frames this project.

Forms of Discourse

This project takes up a broad conception of discourse which includes the many possible social and cultural practices through which human subjects may be constituted. Discourse can be understood as,

...a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment...Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But...since all social practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect. (Hall, 1992, p. 291)

Discourses are instantiated through practices such as language use, traditions of family and culture, and institutions such as school and media (Pile & Thrift, 1995, p. 29).

Important to this conception of discourse, is the meaning of “experience.” In humanist thought, experience is often viewed as a window on reality – as something that can be used to make sense of the world, both by the lay person as well as by particular philosophic traditions, such as phenomenology. In much poststructural thought, however, our experiences are viewed as grounded in discourse: as “the product of our insertion into particular practices and discourses that have been made available to us in our specific times and places” (Kramer-Dahl, 1996). This use of the term “experience,” as “one’s experience of something,” can be differentiated from the material conditions and practices with which that “experience” is linked.

This means, for example, that a personally transformative experience in the outdoors can be viewed as the product of multiple discourses, such as previous notions of “wilderness,” body, “normal” North American ways of life, personhood, and so on. Although there may be material conditions and practices that provide the basis for the experience, such as one’s body, other

humans and other species, the surrounding land, walking or paddling, and so on; one's interactions with them are mediated through discourse. Perceptions of how things feel, smell, taste, sound, and look are affected by one's own social and cultural history with connected conditions and practices. Stuart Hall (1992) writes,

Is Foucault saying – as some of his critics have charged – that *nothing exists outside of discourse*? In fact, Foucault does *not* deny that things can have a real, material existence in the world. What he does argue is that “nothing has any meaning outside of discourse” (Foucault, 1972)...The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from. (p. 273)

Power/Knowledge

Power and knowledge are viewed in much poststructural work as inextricably linked with discourse. The meanings that conditions and practices take on through discourse construct our knowledge of them, while the power of the various discourses affects which discourses and knowledge we privilege, and in turn, empower. As Rebecca Martusewicz (1992) suggests, knowledge and power “are two sides of the same process” (p. 148). Knowledge linked with power, “not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to *make itself true*. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, ‘becomes true’” (Hall, 1972, p. 273). In this view, each person’s “world” is

comprised of multiple discourses, which are potentially competing or contradictory ways of giving meaning to the world. Discourses have different degrees of authority, with “dominant discourses” appearing “natural” or “true,” denying their own partiality, and supporting and perpetuating existing power relations (Gavey, 1997, p. 54).

The discourses dominant in a given time and place tend to constitute the “subjectivity” of the majority of people much of the time, acting both as, in Foucauldian terminology, “technologies of power” initiated and enforced by official authorization and as “technologies of the self,” internalized means of self-discipline (Foucault, 1982/2003). An all too clear example of this process is the pervasive combined influence of contemporary media and corporate advertising, whose influences are both officially sanctioned and perpetuated through our own desires (Kilbourne, 2000). As Stephen Seidman (1994) suggests, “[d]iscourses that carry public authority shape identities and regulate bodies, desires, selves, and whole populations” (p. 215).

The Discursive Formation of Subjectivity

Etymologically, to be subject means to be “placed (or even thrown) under”. One is always subject *to* or *of* something. The word subject, therefore, proposes that the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that

operates at the intersection of general truths and shared principles. It is the nature of these truths and principles, whether they determine or are determined by us as individuals—in short, the range of their power—that has dominated theory and debate. (Mansfield, 2000, p. 3)

In his genealogy of subjectivity, Nick Mansfield (2000) traces the modern emphasis on the subject to the Enlightenment era, the work of Rene Descartes, and the still influential turn towards the notion of humans as rational, autonomous individuals that are the origin of all experience and knowledge. This understanding of the subject has been called into question over the past century, and Mansfield suggests that two broad camps of critique have evolved in the fields of literary and cultural theory. The first, he links with Freud and the psychoanalytic field (e.g., Lacan, Irigaray), and with continued attempts to explain the subject – “how our interior life is structured, how it has been formed, and how it can explain both uniquely individual traits...and vastly public ones” (p. 9). The second, is linked with Nietzsche, Foucault, and the idea that subjectivity is “not a really existing thing, but has been invented by dominant systems...trapping us in the illusion that we have a fixed and stable selfhood that science can know, institutions can organize and experts can correct” (p. 10).

Indeed, we have already begun to explore some of the ideas that can be linked with Foucault and contemporary poststructural conceptions of subjectivity. The

relationship of power and the subject is further explained by Foucault (1980) as follows,

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constitute as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-à-vis* of power: it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (p. 98)

In other words, poststructuralism rejects the humanist notion of “authenticity” in the individual (Gavey, 1997, p. 55), instead suggesting that subjectivity is fluid and multi-faceted, with its constitution changing in relationship to the relative power of various discourses over contexts and time. Bronwyn Davies (2000) suggests that the sense we often have of ourselves as having an “essential” or “authentic” self is achieved through a number of features of the discourses through which we are constituted, such as: (i) the consistent influence of a frequently used discourse, (ii) the use of socially available stories to tie together the elements of a person’s existence into a meaningful continuity, (iii) the inscription in one’s body of ways of being that are appropriate to the discourses taken up, and (iv) consistent features of most discourses, such as the male/female dualism, are achieved and experienced as natural features of persons when they actually derive from the structure of discourse (pp. 64-65). Althusser (1984)

names this phenomenon of the taken-for-granted quality of discourse, “obviousness.”

Although Foucault identified his central project as creating a history of the different modes by which human beings are made subject (1982; 2003), a number of theorists who draw extensively on Foucault’s work contend that he did not adequately address the complexity of subjectivity, particularly in relationship to agency, and have continued to explore this area of inquiry (e.g., Butler, 1995, 1997; Walkerdine, 2002). This can be seen as indicative of a more general shift in the social sciences and humanities towards more theoretically developed and politically potent poststructural understandings of subjectivity as still limited and contingent, but also capable of exerting a degree of agency (Pile & Thrift, 1995). More recent perspectives on subjectivity view it as more than a “sum total of positions in discourse” (Walkerdine, 1989), with the opportunity for agency explained as occurring within and amongst discourses, as they bump up against one another, as one discourse enables critiques of others.

Judith Butler (1997) explains her understanding of poststructural agency as follows:

Power acts on the subject in at least two ways: first, as what makes the

subject possible, the condition of its possibility and its formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's "own" acting. As a subject *of* power (where "of" connotes both "belonging to" and "wielding"), the subject eclipses the conditions of its own emergence; it eclipses power with power...the subject emerges both as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibility* for a radical conditioned form of agency. (pp. 14-15)

This process of "subjection" suggests that subjects do not simply mirror the practices through which they are constituted, but that there is always a possible tension between the discourses available and the subject's interpretation and use of them (Søndergaard, 2002). For example, poststructuralist discourse opens up the possibility of viewing *other* co-existing discourses in new ways, and using/being used by a particular subject to question certain practices or ways in which they view the world.

Subject Positions

Finally, this brings us to the notion of "subject positions." Connected to many of the ideas we have already touched on, discourses can be viewed as constructing subject positions from which they alone make sense (Hall, 1992). Davies (2000) explains:

The constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions...Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts made relevant within the particular discursive practices in which they are positioned. At least a possibility of notional choice is inevitably involved

because there are many and contradictory discursive practices that each person could engage in. Among the products of discursive practices are the very persons who engage in them. (p. 89)

The subject positions “taken up” in the discursive process of subjection, affect one’s desires, moral commitments, and ways of knowing and being (Davies, 2000, p. 71). But the various subject positions which constitute any one person’s subjectivity, do not necessarily fit together seamlessly. In fact, rather than creating a unitary and coherent identity, these multiple positions are a source of potential conflict or contradiction (Walkerdine, 1989, p. 77). While a subject may be constituted by a variety of positions that relate to gender, race, religion, economics, and so on, positions aligned with particular discourses may be relatively more powerful, thus suppressing oppositional positions (Hollway, 1984). Agency can thus be viewed as a matter of “positioning:” not freedom from discursive constitution, but the capacity to recognize that constitution and to “resist, subvert, and change the discourses themselves” (Davies, 1990, p. 67).

In the Context of Socio-Ecological Education

In the context of education, MacLure (2003) discusses the constitution of children as viewed through a poststructural discursive lens:

Children have to do considerable discursive “work” ...to respond *competently* to the summons to speak “as” a child. And throughout their school careers,

in the classroom and the playground, they will have to negotiate the rapids of the desirable and undesirable [subject positions] that can befall children as they are summoned by the different discourses of gender, education, adolescence, sexuality – high achiever, slow reader, Key Stage 3 student, bully, victim, disaffected, disruptive, attention-seeking, common, working class, bottom set, wimp, slag, teacher’s pet, cry-baby. (p. 19)

Barron’s (1995) research explores the taking up of some of these various possible subject positions in young children in relation to the Dr. Seuss story of *The Lorax*. She was interested in examining the ways, and to what extent, boys and girls entering schools have positioned themselves in relation to “discourses about the environment.” Barron discusses her research as follows:

The children voiced many different understandings of *The Lorax*... Throughout the interview some children changed their answers. It may seem that these children are confused or unable to make up their minds. However, it could be read as the children taking up multiple subjectivities in relation to contradictory discourses; e.g. Robert when positioned within the discourse of conversation states that the Once-ler should not chop down the trees. His positioning shifts to allow the Once-ler to chop down some trees, and if need be all of them, when he engages with the text through a technological discourse. That is, the child could be seen as taking up contradictory understanding(s) of his role; the need to provide material wellbeing versus the need to care for all the non-human life that is affected by consumerism. When he is faced with the notion that he is being contradictory he takes up the masculine, scientific discourses of intervention. (pp. 116-117)

Other studies in education that have investigated the influence of various discourses and the subject positions taken up by students have also tended to focus on younger, elementary school aged children, and often in relation to gender issues (e.g., Davies, 1993, 2003; Walkerdine, 1989, 1997, 2001).

Given the complex discursive environment of today's increasingly globalized and hyper-real world (Baudrillard, 1994; Bauman, 2000), and the scant attention that has been paid to poststructural and discourse theories thus far in the fields of global and environmental education, this exploration of students as the subjects of socio-ecological education appears to be timely. Bringing this approach to the study of socio-ecological education offers an understanding of the world as a complex discursive environment in which students are immersed, and suggests the potential for transforming students' relations to it through an examination of subject positioning. This study takes up questions of "how students understand and act in the world" through an analysis of the discourses and subject positions taken on by students in three socio-ecological education programs for secondary school aged students, identifying how as educators and researchers we may be encouraging the contestation of the very perspectives and practices we seek to promote.

Chapter Two: "Post" Methodologies

This chapter is split between a discussion of general methodological issues that are relevant to empirical research that seeks to find coherency with poststructural perspectives; and an elaboration of how I have endeavored to consider these concerns in the process of my own research on the discursive formation of students' socio-ecological subject positions. Although wary of the desire to "decipher" what poststructuralism means for educational research (Constas, 1998), I am nonetheless committed to examining my research practices and how they may, or may not, be consistent with the theoretical perspectives that drive my research interests.

Methodological Issues

The coherence between the form or methods of research and its content or aims is a deep-seated problem in social science research. Recognition of this problem has surfaced over the past several decades, initiated by feminist theory and

continued through the development of poststructural perspectives. Previously, positivistic and postpositivistic understandings of reality as more or less knowable reigned over the social sciences, resulting in research which expected its methods to reveal, or at least approximate, truths about the subjects of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Despite often good intentions, the conceptions of knowledge inherent in these (still-prevalent) genres of research tended to promulgate research methods that assumed the researcher as unbiased knower, and the researched as the “Other” to be known (Fine & Weis, 1996; Lather, 1991). The difficulties inherent in research undertaken without recognition of the coherence between form and content are strikingly illustrated by bell hooks’ (1990) reading of the photograph on the cover of Clifford and Marcus’ (1986) book, *Writing Culture*:

The photo depicts Stephen Tyler doing fieldwork in India. Tyler is seated some distance from three dark-skinned persons. A child is poking his or her head out of a basket. A woman is hidden in the shadows of a hut. A man...is staring at Tyler. Tyler is writing in a field journal. A piece of white cloth is attached to his glasses, perhaps shielding him from the sun. This patch of whiteness marks Tyler as the white male writer studying these passive brown and black persons. Indeed, the brown male’s gaze signals some desire, or some attachment to Tyler. In contrast, the female’s gaze is completely hidden by the shadows and the words of the book’s title, which cross her face. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 2)

Since the mid-1980’s, hooks and many others have pointed to the necessary coherence between the methods and aims of research in the social sciences: the

methods chosen determine what is seen, while what is sought determines which methods are elicited (e.g., Richardson, 2000; Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000). This relationship is alluded to by Clifford and Marcus' (1986) book title, *Writing Culture* – culture is not objectively uncovered by the researcher, but is instead subjectively “written” – content and form are inseparably interwoven. The recently expanded awareness of the close relationship between the methods and the focus of social science research can be seen as part of the development of poststructuralist theory. In this so called, “post-post period” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000), the poststructural thesis that “the map precedes the territory” (Lather, 1991, p. 153) has far reaching implications for the ways we approach research in the social sciences. If form precedes content (and vice versa), it becomes critical to attend to how our seeking affects and (mis)represents the researcher and researched, what we consider to be legitimized knowledge, and how social science research is necessarily a political act.

Representation

The “crisis of representation,” first evident in feminist and other critical theory and manifested in the development of poststructural theory, is “not the end of representation, but the end of pure presence” (Lather, 1993, p. 675). Lather explains,

Derrida's point regarding "the inescapability of representation"...shifts responsibility from representing things in themselves to representing the web of "structure, sign and play" of social relations (Derrida, 1978). It is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing. (p. 675)

Issues of representation arise in the doing of research in multiple ways, influencing both our perceptions of the researcher and the researched.

In contrast to positivistic and postpositivistic research, where the researcher is seen as able to take an impartial perspective as they seek out objective understandings of the world, research in the post-post period views the researcher's "precarious, contradictory and in progress" subjectivity as consciously and unconsciously framing the research process and outcomes (Orner, 1992). Scheurich (1997) calls this shift "the embrace of the relativity of the social scientists' positionality" (p. 33), while Casey (1995) writes that "what is at stake is a fundamental reconstruction of the relationship between the researcher and the subject of the research...Increasingly, an explicit explanation of the researcher's own subjectivity is becoming an expected part of analysis in this new mode" (pp. 231-232).

Elaborating on what a poststructural understanding of subjectivity means for the way they approach their research, Fine et al. (2000) suggest the importance of

“working the hyphen” at which Self and Other join – that is, “the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of Others.”

This, they propose, means,

...that we interrogate in our writings who we are as we coproduce the narratives we presume to “collect,” and we anticipate how the public and policy makers will receive, distort, and misread our data. It is now acknowledged that critical ethnographers have a responsibility to talk about our identities, why we interrogate what we do, what we choose not to report, how we frame our data, on whom we shed our scholarly gaze, who is protected and not protected as we do our work. (p. 123)

In discussing a study by Fine and Weis (1998) on poor and working-class city dwellers at the end of the 20th century, Fine et al. (2000) suggest that “working the hyphen” means drawing attention to their looking for “great stories” in the often mundane research data, to their searches for interviewees who are “resistors” or critics of the state, to their decisions to leave out “‘great stories’ that have the potential to become ‘bad data’ to buttress stereotypes,” and to their differential theorizing and contextualizing of hegemonic versus counter-hegemonic voices (pp. 117, 120).

Bringing a poststructural conception of one’s own subjectivity to a research undertaking entails the sort of reflexivity exemplified by Fine et al. (2000) and also a presumption of polyvocality – acknowledgement of “the multiplicity of competing and often contradictory values, political impulses, conception of the

good, notions of desire, and senses of our 'selves' as persons" (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1037). Lather (1991) outlines what this polyvocality might look like within research texts:

"[T]he fiction of the creating subject gives way to frank quotation, excerptation, accumulation and repetition of already existing images" ... This de-centering of the author via *intertextuality* is a demonstration of how the author is inevitably inscribed in discourses created by others, preceded and surrounded by other texts, some of which are evoked, some not. In my own writing, the accumulation of quotes, excerpts and repetitions is also an effort to be "multivoiced," to weave varied speaking voices together as opposed to putting forth a singular "authoritative" voice. (p. 9)

Related to these methodological concerns and efforts around the subjectivity of the researcher, are those to do with the also shifted conceptions of the researched. The evolving and imbedded partiality of the researcher raises concerns about the possibilities of being able to "speak authentically of the experience of the Other" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1051). Indeed, Fine (1994) critiques "how researchers have spoken 'of' and 'for' Others while occluding ourselves and our own investments" (p. 70). In response, many researchers have moved to addressing not only their own polyvocality and partiality in their research, but also working to give unfiltered "voice" to others.

However, given the pervasiveness of the researcher in the research process, truly "giving voice" to the researched is a difficult, if not impossible, feat to

accomplish. Casey (1995) relates the comments of Risessman (1993) who says, "I share the goal but am more cautious. We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret.' The problem, after all, is not with the voices that speak but with the ears that do not hear" (p. 223). Instead of the researched being included "as garnishes and condiments, tasty only in relation to the main course, the sociologist" (Richardson, 1988, p. 205), Lather (1993) suggests that the subject and object of the research should be one and the same. In this way, research "avoids both appropriation of the experience of the 'Other' and the inherent disparity between the writer and the written about" (Lather, 1991, p. 96). This understanding of the appropriate intentions of research has resulted in a variety of research methods which, more or less successfully, have aimed for reciprocity - "a mutual negotiation of meaning and power" (Lather, 1991, p. 57) - between the "researcher" and "researched." These methods include collaborative interviewing and collaborative theorizing (Lather, 1991, pp. 57-58), various forms of participatory action research (e.g., SooHoo, 1993; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), narrative inquiry (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), and mixed genre (e.g., Lather & Smithies, 1997).

Another issue that intersects with efforts to enable the researched to escape the researcher's subjectivity through self-representation, is that of the subjectivity of

the researched themselves. Ellsworth (1989) and others have suggested that the idea that the researched *can* truthfully speak for themselves is misguided. She writes,

The literature on critical pedagogy...recognize possibility that each student will be capable of identifying a multiplicity of authentic voices in her/himself. But it does not confront the ways in which any individual student's voice is already a "teeth gritting" and often contradictory intersection of voices constituted by gender, race, class, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ideology. Nor does it engage with the fact that the particularities of historical context, personal biography, and subjectivities split between the conscious and unconscious will necessarily render each expression of student voice partial and predicated on the absence and marginalization of alternative voices. It is impossible to speak from all voices at once, or from any one, without the traces of the others being present and interruptive. Thus the very term "student voice" is highly problematic. Pluralizing the concept of "voices" implies correction through addition. This loses sight of the contradictory and partial nature of all voices. (p. 312)

The subjectivity of the researched, then, suggests a potential usefulness of interpretation by the researcher (and vice versa). Indeed, Fine et al. (2000) write that "as theorists we refrain from the naïve belief that these voices should stand on their own or that voices should (or do) survive without theorizing" (pp. 119-120).

A number of research methods have been used in efforts to probe this tension between the "self-"representation of the researched and explorations of the understandings that underlie the subjectivity of the researched. Lather and Smithies (1997) created a research text which includes a discussion of their

theoretical and personal thoughts running in a split-page format alongside texts of interview transcripts and letters written by other women involved in the study. In discussing this work, Lather (1996) writes,

Rather than seemingly unmediated recounting of participant narratives or unobtrusive chronicling of events as they occur, we 'both get out of the way and in the way'...in a manner that draws attention to the politics of knowing and being known as we tell stories that belong to others. (p. 5)

In a different approach, Grumet (1991) requests three separate narratives from research participants because "[m]ultiple accounts splinter the dogmatism of a single tale. If they undermine the authority of the teller, they also free her from being captured by the reflection provided in a single narrative" (p. 72). Similarly, Fine et al. (2000) emphasize the importance of the triangulation of multiple methods, not to look for a "simple, coherent synthesis of data or methods" (p. 118), but instead to search for contradictions between methods. They write,

We recognize different methodologies are likely to illuminate different versions of men's and women's understandings... Convergence is unlikely and, perhaps, undesirable... Once women's and men's subjectivities are considered and sought after *as if* multiple, varied, conflicting, and contradictory, then the "data elicited" are self-consciously dependent upon the social locations of participants and the epistemological assumptions of the methods (p. 119).

An example of this phenomenon is the different stories that will often be evoked in group versus individual interviews (Fine et al., 2000; Lather & Smithies, 1997).

With a sense of the issues arising out of the crisis of representation around the researcher and researched, I will now turn to those directly related to what we consider to be “legitimate” research.

Legitimation

“Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?” asks Lyotard (1984).

Issues of legitimation are central to how we think about and undertake social science research. Gergen and Gergen (2000) point to Lather’s (1993) framings of “transgressive validity” as “counter-practices of authority,” as offering the most promising response to Lyotard’s query to date. Lather writes,

Situated in the crisis of authority that has occurred across knowledge systems, my challenge has been to make productive use of the dilemma of being left to work from traditions of research legitimacy and discourses of validity that appear no longer adequate to the task. Between the no longer and the not yet lies the possibility of what was impossible under traditional regimes of truth in the social sciences...Derrida terms this “a ‘science of the possibility of science’...a nonlinear, multiple, and dissimulated space...Thus we discover a science whose object is not ‘truth,’ but the constitution and annulment of its own text and the subject inscribed there” (Sollers, 1983, pp. 137, 179). (p. 683)

Defining validity as “the conditions of the legitimation of knowledge” (p. 673),

Lather (1993) proposes four framings of validity which de-center it as about epistemological guarantees and reframe it as post-epistemic, “multiple, partial, endlessly deferred” – “a nonreferential validity interested in how discourse does its work” (p. 675). Imagining “transgressive validity” as simulacra/ironic

validity, as Lyotardian parody/neo-pragmatic validity, as Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity, and as voluptuous/situated validity, Lather offers a check-list simulacrum to help in moving towards “generative methodology” (Appendix B).

Richardson (2000) suggests a similarly transgressive validity, preferring to call it “crystallization.” Displacing the familiar metaphor of “triangulation,” for the use of multiple methods in an attempt to capture an understanding of a phenomenon, she proposes that “there are far more than ‘three sides’ from which to approach the world’ (p. 934). Unlike the fixed two-dimensional triangle, crystals “grow, change, alter...reflect externalities *and* reflect within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose” (p. 934). Like Lather’s (1993) conceptions of validity, the process of crystallization offers a “deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic” (p. 934).

Related to emerging post-post conceptions of validity are explorations into the notion of situated knowledge. Gergen and Gergen (2000) explain,

Because few traditionalists wish to argue that their interpretations are uniquely articulated with the subject matter they wish to portray, and few constructionists would maintain that there is “nothing outside of text,” a

space is opened for situated truth, that is, "truth" located within particular communities at particular times and used indexically to represent their condition...Descriptions and explanations can be valid so long as one does not mistake local conventions for universal truth...Dialogue is invited, then, into how situated validity is achieved, maintained, and subverted. (p. 1032).

Poststructural feminism offers some insight into conceptions of situated knowledge (e.g., Britzman, 2000; Ellsworth, 1989, Lather, 1991). Discussed in terms of "little narratives" (Lyotard, 1984) or "theoretic fictions" (Lather, 1991), this localized "knowledge" of every day life can be viewed as continually being formed and reconceived depending on the changing circumstances and subjectivities in which it is rooted. Situated knowledge then becomes useful in its temporary fixing of meaning "on behalf of particular power relations and social interests" (Weedon, 1987, p. 98).

Poststructural feminist conceptions of situated knowledge are linked with Lather's (1991) work on catalytic validity, which although different from her more recent work (1993) on transgressive validity can still be glimpsed in her framing of voluptuous or situated validity (Appendix B). Lather (1991) describes the concept of catalytic validity as "the degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire (1973) called conscientization" (p. 68). In relation to his work on participatory action research, McTaggart (1997) promotes a similar

conception of validity as the ability of research to change relevant social practices. Viewing validity as an ethical relationship, Schwandt (1996) and Lincoln (1995) also seem to take related perspectives. Although some claim these conceptions of validity are imbued with foundational assumptions of modernism (Scheurich, 1997), these perspectives on legitimation seem curiously related to recent vague rumblings of a spiritual or moral “validity.”

In the final chapter of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Lincoln and Denzin (2000) write about the “seventh moment” of qualitative research – that of the future. They suggest that one of the issues of this coming moment will be a concern “with moral discourse, and with the development of spiritual textualities” (p. 1048). Lincoln and Denzin write ambiguously,

[T]hroughout its history, qualitative research has been defined in terms of shifting scientific, moral, sacred, and religious discourses...Since the Enlightenment, science and religion have been separated, but only at the ideological level, for in practice...religion has constantly informed science and the scientific project. The divisions between these two systems of meaning are becoming more and more blurred. Critics increasingly see science from within a magical, interpretive framework (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 219), whereas others imagine a sacred epistemology (Bateson, 1979). Others are moving science away from its empiricist foundations and closer to a critical, interpretivist project that stresses ethics and moral standards of evaluation. (p. 1049)

I am tempted to see this as foundationalism in the guise of a “spiritual” anti-foundationalism, but I am not sure. Adding to the confusion is the matter of how

this connects with Lather's recent turn to "spiritual materialism." Discussing a co-authored book (1997) with Chris Smithies in which stories and images of angels are interwoven with interviews of women with HIV/AIDS, Lather (1995) writes,

Surveying the ruins of the twentieth century, we are confronted with the collapse of the real into its representation...In an economy so marked by loss: God is dead; man is dead; the hold of humanism on the western mind is under a cyborg cloud... At the risk of wandering too close to mysticism in my desire to escape fixed gestures, my angel economy is part of what Stockton (1992) refers to as a curve of intelligibility in poststructural feminist work of "antitranscendental gestures towards spiritual materialism" (p. 116). This gesture is about "an earnest attempt to listen to the material" (p. 117) that moves against both extreme forms of social constructionism and any claim to unmediated access to some real. (pp. 8-9)

Is this post-post movement towards a poststructuralism that returns to/adds a justification for action that it lacks? It is certainly intriguing and invites further exploration.

In considering the content and form of research, each the map which precedes the territory of the other, what then do these various perspectives on legitimation mean for the methods of social science research? Lather's (1993) and Richardson's (2000) transgressive validities as well as conceptions of situated knowledge (e.g., Ellsworth, 1989; Gergen & Gergen, 2000), point to variations on similar methods which can be described as "bricolage." Lather (1991) describes this "art of quilt making" as evocative as opposed to didactic: "extended

argument is displaced by... 'a much messier form of bricolage [oblique collage of juxtapositions] that moves back and forth from positions that remain skeptical of each other though perhaps not always skeptical enough'" (p. 10). Lincoln and Denzin (2000) explain their take on the post-post methods of bricolage in the following way:

The methods of qualitative research thereby become the "invention," and the telling of the tales – the representation – becomes the art, even though, as bricoleurs, we all know we are not working with standard-issue parts, and we have come to suspect that there are no longer any "standard-issue parts" made (if ever there were). And so we cobble. We cobble together stories that we may tell each other, some to share our profoundest links with those whom we studied; some to help us to see how we can right a wrong or relieve oppression; some to help us and others to understand how and why we did what we did, and how it all went very wrong; and some simply to sing of difference. (p. 1061).

Without going into more detail here, it can be said that the bricolage text as research method continues to take on ever-more experimental forms, such as autoethnography, fiction-stories, poetry, drama, performance texts, polyvocal texts, conversation, and mixed genres (Richardson, 2000). Lather and Smithies' (1997) work is one example with its continuously interwoven interviews with women with HIV/AIDS, historical and medical information on HIV/AIDS, images and discussions of angels, and the reflexive and theoretical text of the researchers.

Politics

Overlapping with issues of representation and legitimation, and also central to how we understand the form and content of research, are concerns around the politics of undertaking research. The crisis of representation means that “we can no longer separate ideology and politics from methodology” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 1021), but how this realization plays out in the work of different researchers in the post-post moment varies considerably. While many suggest that “if science is politics by other means, then we should pursue the inquiry that most effectively achieves our end” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1036), there is also a responsibility felt by researchers to take into consideration concerns such as their own subjectivity, the oppression of the researched, and the legitimacy of research in post-foundational circumstances. Fine et al. (2000) write, “This is a(nother) critical moment in the life of the social sciences, one in which individual scholars are today making decisions about the extent to which our work should aim to be ‘useful’” (p. 124).

To take up the task of aiming to do “useful” social science in a post-foundational context for Lather (1991) has meant undertaking “research as praxis.” This entails, “rendering problematic and provisional our most firmly held assumptions and, nevertheless, acting in the world, taking a stand” (p. 29),

calling “for empowering approaches to research where both researcher and researched become in the words of feminist singer-poet Chris Williamson, ‘the changer and the changed’” (p. 56), and working,

...to tell stories that end in neither comprehended knowledge nor in incapacitating textual undecidability...Disallowing claims to certainty, totality and archimedean standpoints outside of flux and human interest, it is to tell “a story that retrieves inquiry as a ‘way’ that is always already beginning, always already ‘on the way,’ a different story ‘that makes a critical difference not only at the site of thought but also at the site of sociopolitical praxis’ (p. 151).

For Fine et al. (2000) political post-foundational research means seeing themselves as social researchers who create “vision and imagination for ‘what could be’” (p. 122). They write,

How to inform and encourage social movements for “what could be” is the task at hand. Thus, indeed, we err on the side of telling many kinds of stories, attached always to history, larger structures, and social forces, offered neither to glamorize, but to re-view what has been, to re-imagine what could be in communities of poverty and the working class, and to re-visit with critical speculation, lives, relations, and communities of privilege. (p. 126)

Much care is taken in Fine et al.’s (2000) research to endeavor to “work with – not on or despite – local community efforts,” (p. 125) and to help contribute to conversations about researcher responsibility, recognizing that “questions of responsibility-for-whom will, and should, forever be paramount – because the ‘whom’ is not a coherent whole...and because the context in which we write will change tomorrow, and so too will the readings of this text” (p. 125).

These efforts to be thoughtfully political contribute to the taking-up of many of the methods and forms of research already discussed. Varieties of participatory action research which take poststructural considerations into account are one area of possibility. For example, Gergen and Gergen (2000) describe research in which “ghetto inhabitants” are provided with cameras or video cameras to participate in the research – re-creating “the ‘research subject’ as both learner and teacher/informer/performer” (p. 1039). Lather (1991) warns that action research “lends itself to subversion by those ‘who are tempted to use merely the technical form as a means of engineering... development’” (p. 56), while Van Galen and Eaker (1995) suggest the need for “a movement from research *on*, to research *for*, to research *with*, to research *by* those who would, in ordinary circumstances, have been at best ‘collaborators’ in a study of their conditions” (p. 128). In all its varieties, forms of research that aim to see the subjects of research become “the changer and the changed” require “much longer commitments...It will require us to become... ‘citizen-scholar-activists’ rooted in a community” (Van Galen & Eaker, 1995, p. 120).

Another area of possibility for overtly political social science research is more product-oriented research which uses polyvocal and contradictory text to enable

research “to provide a critical space to push thought against itself” through the identification of “textual strategies and political commitments” and by “pointing out the differences among the stories, the structure of telling, and the structures of belief” (Britzman, 2000, p. 38). Explicitly political research is undertaken as bricolage with hopes of influencing public perceptions or policy makers (e.g., Lather & Smithies, 1997; Fine & Weis, 1996).

The Study at Hand

These discussions of a number of issues that are being considered in the research of the, so called, “post-post period” are helpful in their muddling/clarifying of what it means to consider the coherence between the form and content of social science research. Although in no way conclusive, they provide direction in considering how my own research might better take issues of representation, legitimation, and politics into account in working towards greater coherence between its aims and methods. In speaking about feminist scholars who are “working the ruins” of post-Enlightenment versions of truth, reality, reason, science, progress, the subject, and so on; St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) write,

These scholars do not claim to have found solutions to the issues they engage... Neither do they evidence the “paralysis” (Kemmis, 1995) so often attributed to poststructuralism, nor, in contrast, have they written “victory

narratives"... Instead of realizing Rosenau's (1992) fear that the social sciences might become "casualties of its [postmodernism's] excesses," (p. 3), their work moves toward a reconfigured social science, a "less comfortable social science"... one that tries to be "accountable to complexity." (pp. 3-4)

Research Methods

It was with these aims in mind that I designed the current study. I initially set out to create an end product which "pushes thought against itself" through the juxtaposition of polyvocal and contradictory perspectives using interview data, photo and video data, and archival documents from three research sites; and text and photo excerpts from other sources. Inspired by mixed genre research (e.g., Lather & Smithies, 1997), I hoped to take the issues described above into account through a multi-perspectival montage of each of the three research sites.

However, I quickly encountered a road block as I proceeded with this plan – I was overwhelmed with the challenge of creating collage out of hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, hours of video data, and dozens of photos; without a system of analysis. Working with an 8.5" wide canvas, I needed some way of approaching the data that would enable me, and other readers, to find meaning in it. I wanted to interpret the data, and also not to close down the possibility of other readings.

Reluctant to return to the post-positivistic approaches of content analysis I had used in previous projects (McKenzie, 2003; McKenzie & Fettes, 2002), I turned to the questions and theory that frame this study. Without leaving behind the idea of “bricolage” as a way of addressing the complexity of life and of research, I approached the data representation through an analysis of the discourses and subject positions of students that can be read as existing across some or all of the research sites. This approach is informed by the theoretical and methodological issues described thus far, and is quite removed from more linguistically oriented forms of discourse analysis, such as conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis (MacLure, 2003), as discussed earlier.

The system I developed for approaching the data included multiple readings of interview transcripts to locate discourses I saw suggested therein, and then using this analysis to organize the data representation. Along with interview data presented by discourse, I include photo data and archival text excerpts, in ways that extend, trouble, or are troubled by, my discursive analysis. I chose not to include the video data in the current rendering of this research as a result of time constraints.

Another way in which I have attempted to take the methodological issues described above into account is through the creation of a research website (www.otherwise-ed.ca). The site is intended as an alternate means of “disseminating” the research both as it has been in-progress, as well as following completion; and one which may prove more accessible and helpful to students and educators than a dense text-based format. Comprised of the contents of this study, as well as links to other related resources, the site provides an opportunity for research participants and others to respond to the research in an interactive manner. The website is part of the efforts to make this research explicitly political, as well as to provide a venue for including the researched in the research process.

Research Settings

I selected the three research sites from over forty sites which expressed an interest in the project, and they were chosen in part because initial impressions suggested they took a critical approach to socio-ecological issues. Instead of a focus on fact-based environmental studies and social studies curricula, these sites appeared to delve into the political, ethical, and personal aspects of social and ecological concerns. The three sites were chosen as “cutting edge” exemplars in which passionate and dedicated educators with a considerable amount of

flexibility work to engage students in socio-ecological learning. I wanted to explore discourse in *these* sites, to examine how it may work both with and against relatively in-depth efforts in socio-ecological education.¹

The first site is a Grade 12 Global Education course at Hillview Secondary School², which is located in a rural, predominately white, and lower income community of 5000 people, about an hour by car from the city of Vancouver, British Columbia. The teacher, Ms. Meredith Scott, created the Global Education course as the first of its kind in the School District several years ago.

The full-year course is divided into the topic areas of civil disobedience and civil rights, profit and equity, nature and humanity, and development. In addition to

Global Education Course Outline

Introduction:

Global education is a locally developed course designed to teach students about the world in which they live. In this course we will look at various issues facing the world today and discuss solutions. Students should expect to be actively involved in projects aimed at current problems. The students in this class will also undertake the responsibility of helping raise awareness and support of the Child Welfare Society in Ne al. We will also be helping out at a local soup kitchen and other projects that the students feel need our support. We will discuss and have guest speakers from various organizations such as Oxfam, CUSO, CIDA, Amional, Check Your Head, and Canada World Youth at appropriate times throughout the year.

¹ I spent a total of two weeks at each of the research sites during the spring of 2003. Twenty-eight individual and focus group interviews were undertaken, and student activities were recorded through photographs and video. Nine students completed a written survey, five of whom were also interviewed (see Appendices C through I for research documents).

² All places and names of participants have been changed for reasons of confidentiality.

class discussion, activities in the Hillview Global Education class include researching action projects, school recycling duties, and volunteering at a Vancouver soup kitchen for the mentally ill. Research participants from this site include 8 female and 3 male students from grades 11 and 12, all of whom were enrolled in the course.³

The second site is a “school within a school” for Grades 8, 9, and 10 at Kirkwood Secondary School, which is located in an urban, culturally diverse, lower to middle income community in East Vancouver, British Columbia (population 2,000,000). The program, started in 1994, is based upon the work of Maria Montessori, with a focus on “peace education, global issues, and environmental concerns” (Application Package, 2003). Students generally remain in the program from Grade 8 through 10 and then move into the mainstream program either at Kirkwood or at their area school.

While in the Montessori program, students take Science and Math with Mr. Mansur Karim and Humanities with Ms. Terese Pryde, within the specially designated multi-room space set aside for the program on the first floor of the

³ As a result of recording problems, interviews with one to three participants at each of the sites were unable to be transcribed, and therefore are not included in the analysis.

school. Students in the Montessori program participate in a range of activities including action projects; service work with local elementary schools and a wide range of other community organizations; as well as various other environmental activities such as working on a school ground naturalization project, beach clean up, and habitat restoration at a nearby park. Students are expected to complete 75 to 100 service hours per year, split between service to community, service to school, and service to the class. Students in the program participate in course electives and extracurricular activities with other students in the larger school. The research participants from this site include 10 female and 6 male students, 6 of whom were graduates of the program, as well as both teachers.

The “Four Pillars” of the Kirkwood Montessori Program	
Holistic Education	Experiential Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of subjects • Connection of the physical, intellectual, and emotional aspects of the individual • Emphasis on global perspective • Fostering of a community of students • Parent involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on • Process focused rather than product focused • Community involvement • Small business orientation • Accommodation or sensitivity of a variety of learning styles
Democratic Education	Humanistic Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of movement • Freedom of exploration • Encourage/foster self-motivation • Self-direction • Non-competitive and co-operative environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of humanitarian values of tolerance, freedom of thought and social responsibility • Student centered learning process • Nurture pride, collaboration and self-esteem.

Table 1. The “Four Pillars” of the Kirkwood Montessori Program

I stand for internationalism,
I stand for equity,
I stand for democracy,
I stand for freedom;
For and with all the poor and excluded,
I stand for diversity,
I stand for peace,
I stand for nature,
I stand for justice,
And I pledge to work for these values.

- Quotation from College namesake
included on College website

The third site is Lawson College, located along a quiet stretch of Vancouver Island coast, half an hour from the city of Victoria, British Columbia (325,000). This non-profit school has a student body of 200 from around the world and operates with a

mandate “to promote the cause of international understanding by creating an environment in which students from many countries and cultures are brought together to study and to serve the community” (School Aims, 2003).

Students come to the school for two years for a grade 12/pre-university International Baccalaureate program of study, which includes a mandatory Theory of Knowledge course, as well as courses in the areas of Languages, Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, and Arts. At Lawson College, students are required to participate in at least three activities per week, and over the course of their time at the school must participate in one activity from each of the five categories of activities: active citizenship, creative expression, humanitarian service, outdoor leadership, and service to the college. Research participants from this site include 6 female and 5 male students, as well as 3 instructors.

Active Citizenship	Creative Expression	Humanitarian Service	Outdoor Leadership
Campaigns	Astronomy	Adult Literacy	Diving
Current Affairs	Building Project	Drama with Aids Org	Martial Arts
Library/PeerNet	Choir	Tutoring	Ocean Kayaking
Model U.N.	Technology	Community House	Outdoor Fitness
Museum Project	Gospel Choir	Adult Literacy	Sailing
Organic Farming	Folk Dance	Group Home Visits	Wilderness
Ethics Initiative	Latino/African Dance	Special Needs Dance	
Marine Park	Media Activity	Special Needs Music	Service to the College
Recycling	Photography	Special Needs Recreation	Fire Fighting
Animal Shelter	Pottery	Teens on the Town	First Aid Service
	Publications	Visiting the Elderly	Lost and Found
	Sign Language		Pool Service
	Singers		Recycling
	Step Dance		Student Store
	Ukrainian Dance Plus		Library

Table 2. Activities at Lawson College

The many issues of “post” methodologies come to life in the following chapters, as I engage in the weaving together of stories that suggest how students at these three schools are subject to various discourses of education, socio-ecological (in)action, and subjectivity.

Chapter Three: *Discourses of Education*

In this chapter I explore how the voices of students and teachers from the Hillview Global Education class, the Kirkwood Montessori Program, and Lawson College can be heard as expressing a number of prevalent, and sometimes conflicting, education-related discourses around neutrality, critique, achievement, diversity, and consistency. The discourses discussed are important to this study because as undercurrents that run through the school, they influence other messages on the importance of socio-ecological issues, and ultimately, affect the subject positions that are available to students as they engage in their education and their lives beyond school. As with the analysis throughout this project, I emphasize that these are discourses that stand out for me as a result of my own positioning, and encourage alternative readings of the data and my analysis⁴.

⁴ The data from the three sites are included in different fonts to help the reader distinguish among the data sets.

Neutrality

Discourses of neutrality are a staple of dialogue on the means and ends of education, both within schools and across the educational literature. There are a variety of perspectives supporting educational neutrality, others that propose particular moral curricula, and then those who take the view that, regardless of intent, all education more or less explicitly advocates particular views of the world (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1998). This range of, often implicit, positions on the possibility and desirability of “neutral,” or apolitical, education is echoed in the multiple discourses on educational neutrality that can be heard across the research sites.

“The Solid Facts”

Suggested in the talk of many of the students is the assumption that education is, and should be, unbiased. This discourse of neutrality seems to be one that is called upon by students quite frequently, although there are differences in the ways it is taken up among students and sites. For a number of the students, this discourse seems to be asserted as “the way things are:” Their involvement in socio-ecological education has taught them more about the facts of the world, and as a result, has “opened their eyes” to the truth. The main objective of their

program is discussed as increased awareness (or more than one-sidedness), and is not considered political or biased.

There were only a few students who seemed quite unconflicted in taking up this discourse as the dominant understanding of their experiences, and most were from the Hillview Global Education course, where classes were only held for two to three hours each week. The comments of Angela, a student in that course, suggest these perspectives:

What do you think you are learning in your class in relation to social issues or environmental issues, if anything?

I learned a lot about the problems dealing with sweatshops and about cloning, not only with people but with food. And possible solutions for these problems... In this class you get the truth and solid facts about what is going on. Not like the one-sided media.

Do you believe your experiences in the class have affected the way you will live your life?

Yes, a little bit. Being in this class made me want to help out with the less fortunate in anyway possible throughout my life, whether it be by volunteer or donation.
(Angela, 18)

Angela appears to construe the learning in the class as fact based: as problems

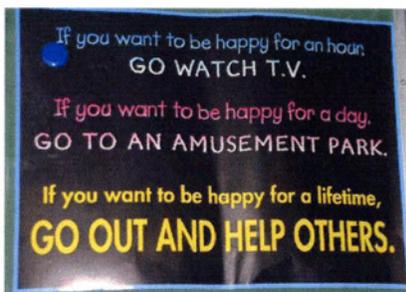


Figure 1. Hillview Poster

that can be solved. The learning derived from the class is not seen as having considerable personal or political implications, other than perhaps an increased awareness, and therefore, concern for “the less fortunate.” As someone who (now)

considers herself “fortunate,” Angela has learned that she can donate time or

money as her part of the solution to social problems. The Global Education class is understood as having helped Angela gain greater knowledge of the realities of the world, and is not seen as promoting particular political perspectives.

The prevalence of this discourse of neutrality in the talk of the Global Education students suggests the coherence of class discourse with that of mainstream society: The views perpetuated in the class are not seen as political because they, in many ways, parallel those common in Canadian society. In “teaching students about the world in which they live” (Global Education Course Outline), the course highlights issues that are explored as largely external to the students, and proposes solutions that draw on dominant discourses of Western intervention in less developed countries, economic development, and environmental management.

Global Education Major Project

You are going to write up a proposal for a development project... For this development proposal you will be given money through which you will need to request funds and itemize how much money will be needed. Find out which organization you will request funds from (CIDA etc.) Remember you must make this project sustainable.

- 1) First choose a country and a development project you wish to begin (e.g., Water well in Liberia, School in India).
- 2) Research the area in where you choose to complete your project. Find out about its agriculture, climate, population, etc., whatever is necessary for your project.
- 3) Choose the project you think would benefit these people the most. Then plan how you will implement this project.
- 4) Create your development project proposal booklet.

Adam, a second year Lawson College student from England, expresses a similar discourse of educational neutrality, although his baseline of “neutrality” appears to be more in line with College values than dominant discourses of Canadian society more generally:

I've had the freedom now, to think for myself, and question myself about life in general. Um, there's obviously been influences, but, I think, if you, like, hear all these different sides and choose the one you want to take. Before I had the views from my family back home, so I was only going on that half because I didn't experience anything else. But here there's views from everyone, every opinion is talked through, and then you just choose the path in which you want to go.

Do you think there are certain values that are taught here? Like in International Affairs today, that was pretty one one-sided against the war I thought. Is there a certain bias that's here that's different than at home, or do you think - ?

I think, that one-sidedness was mostly just the first thing that's ever happened here, but I know there are things, but it's usually definitely double sided. And, I don't know, cause they had a time limit on International Affairs, whereas other things there's not a time limit, so they're just debating the whole day about all the different sides. I don't know why it wasn't double-sided, it sometimes happens, but, I'm not sure why. But you obviously notice it now, like, I wouldn't have noticed it before. But now I notice that it's only one-sided. (Adam, 18)

Although suggesting that he views himself as having been influenced by different perspectives, Adam indicates that now he has been rounded out by his education. Unlike before, when he only had “half,” now he has the whole view of things – “every opinion is talked through.” When faced with my suggestion that the presentation that I had witnessed had been biased, Adam indicates that the occasion of one-



Figure 2. Lawson Magazines

sidedness that I witnessed was very rare and likely just a result of time constraints. Then, admitting to himself that one-sidedness does sometimes happen at the College, Adam appears to push his confusion away with an assertion that because of his (usually) multi-sided education, he can now at least “obviously” notice when there is a one-sided perspective. Despite suggestions of a “leftist slant” (Lawson teacher) to the College, Adam maintains the discourse of educational neutrality by suggesting that his studies at Lawson have given him the ability to be objective and aware of all points of view.

“They Just Want to Teach You What’s Important”

A number of other students who espouse a discourse of neutrality appear to do so alongside a discourse of transformation — of education as a means of personal

I think a lot of society's views are wrong... that's just what I feel from being in Montessori. You're more aware of the environment, and you know, poverty, and all that kind of thing... I think they just want to teach you what's important and that your one, um, your one contribution can make a difference. And just, even after the program, um, just to keep doing it. (Kim, 15)

and social change. These two seemingly very different discourses are taken up without much sense of conflict, and it

appears as though they may be reconciled through understanding transformative perspectives and action as “right,” and therefore as neutral.

Lara is one of numerous students from the Kirkwood Montessori program whose talk suggests the explicit coexistence of these discourses:

What kinds of cultural values do you think are taught in the Montessori program, both consciously and unconsciously?

I don't know, um. They sort of just teach that all cultures are important. You know, we are all equal in the world... that people are alike no matter who they are, how much money they have. That we're all the same. And that, it's just really important to know that I think...

So, do you think the teachers here are wanting to teach you social and ecological issues?

Well, I think they're just trying to teach us that we can't take anything for granted. Um, we, we need to think of everyone and social issues and the war and things like this, invasions, we need to think of that and see if we can stop it and help it. 'Cause these are *really* important issues and we just need to, well, do our best to make our voices heard too. And they really, they really push on that. Individually we may not be heard, but if we group together we will. So, as a class, if we stand out, we may be heard. And, it's just, it's quite interesting hearing that.

Do they teach, do they sort of have certain perspectives on the world that they try and promote or - ?

Um, not so much perspectives of, though I guess, in some ways, but, they, they just sort of promote the world. And they don't really say any negative points or positive points. They just explain how the world is and they explain how countries are, and they don't say whether that's good or that's bad, 'cause that's something that we have to learn ourselves and I really value that. (Lara, 14)

In the first half of this dialogue, Lara indicates that the Montessori program teaches students certain perspectives on the world: that people are equal, nothing should be taken for granted, and social issues need to be considered and acted upon. Teachers are portrayed as “really pushing” the idea that students’ voices will be heard if they speak out on social issues. Running parallel to this talk, which seems to quite explicitly suggest that the program teaches certain views, is

a discourse of neutrality. Twice Lara expresses the opinion that the issues addressed in Montessori are “really important,” which seems to work to validate them as “the way things really are,” rather than as subjective viewpoints. When asked if Montessori promotes certain perspectives, Lara, with some initial uncertainty, responds by asserting that teachers “just sort of promote the world,” without saying “what’s good or bad.”

We learn more about, like, third world countries and we learn to care, well, we don't learn to care, we grow we care about all the people there and how much they're going through.
(Corrine, 19)

As the following focus group discussion with several Montessori program graduates suggests, the commonly referenced “Montessori values” are often seen as being “right;” and, thus, as allowing the coexistence of neutrality and transformation.

You said it strengthened your strength, being in the Montessori program?

Steve: Well, it strengthened my strength, but only the values I had already. It's not like I developed bad values and then had to change them, I just had, like, sort of, well I already had them, but then because of this I knew they were the right ones.

Which ones?

Steve: Not steal, not buy Nike, not whatever.

Daniel: The ten commandments.

Lena: Yeah. I don't know if it's strengths, as much as morals. It's not really what to do, as much as what not to do. (Lena, 17; Daniel, 16; Steve, 16)

Knowing "these were the right values," seems to allow these students to protect their education as neutral ("only the values I already had"), despite any "ten commandments" they perceive as part of the program. This mutual taking up of discourses of transformation and neutrality appears to be seen as viable for students through multiple influences.

My conversation with Lara points to two interesting connected factors: students' families and perceptions of Canadian culture.

Does what is taught here ever conflict with what is taught by other sources, for example your parents, or community, or entertainment?

...I know at home you're really taught to, at my home, it's actually quite close to Montessori - you know, be good to the environment, be good to the world, look at yourself as an individual, things like that. Um, that pretty much, that's what I think that Montessori really focuses on too...

How do you think the values that are sort of taught here in the Montessori program - do you think they correspond or conflict with values that are taught by society in general?

They're quite the same actually cause I know that Canadian society, they're uh, "we don't want to be part of war, we want to do this," and environmental concerns - little hippie tree hugger country right? (laughs) So, that's what Montessori is too. (Lara, 14)

About half of the Kirkwood students that I interviewed had been through a Montessori elementary program, and many indicated that their parents were strongly supportive of the Montessori program's values and approaches. Lara's comments that, "at home it's really quite close to Montessori," hint at how family values may tie into views that the program teaches "just...what's important."

Likewise, Lara's perspective of Canadian culture as anti-war and "tree hugging," provides congruence with the program's values, and thus adds to the semblance of neutrality.

Perhaps the most important factor in encouraging students to take up both discourses of transformation and neutrality in discussing their perspectives of the program, are the teachers of the Kirkwood



Figure 3. Kirkwood Classroom

Montessori program. Students in the program spend every second day for three years with these teachers, and in many ways their discourses of education seem to parallel those of the program teachers. These same discourses of neutrality and transformation are clearly evident in the following discussion with one of the Montessori program teachers:

It's really important that education is... the idea that it be relevant to the child and something that they're seeking, and is not imposed on them, is a really important aspect...

What about in terms of the values of North American society and Canadian society - where do you see the program as being congruent with those values and where do you see it bumping up against them a little bit?

The program being congruent with those values? Well, I don't think we bump up against those values at all, because we really seek to give the students an opportunity to have an understanding of why certain cultural groups believe what they believe. And to give them a sense of what their history was and where that attitude is coming from or where that frame of reference is coming from. You know, just through current events is a great time to kind of go back

with them there. In terms of congruency, with world issues where there's definitely have/have not situations in terms of countries in the world, it's taken over the realm of being, of cultural difference, but what we try to do is educate them that there's a difference in terms of the resources that those countries have and how they've been utilized and the distribution of wealth around the world. And also for them to have an awareness about how in the Western world, you know, we have a value system here that perpetuates consumerism and the use of resources at a high level in comparison to other countries. (Kirkwood teacher)

The education offered in the Montessori program is positioned by this teacher as neutral: as “not imposed” on students, and as “not bumping up against” North

American or Canadian values. At the same time, the teacher talks about how the program aims to teach students about how the Western world has a “value system” that “perpetuates consumerism and the use of resources” in a world of unequal distribution of wealth. As valid as this critique of Western values may be, it is intriguing that it is accompanied by a denial that any “bumping up against” these values happens within the program. This discursive tension seems to be a *sine qua non* of the Montessori program, which

Sometimes Montessori can be a little bit naive. But, that's because they're trying to give you an even keel of both sides, and I think it just depends on which, like whether you want to be, for example, with all the things that are going on right now, um, they want to give you an even keel boat. Like, the Americans are bad, or the Iraqis are bad or whatever, just for an example, they just try to give you the straight facts, which can be pretty basic, because there are only so many straight facts we can actually pick out of what's going on right now. But sometimes because they are not trying to give you their points of view and they're not trying to tie in their political views into everything, because that would be wrong, they're giving you a tainted source then. You get more of a naive, lesser, like not completely full view of it. (Mia, 16)

is perhaps also not surprising for an advocacy program in the public education system, where education in general is purported to be neutral.

“We’re Supposed to Have the Same Values”

A third approach to the issue of educational neutrality is that of education as both transformative and partial. These discourses are most commonly interwoven at Lawson College, where the school advocates personal change in line with certain “core values” as part of its mission statement:

Through international education, experience and community service, [Lawson College] enables young people to become responsible citizens, politically and environmentally aware, and committed to the ideals of peace and justice, understanding and cooperation, and the implementation of these ideals through action and personal example. (Lawson College Website)

One of the teachers at Lawson identified the values of internationalism, service, and knowledge as being important in the various day to day activities of the College, and went on to explain how these values affect the way students “see the world:”

This experience of living together in a small global community is something that affects not just what you think, in terms of attitude and background knowledge, but affects who you are, affects the screens through which you see all the world, and we’re speaking of knowledge (laugh) I suppose, knowing about, learning about issues. I think the screens that were developed, the screens, the eyes through which you look, are, that they more or less look through (laugh), and I don’t think students look at the world through the eyes after they’ve left Lawson...

Do the screens come back to the core values?

I would certainly hope that the core values of the College are in harmony with the core values of students as they come in, but if you live those, develop those, over two years, then I think they become part of a person. (Lawson teacher)



Figure 4. "Special Needs Dance"
Activity at Lawson College

In contrast to the dominant discourse of the Montessori program, transformation is not understood here as a neutral coming to know how things really are, but instead is perceived as the development of different "screens" through which to see the world.

The use of this word to describe the outcomes of learning at Lawson, connotes a view of "knowing" and therefore, of education, as necessarily partial or biased.

So, while the College hopes that students will (come to) view the world in alignment with the school's core values, this teacher expresses a perception that taking on these values is just

one of many possible ways of understanding and being in the world.

David, a Lawson first year from Portugal, talks about the interaction between the dual discourses of education as transformational and partial:

*Yesterday in the Village Meeting there was a student who stood up and talked about the values of the school and whether decisions are made in accordance with those values, and there seemed to be a sense that there are values that people would generally agree to here. Is that true, and if so, where do they come from?
Yeah, there's a lot of debate on that, um, in terms of the values. The values that we're supposed to have, they're not written down anywhere, I mean other than the mission statement, which is working on, you know, honesty and social justice and that kind of thing. These values that we have that we talk about, are very abstract; and that's why there's so much debate about them. But essentially, they're honesty, I mean, they can be summed up in "respect." They pretty much, yeah, it's respect, it's general respect. (Heidi, 17)*

What do you think that the teachers and administrators here at Lawson are wanting to teach you during your time here?

Okay, even though they try to be as neutral as possible, there is always bias. Which means they can't produce unbiased statements, and of course there are biases here at Lawson, and they kind of want us to, force us to, think that way. But they don't actually physically force us, but they always suggest that we think that way. But I think that's okay.

Think what way? Like think critically about things?

Yeah, but even if you think critically there are certain biases that the College introduces to you. For example, the word around campus is that, "Don't trust CNN, don't trust a word of what they say." Even if what they're saying is true, I think that a Lawson student will assume that it is false. (David, 17)

In this dialogue, David suggests that it is okay that the College wants students to change to think a certain way, even though he perceives the desired way of thinking as biased. In addition to a discourse of "education is transformational," David takes up a discourse of, "there is always bias," which means that the College/teachers "can't produce unbiased statements."

Montessori can
manipulate
[students'] minds,
and make them
become Montessori.
(Lena, 17)

Critique

The perspective on neutrality voiced by David is connected to another set of discourses that have to do with critique. In listening to students talk about their programs, it seems as though those students that most strongly espouse a discourse of critical thinking are also much more likely to be among those who view their education, and life in general, as partial and political.

“Be Problem Solvers”

Lawson College students are required to take a “Theory of Knowledge” course in their first year, and the approach taken in this course is indicative of the discourse of critical thinking which pervades the school. The course is described on the Lawson College website as follows:

The aim of Theory of Knowledge is not to give students information, but to engage in critical reflection on what they think they already know, both facts and values. The course considers ways in which we gain our understanding through perception, language, reasoning, and emotion, and considers individual disciplines which arise from different approaches and justifications.... The influence on knowledge of culture and personal experience also emerges in the discussions on which the course is based.



Figure 5. *Physics World* Comic (1988)

Knowers and Sources of Knowledge

How is knowledge gained? What are the sources? To what extent might these vary according to age, education or cultural background? What role does personal experience play in the formation of knowledge claims? To what extent does personal or ideological bias influence our knowledge claims? Does knowledge come from inside or outside? Do we construct reality or do we recognize it? Is knowledge even a 'thing' that resides somewhere?

(Text and *Physics World* comic found on the website of a Lawson College teacher of Theory of Knowledge)

The talk of students and teachers at Lawson suggests the dominant discourse of critique that is taken up at this school is one of activism. Critical thinking is promoted as a means of determining when and how to act. This understanding of critique can be seen in the comments of Lawson student, David:

It's good to, to judge everything that we come across, and to criticize everything that we come across, but at a certain point, if we cannot get the information our self, if we cannot go to the source and get information our self, we have to trust

something. And that's what TOK [Theory of Knowledge] teaches us to do: think critically about information, and see which one's more likely to be true. It is biased, of course, but all information is biased, but still; the only information that is not biased is say, "I weight 65 kilos," or "I'm 17 years old," that's a neutral statement. But as soon as you're getting involved in, in international politics and points of view, things become really subjective. And the, and the theoretical job of the TOK is that, the role of TOK is that, you inform yourself and decide which one you support, and act based on the information.(David, 17)

David links being critical with making decisions and taking actions, emphasizing that because nearly "all information is biased," critical thinking is necessary in choosing what information to trust.

This discourse of critique as activism can also be heard in the voices of teachers at Lawson College. A teacher in the course area of Individuals and Societies, highlights the importance of the connection between

In my course, I hope that I, um, am encouraging students towards critical thinking, that is reflective and questioning thinking, so that they reach sound conclusions without being, I hope without being deceived, in so far as we can ever know these things. Um, and, I'm very interested then in taking those sound conclusions and that they don't just stay theoretical, but that they get moved toward, um, taking effective action.(Lawson TOK teacher)

critical thinking and socio-ecological action, suggesting that the Colleges goes "well beyond just basic critical thinking" in encouraging students to "be problem solvers:"

I mean ideally, you want [students] to be able to inform themselves on issues and make a choice, and not necessarily agree with you, but, and be able to act on things, you know. I have a big problem with, a lot of them are very big critical thinkers, and I think that's how we get there, but not just being negative critical thinkers, but being positive critical thinkers is really lacking. And that would be one of mine, to try to better teach that. And to be problem solvers, you know. That's why I have a problem with the word, "protest," because it automatically implies in the word, "no." I want them to say, "no, I don't like this, but this is what I want to see happen." And that is something that I emphasize quite a few of my classes, as well as outside of class. You know we talk about an issue and they trash it, and then and I say, "Okay, so what would you propose?" And sometimes they're things that are huge, right? How do you fix the human rights

code or whatever? But, yeah, just being problem solvers. And if we're going to be educating leaders and a rather selective group in a culture, then we can go well beyond just basic critical thinking. That would be the overarching umbrella. (Lawson teacher)

In suggesting that “positive critical thinkers” are really lacking in the school, the teacher hints that one effect of a discourse that supports critique may be to position students as dissenters. How this plays out in the dynamics of the school will be addressed in later discussions of discourses of educational consistency.

“Don’t Sit Back and Be Spoon Fed”

A second discourse of critique is suggested by student talk in the Kirkwood Montessori program. Here, a discourse of critique is engaged in, but one which takes learning and effective argumentation, rather than activism, as its focus. This is interesting given the dominance of discourses of “neutral” transformation at this site, and suggests that perhaps “critique as learning” is enacted as a less radical and yet still probing accompanying discourse.

[They teach you] freedom of speech, to question authority (laughs), not to challenge it but to question it. Yeah, don't sit back and be spoon fed, you know. If you don't understand something, don't be afraid to say you don't understand because pretending you understand it will not help you later. (Jenny, 16)

In talking about their recent experiences in mainstream classes, in which graduates of an academically oriented “Mini” school are also enrolled, a group of Montessori program graduates flesh out this discourse of critique as learning:

Lena: Through Montessori, you're taught to kind to question stuff, which is a good - be respectful, but question stuff...

Steve: Some teachers love having Montessori students and some don't. I know in Chemistry - it's such a dull class in my opinion - and it's almost like they don't want you to ask questions... I can't stand it. I want to rip my hair out every time I'm in it. And classes like English, where you're expected to speak, the teachers just get tired of the mainstream kids.

Lena: In classes where there's room for opinion and analysis stuff, Montessori kids do better. Teachers get jaded after having years of empty minds sitting there...

Steve: It's like the Mini stream kids... They think they're smarter than us, we think we're smarter than them. But really, if we sat down and had to do, uh, study the States, we'd sit down and they'd win hands down. If we had to do a debate on something that wasn't taught in the textbooks, the Montessori kids would *destroy*...

Daniel: Well, it's all the critical thinking, right? We might not even know the thing, but I mean, if you put down a topic that I know nothing about and the Mini school kids knows nothing about, I'll still destroy him, because it's all about critical thinking.

Steve: Daniel and I had, we were in Biology and we had a debate. And it was Daniel and I against the entire rest of the classroom on genetic modification and Daniel didn't even believe in genetic modification and the debate was pathetic. It wasn't even fun, cause we just, we had the entire class, and we, we pulled information that all of them knew. We pulled it out of social studies curriculum - that we'd all learned. And we just, I don't know.

Daniel: And then they'd, like, mumble about what they were going to say. And then you could just, like, think about what they were going to say. You could read the lines they were going to say out of the textbook (Lena, 17; Steve, 16; Daniel, 16)

The discourse iterated by these students is one of “respectful” questioning that engages in “opinion and analysis” on the topics at hand. “Not asking questions,” is equated with textbook knowledge and the “empty minds” of many students in the mainstream classes. Although this brand of critical thinking can be applied to socio-ecological issues, such as

genetically modified foods, the students seem to perceive it as a learning and

When a butterfly flaps its wings, it creates an air disturbance that can trigger a storm somewhere else in the world. If an insect has the power to change the weather, just think of the power you have to change the world. (Butterfly 208 website @ www.bp208.ca)

rhetorical, rather than activist, tool. Other discussions indicate that students do undertake some activist work, such as developing and implementing action projects in association with a Canadian International Development Agency

“Butterfly 208” contest; but that this work does not seem to be taken up as critical

The main lesson I have learned is to question, but to do it in a respectful manner. May it be authority or the media, use your mind to determine how much substance these things have. You learn through questioning and I truly believe students who have left Montessori are better at learning, rather than digesting information. (Steve, 16)

in the same way as it is at Lawson.

Rather than seeking to look through critical eyes at all of society and school,

the dominant critical discourse at

Kirkwood seems to promote critical

thinking as an interactive means of

learning about “what’s important” and as involving the selective questioning of what has already been identified as “wrong,” and thus beyond partiality, by the discourse of educational neutrality.

Where Discourse is Silenced

Silence around the idea of critique speaks volumes about how education is understood, and this is particularly the case in the Hillview Global Education class, where critique was mentioned by none of the students interviewed. This seems to fit with the strong discourse of neutrality that was evident in talk with Hillview students: for them, the purpose of the course was a heightened “awareness” resulting from a received view of the way the world *really is*.

Although the “neutral” curriculum no doubt ties into the absence of a critical discourse, there seem to be many other factors at work, such as the very few



Figure 6. Student Art at Hillview School

hours each week spent in the class, and the discourses commonly experienced by these

students in, as the Hillview teacher suggested informally, primarily working class homes. Unlike the Montessori and Lawson students, who are selected for their prior involvement with socio-ecological issues, and often speak of home environments supportive of critique and activism, several Global Ed students talked of the dissonance of now knowing more about global issues than their parents, or of worrying about ending up on the street like the homeless people

they had volunteered with. These are perhaps more challenging grounds for engaging students in critique than in either of the other programs.

Achievement

In a time of increasing emphasis on standardized testing and measurable “achievement” in North American schools, the students involved in these three settings of socio-ecological education articulate a range of discourses on what it means to “achieve” in school and beyond. Students often draw upon more than one of these discourses, weaving them together to represent a multi-faceted outlook on the world, which sometimes involves inherent contradictions.

The talk of Adam, a second year Lawson College student from England, exemplifies this blending of multiple discourses on achievement:

Whereas before I would have been like, “Yep.” I would have been happy with the life I had, I wouldn’t have wanted to change anything. But now I just, I’m happy to change anything. Whatever it is, I’ll change it. And I’ll have fun, you know? I’ll do anything.

***For something different? Because you want to try new things?** Yeah, new things to a certain extent, but, there’s definitely a big world out there, that we don’t experience much of it, and I want to experience as much as I can, while having fun, making money, or whatever way, whatever I need to enjoy my life. But money, before I came, I was told, “Yeah, you got to go to College to get into economics, you got to make lots of money.” But my view changed and I was like, “No. I don’t want any money. I just don’t need money to survive.” I want to have a happy life. I don’t care about money. If I have a small house with a window, then I’ll be really happy. I don’t need to money to live, happily. But that’s what, the coach back home is, “Oh, need money, need money.” Especially with England being an expensive place, you have to have money. I don’t know, I*

don't want it to come between, obviously you need money to live and support a family, but I've just started at the, I need nothing basically. (Adam, 18)

Adam explains that before coming to the College he was happy with the life he had – one that included an emphasis on growing up to make “lots of money.” However, this economic discourse has been called into question by his experiences at the College and the ascendancy of a discourse of doing “whatever I need to enjoy my life.” Achievement in life is no longer necessarily equated with money, but with experience and change. Adam indicates some conflict around these competing discourses,

indicating that he wants to do whatever he needs to in order to enjoy his life, “making money, or whatever way;” but

then says, “No, I don't need any money. I



Figure 7. Economics Class at Lawson

don't need money to survive.” Despite what seems to be a desire to abandon concern for money and focus on experience and happiness, Adam returns to his home discourse of “need money, need money;” and says, “I don't know...obviously you need money to live and support a family.” This suggests yet another discourse of wanting to have a “steady life.”

The following sections will further explore these and other discourses of achievement that relate to students' experiences in their educational contexts.

Although students from all three sites appeared to take up almost all of these discourses, Hillview students tended to evoke more modest understandings of achievement, whereas those at Kirkwood and Lawson were more likely to take up those related to power and influence.

“Do What You Want to Do”

A discourse of achieving enjoyment as a primary objective in life was only articulated by a few students – those that also talked about coming from “tough areas” (Adam, 18), and working class backgrounds. This suggests that perhaps for many of the students who were more “privileged” growing up (Heidi, 17); that enjoying life is a discourse so ingrained that it is not noticed and thus, not articulated.

The following discussion with Doug from the Hillview Global Education class suggests how various struggles may tie in to enjoyment being taken up as a dominant discourse by some students:

And how would you describe your values, the things that are important to you?
What values, like, what things are important to me, like, in the class?

No, just in life in general.
In life. Um. Being considerate. Having a good time. And do what you want to do, not what you think you should do.

I don't know, I've really come to that point where I decide just what I want to do, and I want to stop doing stuff that I don't want to do, so I can get on with my life and do what I want to do. (Adam, 18)

How do those values affect the choices you make in your life?

Uh. With the future – going where you want to go. Knowing that you're going to get there. Pretty much, if you live how you want to live, that's how it's going to be, like, you're going to have a good time if you live how you want to live...

What things do you think will affect who you are ten years from now?

What will affect me? Probably I will regret my grades in school. I should try better, but I just don't right now. That's one thing I should be doing. If I wanted to get a better job down the road. And, I don't know. That's probably the most important one.

Great. And do you have any specific dreams or goal for the future?

Uh, I'd like to be a personal trainer, but that's just a lot of school work and I'm not very good with school, so - but, just live a steady life and have a family.

Do you have plans for next year?

Uh, I'm just going to get a job and then, after I work here for a bit I want to go the oil rigs. Go to the oil rigs for a couple of years. (Doug, 17)

Doug seems to be in a position of conflict, where he wants to get “a better job,” such as personal trainer, but believes he’s “not very good at school:” his struggles with school put him in position where he feels as if he is choosing between doing what he wants now (avoiding school) and what he wants for the future (a good job). In this challenging situation, where so many of Doug’s choices actually seem to be being made by his background and circumstances, “doing what you want to do” becomes a desirable and important discourse.

“Just Live a Steady Life”

As his primary future “want,” Doug says that he would like to “just live a steady life and have a family.” Again, with the academic and financial challenges Doug faces, this desire to “just live a steady life” is not something that he appears to take for granted. Corrine, also a Hillview student who has struggled with school

and gets special instruction to help with learning disabilities, describes her measures of achievement as graduating and getting a Monday to Friday job:

And do you have any specific dreams or goals for the future?
Not that have to do with Global Ed.

My main goal right now, is to graduate and get out of here (Corrine, 19)

That's fine.

I'm looking into, like, medical stuff. I'm not a big science, so it's like medical office assistant. Something where I can work Monday to Friday, no weekends. I don't like working on weekends. (Corrine, 19)

Cutting herself off when she presumably begins to talk about “not being good a good student,” Corrine instead takes up a discourse of wanting a steady job, with weekends off.

This discourse of “modest aspirations” may well be common for this rural working class community, and is perhaps unsurprisingly given the incidences of homelessness, teenage pregnancy, and drug addiction that the Global Education teacher described as being experienced by several of her

past students. I find this a complicated issue, as it should not be assumed that “modest aspirations” are less valid than discourses of change and power.

“Modest aspirations” also perhaps tie back into the notable absence of a

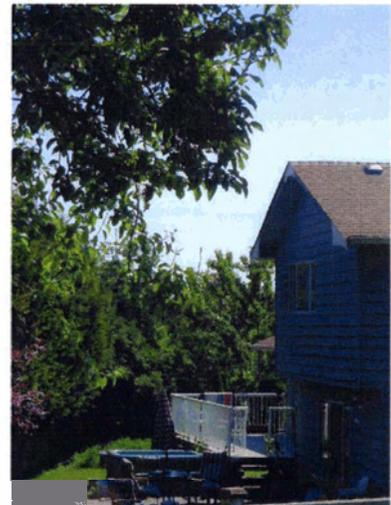


Figure 8. The Neighborhood around Hillview School

discourse of critique among the students at Hillview, in ways described by a

Lawson student in talking about the situation in her home country of Bulgaria:

I think all the problems in our society come from, from money or from economic problems. And if you don't have a very good economic basis, you just can't strive for ideals. For example at home you see all the garbage on the street and everything, if there is no money for - Indigent people don't think about "Well, why don't I put it in the garbage bin and not on the street". Well, indigent people have so many different problems on their minds that they can't think about recycling or about - It's very different. I think that, that the basics, those everybody should have and then they can try for something else. (Violeta, 17)

"I Am an Individual and I Can Do Anything"

Violeta also talks about a discourse of achievement that she has taken on since arriving at Lawson College: that of individual power.

Before coming here I never thought about applying to any really, really good universities, like top universities. But after coming here, I'm thinking like, I mean, I can aim a little higher, because I have that ability and I recognize my ability after coming here. So, yeah, in certain ways it definitely shaped the rest of my life. (Joe, 19)

So you were just talking about how you've learnt that the sky is the limit and that you can do whatever?
Uh-huh. Yep.

"Whatever you set your sights on," where did you learn that?
Where again! It, it's just again like - it's just that the daily experience of seeing the way you people behave towards each other, the way things function and all the things, it's, it's just how it became engraved in myself. It is also true that because here people are so different and they value differences and I think that that's what I also respect a lot because at home we still have kind of all believe some form of mythic, some kind of the communistic way of thinking because although fifty years or something thereabout we have passed, it still remains the predominant mentality so there is still this sort of set mould for everything there. Well here it's very much individualistic and the tolerance is valued. I am an individual and I am different and I can do anything. (Violeta, 17)

The discourse of individualism, as a dominant discourse throughout North American society, is very much present in the talk about achievement at all three

of the schools. It is intertwined with the discourses of enjoyment and stability and their focus on the individual, and it is championed in the discourse of power which is so prevalent in both the Kirkwood and

We have to fulfil our academic abilities and [the College Director] has said this a number of times throughout the year. So I have a bit of a problem in that the emphasis seems to be on passing the IB, and I'd rather the emphasis be on becoming leaders. (Lydia, 18)

Lawson programs. Violeta expresses this discourse here in the understanding that she, as an individual, “can do anything.”

Contained in this discourse of individual power is the idea that students can achieve what they “set their sights on” if they only work hard enough. What students judge as worthy of striving for, commonly seems to match other

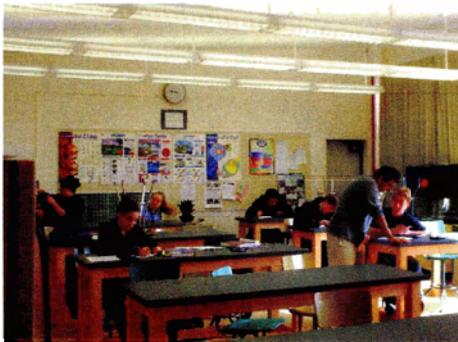


Figure 9. A Montessori Class

dominant North American discourses around academic success, higher education, social status, and economics. The coupling of “individual power” with these other discourses around achievement can be heard in the

comments of many of the Kirkwood and Lawson students, such as those of Kirkwood student, Kim:

How would you describe your values? What things are important to you?

Um, most things that are important to me, grades are important to me. Um, I strive for, um, above 86%, so an A. It's, uh, pretty important to me, but, uh, I'm striving for success in life basically - overall goal. Obviously. Um, and I think grades are a big way of getting there. Grades are getting me up to where I need to be to get into programs for university, for, I want to go to a program in Europe, a boarding school for grade 11 and 12 to earn a baccalaureate... I think that would be a huge thing that's, uh, very based on global issues... So if I go there I know I'm going to learn a lot, so, that would definitely affect it and what university or college I attend or law school, if I go to law school, or whatever... I have big goals, but - it lets me strive higher. (Kim, 15)

Why do you want to study law?

Um (laughs), that's a really good question. Um, basically, I think it would, I think it would be a, a very good, foundation... I wonder sometimes if it has, if I've made that choice just because it's the kind of thing that people go into. I mean it's such a common degree. And I'm wondering whether I just chose it because I can't think of anything else to do? (Lydia, 18)

The comments of David, a first year Lawson student from Portugal, are striking in their articulation of this discourse of individual power, and have a different twist. As with a good number of the students who articulate this discourse, David understands power as being helpful in achieving goals which go beyond a focus on the individual, and entail “solidarity” with others:

I believe that if we really, really strive to pursue an objective, we will, we will then succeed; if we focus on that objective, we will eventually get to that objective. And uh, also, of course that I believe in solidarity, and in helping people who are not, who cannot achieve as much as other people, but I think that everyone should be educated, in the sense to pursue their passion, to be as Nietzsche says, "To go as high as they can. To be as powerful as you can." I think those are the main things, my main values. (David, 17)

Elsewhere David combines these discourses in talking about how social change can only truly be achieved by “climbing the ladders of power” of mainstream society. Thus, individual achievement is in part measured as power and as

And I might even go my entire university - uh, what do you call it - education, without, um, without doing a single piece of volunteer work. But I will once I've established myself and I will use it to benefit society somehow. (Steve, 16)

influence over important social issues. For David and others, "to go as high as they can," means social transformation, and for most,

some degree of individual recognition and financial success.

"Success Doesn't Mean Earning Lots of Money"

Finally, a discourse was evident in the talk of a number of students, particularly those in the Kirkwood Montessori program, that success should *not* be judged according to dominant North American discourses of academic achievement, higher education, social status, or financial situation. This discourse of achievement as "other than academic or financial success" is articulated in the following discussion with Kirkwood student, Mia:

Is what is taught in this program different from what you were taught in your last school?

Well, at my last school, the content is completely different because the idea of school is that you learn... what they decided you should learn at this point in your life and it's the knowledge that's going to be useful for you in the rest of your life, you know. And when you get to grade 12 you are a full person and you have learned all the knowledge, and go get a job, have babies, or not even have babies, just go get a job, be a huge lawyer with a firm and make a million dollars and drive a fancy car, I don't know. Um, get "A's," be the top in everything you know, you have to, there's competition everywhere, and if you don't compete then you won't be anywhere, you'll just be *nothing*. You know, they push that so much. And that's not how life is, because why do you need to be the top in your field? In some fields there is no top, I mean, you can get paid more than somebody else, but you could be a completely immoral person and no eloquence to your speech, or no knowledge of life, just knowledge of the work space. You can

never be a whole person if you're just trying to be the top yourself...

I had one teacher that felt that one student was useless and needed to get some class, so he threw one of his yacht club books at him and then he should get a job and get a brain and everything like that, and you can be a responsible member of society and get a yacht is pretty much what he said. The words are different, but the idea is exactly the same. And I was like, I thought that was wrong. The guy was, he wasn't a mean guy, he just didn't really want to conform to the mainstream mind state and that's really evident. (Mia, 16)

I try to think of everyone as a whole, instead of just myself. (Mia, 16)

Mia suggests that the Montessori program is different from mainstream

schooling in that it promotes the view that "a whole person" is more than having

I didn't know what I wanted to do in university before Montessori but it was not, like, international relations, which is, like, for sure what I want to do now. And then, I don't know, it showed I guess, that you don't really need to - I don't know if it showed that - but what I got from it, was you don't have a definite plan, right? You don't need everything to be, I mean, there's places for you to fit in and to make a positive difference anywhere. You don't have to go to university and you don't have to get a job and 2.5 kids. (Lena, 17)

a family, a high status job, or large amounts of money. Being educated to value things other than academic and financial success, for Mia, means a focus on a broader set of concerns, including morals, speaking skills, and "knowledge of life."

The Montessori teachers appear to be central to the prevalence of this discourse

which de-emphasizes academic and financial success; as suggested by one

teacher's valuing of social growth – "taking risks," "changing...attitudes," "trust," – over academic learning:

I don't really look at students, when I'm working with them, in an academic sense. I look at them in terms of taking risks socially, I see them, in changing their attitudes as being positive, and where I can see that. Something as simple as the student that's never given eye contact being able to do that, it means that, you know, their level of trust between themselves and an adult is growing. So, I think I have a bit of wider scope in how I view progress and learning... I wouldn't be happy working in a program that was very, that valued high accelerated academics as its sole purpose. To me that would be quite empty. (Kirkwood teacher)



I think the Montessori goal is to make us better people. The Mini goal is to make them better, to get into university. And our goal is to be happy, good citizens. (Steve, 16)

Figure 10. Getting Ready for an Art Exam at Lawson College

A few voices at Lawson suggested that, while present, this discourse is not widespread at the College:

How do you think what is taught here corresponds or conflicts with what is taught by other sources?

One of the messages that I always try and hit home everywhere is that success doesn't mean earning lots of money. Actually that, that hits, I know some people who have had big arguments with their parents because of that, so, that's definitely one that - I, I don't know how widely that message is spread around campus by other teachers, but it's definitely one that I focused on. And even that wealth is, is actually a problem. If I can succeed with that message I'll be very happy.

What about the message of the College in general?

The messages that the College conveys? Hm. I think there isn't much of a message that the College conveys. Yeah, I don't know. Well, I know some students will go home and make their parents recycle, but it's nothing very controversial. (Lawson teacher)

This teacher indicates that they have made some inroads in introducing students to a discourse of “success doesn’t mean earning lots of money... and even that wealth is...actually a problem.” While they indicate that some students have at

I trust myself enough that I will succeed, quote-unquote (laughs). I will do well, I will be happy, my life will figure itself out. (Heidi, 17)

least temporarily taken this up, there is a feeling that the rest of the College remains less “controversial” in that they continue to take up many the dominant discourses of North American society around academic achievement and financial success.

Diversity

Across the three schools there are a range of discourses relating issues of diversity to education. As with the discourses around achievement, there is much interweaving and contestation among the discourses of diversity expressed by students. The following excerpt from discussion with a Lawson student from Canada, Heidi, points to a number of these discourses and the ways they rub up against one another:

I was blown away once when someone said, I said, “Oh, are you coming to the [peace] walk,” and they said, “No, I don’t believe in that.” And I said, “Oh, why aren’t you coming to the walk?” and she said, “Because I don’t believe that walking is going to do anything and instead I pray.” “Okay!” I mean that’s international understanding, that’s cultural differences; personally not being religious, at all. And then there’s other people who came here not knowing that this was any different than any other school. I don’t know if they didn’t spend enough time on the internet, didn’t read the brochures, I don’t know. They saw “International Baccalaureate” and they applied. “International Baccalaureate,” “\$56,000 scholarship,” they applied. End of story, don’t really care, this is their

ticket to North America. I have some issues with that. And then there's other people who don't think it's the best means, think protesting is lawlessness, that kind of stuff, which is fine. If you have a different point of view that's fine, as long as [you] do something. (Heidi, 17)

Underlying Heidi's talk are several discourses of diversity in education. There is a discourse about the value of the cultural diversity existing at the College, and also about how she has learned about difference through her experiences at the



Figure 11. Anthropology Class at Lawson College

school. Her comments about students applying to the College who do not share the “core values” of the school, however, suggests a contradictory discourse of “diversity is not always good.” This tension is highlighted in her final comment that, “If you have a different point of view that’s fine, as long as [you] do something.” “Doing something,” for Heidi (and the College), seems to mean taking action to promote peace, a perspective, which as she already explored, does not necessarily encompass diversity. These challenges around the concept of diversity in these educational settings, are explored in this section.

“It’s Not Fair that We Live So Well and They Live in, Like, Nothing”

Students in all three programs talk about learning about the world’s diversity, however, the discourses taken up in relation to this diversity seem to vary.

Hillview students seem more likely to talk about diversity as something that

exists between people “out there” and “us,”

rather than as also existing within their

own classroom or community. In addition,

this diversity seems to be exclusively

understood as connected to social

problems, rather than as including anything “good.” This discourse of diversity

as disparity is hinted at in the comments of several Hillview students:

Miranda: If we were anywhere else, we’d probably be, like, especially, like, if we lived in like a developing country, it would probably be totally different. We take a lot of things for granted and stuff and we just expect, like, to be able to go to school and if we get sick, go to the hospital. But if we were somewhere else it would be a lot different...

Vera: There’s a lot of different views of, like, the world. It’s all pretty much based on religion and stuff and so you hear only one side of it. And in class, we see, like, why there’s fighting and stuff like that, like, the different religions and why there’s conflict...

Sarah: It seems like it’s been really, like, it’s, like, amazing to learn how much what’s going on in other parts of the world, like, we hadn’t done, like, it’s hard to identify with it ‘cause it’s so much different. Like, the things that we’d never, ever, like, dream of happening to us, and they’re happening to other people every day. (Vera, 16; Sarah, 18; and Miranda, 18)

I...thought it would be fun to, like, learn about how other people live and now that I think about it, like, the way we live and the way people, like say in Nepal, live is so different and we’re lucky and I want to help those people. ‘Cause it’s not fair that we live so well and they live, like, in nothing... I’ve realized that other people don’t live the exact same way we do. (Corrine, 19)



Figure 12. Class at Hillview School

In the talk of these students, “difference” is discussed as the cause of conflict, and as unfair. While a discourse of disparity is certainly also evident in the comments of Kirkwood and Lawson students, here there is no accompanying celebration of other aspects of diversity, and the underlying message is that diversity should ideally be minimized so that other people can live the “same way we do.”

“We Want to Have a Microcosm of Society in Each Classroom”

A different discourse of diversity accepted as cultural richness is taken up by many Kirkwood and Lawson students, and is a specific mandate of both of these programs. This perspective is evident in the talk of a Montessori teacher as she discusses the program:

International understanding is not only the product of living and working together. Cultural activities are an important part of life: arts, crafts, music, drama, national customs and even food highlight the international dimension and students frequently host events devoted to their cultures. [Students] therefore develop an international appreciation which is firmly grounded in their own local, regional and national identities. (Lawson College Website)

It's healthier to live in a diverse cultural experience and environment... **We want to have a microcosm of society in each classroom...**

What do you think [students are] coming away from the program with?

Well I think that, just because of the way they are treated and respected, likewise they are very accepting people. And I really believe that. There is very little negative energy that is going on between our students, very little name calling, putdowns, chastisement. They're very accepting and very accepting of a very diverse group of people. We've actually had said to us by parents, etc., that they were really worried about their child coming into high school and how they'd be accepted because they're not the norm and they found acceptance in this program. So I think it's a real key time to learn that and I think that that's something that stays with them. (Kirkwood teacher)

They teach us about how all cultures are important and how we get something from every culture, especially nowadays when everyone's drawing lines in the sand about who's good, who's evil, whatever. It's really important to stop and think and analyze why's this going on. I mean, my family and I already do this but, um, like, just to stop and mention that there's two views because the people that are calling one group of people enemies, and the other group could very well be calling that person an enemy too, you know? Um, and that people from all walks of life are completely equal and no matter if you're rich or poor, sick or healthy, or anything like that, you still have value as a person. (Mia, 16)

Students' comments also suggest that this discourse of welcoming diversity is played out in many respects in the Montessori and Lawson programs: in appreciating both global cultural diversity and that within the home school.

"We're All Supposed to Come Here with the Ideals"

Running parallel to this discourse which welcomes diversity, in the Kirkwood

and Lawson programs, are discourses

that suggests that program diversity is,

You know we have this thing here how, everybody's unique, just like everyone else, no? (laughs). (Violeta, 17)

or should be, limited. A Montessori teacher talks about the ways in which the

diversity of the Montessori program is restricted by how comfortable different

cultural groups are with working with a framework of community activism:

The one thing that I'll, that I possibly is different from the mainstream is, we tend to a higher number, in this particular intake school, a higher number of Caucasian background students and, um, it's very, very difficult when English is their second language, for those families that don't have a good grasp of English, to get involved with parental support, you know supporting your children to be involved in the community. So, I think because we have a larger number of Caucasian speaking students that that's one of the reasons that we have quite a

large number that are active in the community. It's more familiar with them, they can work within that framework. Just the communication barrier is not there for them. (Kirkwood teacher)

Similarly, at Lawson College, two different teachers talk about how student diversity is limited by educational, economic, and thus, cultural factors; despite the mandate of the College to bring a wide range of diverse students together from around the world:

It's really, really weird actually, there's, I know this is totally most likely coincidence, but there's like ten white people in my grade, and like eight of them are in Montessori, which is like, it's totally a culturally accepting program, it's just, I don't know, I guess it's maybe the percentage of people who have been Montessori trained are higher, that are Caucasian are higher, or I have no idea. (Jenny, 16)

What is the economic background of the students here - it is pretty mixed? A lot more middle to upper class, particularly [from] some of the developing countries. It's really difficult to get the kind of education you need to get in here. There is a few exceptions, for sure, but - (Lawson teacher)

I would say most students are coming from cultures, or backgrounds, where they have been individual, high achievers in their school, and have experienced, in general, they've always experienced being solo achievers. (Lawson teacher)

Interestingly, these teachers seem to view the limitations on the diversity of students as imposed by external factors – those of consistency between potential students' backgrounds and the requirements of the program - without explicitly questioning the criteria used to admit students to the programs.

When the entrance criteria are discussed by students and teachers, the dominant discourse at both schools seems to be that it is appropriate to select students who

demonstrate prior interest and action around socio-ecological issues. A teacher in the Montessori program explains:

We want to know that their interests gel with what we're going to be studying, because if they have no interest in getting dirty and getting, you know, their hands dirty and doing some planting and doing some beach clean-up and doing some stewardship of the environment, um, then it's not going to be a good fit. And... if they have some experience in giving to their community and it can be on a real small level, whether it's library monitor or reading to younger students in their elementary school or helping the teacher clean up at the end of the day. All those things are beginnings to community service. So we want to know that the students have taken the initiative in their elementary years and have taken that on. (Kirkwood teacher)

At Lawson College, there is also much talk about how the program entrance criteria favour students with backgrounds of activism. In a conversation with one teacher, doubts are expressed about the dominance of this discourse of selectivity:

How are students selected from those that apply?

I was actually on the selection committee last year. Um, well in BC for example, there's about 120, or last year there were 120 applications, and 24 were selected for interviews based on, like, five criteria: their marks is the basic one, but not a fundamental one because as long as there's a certain level. And then just the tone of them - whether they are committed. We try and see if they have some sense of what this place is all about, whether they're committed to the ideals. That they are committed to learning, enthusiastic about it. Then also letters of reference, but those vary. But trying to decide who comes is the most difficult process, cause you look at, "Well, this person has lots of potential, but this person's already done lots of things - which is going to be better." That was really hard.

And so which way does the process lean?

Well, I'd usually try, I mean it varied in the committee, but I'd try to go with the people that have potential, or who you think have potential, because they don't have all the opportunities already and they're probably less likely to already be successful.

And would you say that was the most popular view on that?

Well, it's, I don't know, 'cause the interview stage which I wasn't involved in, like, of the 24, 8 people are selected, and usually it's the people who've done a lot. (Lawson teacher)

The comments of this Lawson teacher points to concerns about how the selection process leaves behind those “less likely to already be successful,” instead choosing “the people who’ve [already] done a lot.”

Given the type of students that we have applying, and who end up coming here, they're probably already, they already have the interest in themselves, a lot of them would learn, in any case, a lot about the world. A lot of them would end up engaging themselves with service. A lot of them would achieve something of what we do here. (A different Lawson teacher)

However, the comments of some Lawson students suggest that this discourse of selectivity is applied more rigorously in the selection processes in certain countries, and that this contributes to some cultural groups arriving with more of a socio-ecological focus. Joe, a Lawson student from Hong Kong, outlines his perspectives on this in the following discussion:

So do you think those students come here with those beliefs already, or do you think that they maybe are affected by certain teachers or certain activities? Some, I think, some of them, depends where they're from, right? I mean because, basically I think that the Canadians here, and some of the Europeans, they came with these really, really strong values, like the active values, the values, for example, like, in peacekeeping, and that type of thing. They came with all, they'd done a lot of things at home. They have already organized activities and they are well aware. But we're like the African students, the Asian students, and somehow a selection of students, and they came here, and they didn't really come with those ideas. They are to learn, some of them participate, but generally the people who are really actively involved in those activities are North American, particularly Canadian students, because I think that's how the Canadian Lawson community selected students, is based on what kind of community work, like, involvement, what kind of experience they had, rather than just strict academics. It's very different. (Joe, 19)

The comments of Joe indicate an interesting dynamic at the College that results from the mandate of limiting diversity on the basis of certain values, being only partially fulfilled. Whether the reason for this partial fulfilment is fewer

I think there is a lot of similarities between people at Larson because we all, we all come here, we are all supposed to come here with the ideals of peace, justice, international education...Because everyone signs, we don't sign a contract to come here, but you almost sign a contract when you go for an interview. And, when you say "Ok, I'm going", in that you are supposed, you know, you are supposed to believe in those, I don't think everyone does fully. (Lydia, 18)

applicants outside of Europe and North America who have already have "active values," or selection committees with different priorities, is not made clear by the College. The resulting gap between a discourse of selectivity and the reality of a diversity of socio-ecological values

among students, seems to contribute to some confusion and discomfort about who should be at the College, and what exactly the school is trying to achieve.

I know you mentioned this the other day and it just came to mind, with the students that are involved in Eco-action, can you talk a little about that and how are students, like you talked about how students will self-select for something like Eco-action, so that students are coming in with an interest already?
Yeah, actually, there's a lot of people that just kind of took a plunge and joined Eco-action, and it is more diverse than other activities I'm involved in, I think maybe because it has the practical side, so it does get a wider diversity. But there's definitely people from, who are very, it's very, I think it's one of the best groups of students of any activity on campus, like all the enthusiastic, open minded students joined Eco-action so it's really easy actually. But there's definitely, there's no Africans. But I think most other groups. There's a lot of Europeans and North Americans. And they're all, yeah, they're all pretty enthusiastic. (Lawson teacher)

"Am I Really Westernized?"

Closely related to this discourse of selectivity, as it plays out in the selection process and resulting school dynamics at Lawson College, is a discourse of homogeneity. Many students express feeling confused by a tension at the school

between the discourse of valuing diversity and one which promotes the homogeneous acceptance of particular values. Students talk about these values as including the “core values” of the school which are made explicit (e.g., appreciation and acceptance of diversity, compassion, socio-ecological service, etc.), as well as other, more implicit, “Western” values (e.g., academic achievement, leadership, change, etc.).



Figure 13. Environmental Systems Class at Lawson College

The following discussion among three Lawson College students highlights the ways in which students feel caught between these two discourses of diversity and homogeneity, and perceptions that this contradiction is inherent in the mission and practices of the College:

Beatriz: I mean, the [Lawson] brochure will say how we are in a certain way, but we make our own, like, we do what we think. And the brochure is just a statement, but Lawson is made of people and I think we are part of it... I never felt this thing about what the values of Lawson are. Maybe I have, but, not as, that's the values they want us to hold, because I don't think they want me to follow any value, I think they want me to reinforce the values that I've got. And of course I'm learning more, but I don't know, what do you think?

Restha: Actually, yeah, uh, it's very interesting. One of the, I think it's a very contradictory thing, the whole "support the values of the College," because we don't want discrimination, and discrimination is something we don't want, it's a value of the College. But then, I am sure if I said, "I think the war," well no, the war against Iraq is just stupid but something else, say, if I say, "I think killing is right," I am sure I will be discriminated against. I mean, I don't think there can be such a thing as the values of this College, it's just - in that case we'll have to

give up diversity, and in that case we'll have to bring in generic, or not generic, but homogenic the whole place. That's the only way that will work, to have the values of the College, and I think that's led to some conflicts this year.

Beatriz: If you want something homogenic, maybe you should think, I don't know, machines; because human beings are so different, it doesn't matter where you come from or even teens, oh my, they are completely different.

Emilia: I think if you get in a point in Lawson College where you think so, when your mind is very closed, and all your values are very traditional or something, even though people won't fully discriminate you against, but you will see it. And on the other hand, if you are too liberal, then you will also feel it. So, I completely [agree], and I'm not sure where, actually the way that we can work better in that way? (Lawson focus group interview with one male second year from the Maldives, and two female first year students from Nicaragua and Bolivia)

In this discussion, Beatriz seems very much caught between discourses – saying both that the College advertises the students as taking on certain values during their time at the school, and that the College only wants to “reinforce the values that I’ve got” because “human beings are so different.” Restha has evidently thought about this tension before and suggests that there is contradiction in trying to include diversity along with other core values, for as soon as a College value is expressed, it squelches diversity. Emilia supports this idea of the conflict



Figure 14. Working on a Project in the Lawson College Cafeteria

between diversity and homogeneity with her claims that students whose values do not fit with those of the College because they are “very traditional” or “too liberal,” are in fact discriminated against.

This tension between diversity and homogeneity is also talked about by others, and particularly in relation to issues that have come up around the College norm of accepting homosexuality. David, a Lawson

Homophobia is a really big problem, and that is something ties in with that question about their home, religion, parents, community, the national morals, whatever... And they know that they're not supposed to speak out about it. They know that that would be looked down upon by the community.
(Lawson teacher)

student from Portugal, describes this as a sort of a selective acceptance of diversity, in which students are expected to conform to certain values of the College:

We have such a variety of points of view and things that we cannot say that, "Oh, I've been encouraged in the North American culture"... on the other side, of course, some people here have different cultures and, for example, the Muslims, they have really strict views about homosexuality and they just do not accept it. And here, I think we're expected to open our minds and to, comprehend, and to accept homosexuality as a choice from other people; but some students have a hard time dealing with that. And we had, we have a couple of homosexual, we have some homosexual couples, and some students really feel uncomfortable with that, but I think the majority of students, especially second years, by the end of the second year you're so used to it and you just don't care anymore. You accept.
(David, 17)

A Lawson teacher also talks more generally about how "more conservative, or right wing" students can feel "alienated" or "embittered" by the "leftist" College values:

There's certainly, there's a bit of political slant as well. Sometimes students find it quite difficult, if they are not taking the quote "leftist" perspective, on something. Then actually, they feel quite alienated sometimes... But, I think when the students leave they do have a greater awareness of social justice issues and environmental issues and the values associated with those. It doesn't mean that they always do those things. And you also do have those few that also come in and are sort of more conservative, or right wing or whatever, the danger is that sometimes they leave feeling almost more embittered I guess, because it's a difficult environment when the majority of people seem to be taking the same

stance on things. So, yeah, it's more than just figuring out what is your culture, what is your nation about. There's all those other things that come in on the side. (Lawson teacher)

As this teacher suggests, diversity at Lawson College seem to be “more than just figuring out what is your culture... there's all these other things that come in on the side:” things such as negotiating how one's previous cultural values fit with those promoted by the school.

An example of how the tension between diversity and homogeneity can play out in terms of less explicit “Western” values, is offered by Joe from Hong Kong:

What kind of cultural values do you think are taught here at Lawson, both consciously and unconsciously?

That's a really, really hard question, because I kind of think, right? Because, you know, when I went back home and people think that I must be really, really westernized. That's how it is for the people who usually come back from overseas, and that's the case with my other friends before I came here. So somehow I just think, “Am I really westernized?”...I think the first thing in here, like the culture that I learned, is actually Chinese culture, it's not the Canadian culture. Why I've said that is because when I just came here, right? I see really, like, different kinds of people, and all type of culture, all type of mentality, the way of thinking...so I'm thinking, “Why are my ways so different from theirs? And why are those people, just so much different?” And I start questioning myself, from another point of view... I start to study myself, and “Oh why I behave like this, why I say this sentence instead of that sentence?” ...And that sort of thing has helped me to learn about my own culture. ...like the main cultures here that I feel, it's more like European, like North American, and the Afro-Caribbean culture...I also adopt some of those value...I mean that's not a problem to me, because my values are shaped so. So like I still know what's my own culture. But somehow I tolerate some of my changes, but I don't really like, I mean I'm not really transformed to like, “Oh, I'm westernized, or Afro-Caribbean,” but somehow there's a mixture. (Joe, 19)

Joe suggests that he has wondered about whether he is becoming westernized through his experiences at the College. However, he feels that because his values had already been “shaped” by his home Chinese culture, he may “adopt” some

new values, but is not “transformed” to take on a whole different set of values. “Somehow there’s a mixture” Joe indicates – a mixture that maintains some cultural diversity while also having moved Joe towards other values more common in the College environment. As Joe suggested elsewhere, his experiences at the College have let him to “want to get involved in politics,” as well as to consider applying to “really, really good universities, like top universities.”



Figure 15. A Campfire in “Wilderness” Activity at Lawson College

The comments of three Lawson College teachers also suggest some of the more subtle challenges involved in the inherent tensions of a school that emphasizes Western understandings of education as focused on individual achievement and change, as well as an appreciation of cultural differences.

What do you think the role of education should be?

I think opening minds and expanding boundaries - because when you grow up your family has a certain perspective, whatever it is, and you get stuck in that perspective; and the only way you’re really exposed to other things is through education. I think that’s the most important role. It has to introduce you to new ideas, new ways of looking at the world and your culture, and then you have a chance to really find your own. (Lawson teacher)

Obviously since what we’re doing is trying to educate people, there is something that has to centre on the individual, and we’re expecting not to export a community at the end, but a number of different individuals who will go to different parts of the world and themselves be forces for change. (Lawson teacher)

I think Lawson is within a western model for sure. And I think we westernize students to some extent. One of our biggest challenges too is to, a lot of them

want to go onto university within North America, which I think is, I hope, I know everybody doesn't share this opinion, but I think it's problematic. It's not the point of UWC to take the best away from the communities, and not just the communities in other countries, but even we take a student from, it's really hard for us to get students from small communities in the north - if we take their best away, they may not have another best to influence other people. So that's a real challenge. (Lawson teacher)

Talk of “exporting” individuals who are no longer “stuck” in the perspectives they grew up with, and “who will go to different parts of the world and themselves be forces for change,” suggests a discourse of homogeneity which may well “westernize students” and seems at odds with a discourse of diversity. Bumping up against the explicit valuing of diversity, is the dominant Western discourse of individual achievement as well as related notions of emancipation and change, which may in fact undermine loyalty to place, kin, and tradition, and promote mobility and a new kind of select global class.

Consistency

In addition to tensions around discourses of diversity in the Kirkwood and Lawson programs, there is also a suggestion of other discourses around school consistency: about the ways program action matches rhetoric. Most students at the three schools do not talk about the consistency of their program, suggesting through their silence that they are not concerned with, or have not noticed, any practice/rhetoric gap. However, a few students in the Kirkwood and Lawson

programs, as well as a few Lawson teachers, did voice a discourse of program inconsistency.

“Nothing’s Perfect”

The concerns of Kirkwood Montessori program student, Beth, centre on a perceived inconsistency between Montessori program teachers’ prescriptions for action and their actual involvement as activists:

What kind of values do you think are taught in the Montessori program, both consciously and unconsciously?

Well, of course about the environment and stuff, but, I don't know. Somehow I don't think that's done very well. Like, I mean they want you to get into, like, activities and stuff, but like, the teachers don't seem very involved, which kind of doesn't make sense. I think if they had teachers who really seemed like they cared about what they were going to teach, I mean sometimes it seems like they do, but not very often, usually they're just teachers.

So what makes it seem like they don't care very much? What do you imagine a teacher that really cared, what kind of things would they do?

Well, I don't know, it's just like, well, [one teacher] is actually pretty good with stuff like that, I just don't see that they're involved with stuff like that as much as you would think that they should be.

Just like, getting involved in activist stuff themselves?

Yeah, I guess that it would hard, I mean, being a teacher and - I'm a student and I do some activist stuff. (Beth, 16)

Beth seems to suggest that values around “environment and stuff” would be taught more powerfully if teachers “really seemed like they cared” and got more involved. She offers up the excuse that they are too busy, but then seems to abandon that by suggesting that even though she’s a student, she finds time to “do some activist stuff.”

At Lawson College, several students and two of the teachers talked about perceived inconsistencies between the values of the school and its practices. Problem areas seemed to be the lack of an explicit socio-ecological focus in the curriculum, the cost and sustainability of the school, and administrative policies that give priority to external relations over consistency with values. In the context of earlier discussions around diversity, it is interesting to note that the students the most vocal about perceived inconsistencies were North American and European; and it seems likely that expressions of “inconsistency” derive in part from the discourse of critique emphasized at the College.



Figure 16. Eco-action Project at Lawson College and Neighbouring Yacht Club

Adam, a Lawson student from England, talks about his concerns around school consistency in the following discussion:

What do you think the teacher and the administrators involved at Lawson are wanting to teach you during your time here, particularly in relation to social and ecological issues?

... That's what I'm so confused about, is cause they teach us one thing and they do the opposite. Like they teach us to never cut down trees cause they're important to us, and then they cut down ten trees on campus without us being here. You know, they're trying to get us to be responsible for our actions, so you know, you

have to sign up everything that you put on the notice boards so they know who it's from, whereas, they cut down these trees when we weren't here so that we couldn't chain ourselves to them. So, I don't know, it's messed up, the way that they teach us and then they do the opposite themselves. They have to be leaders themselves, in order for us to take example from. They're setting bad examples in some ways, but in other ways they're doing good things. You know, we learn from that...

And when we try to do something environmentally friendly, the College does the opposite. K, for example, we wanted to change the light bulbs, and they say, "Oh no - we can't do that, because our maintenance department would disagree." We have to go through a whole process of why we want to do something, what good it's going to cause. For example, we wanted to get a rain water shower on all the houses, out front. But they didn't do it because it looks aesthetically unpleasing. And I wanted to put recycling bins around the whole campus, but they wanted them behind the houses. Last year there was a conflict between washing lines, because they didn't like the way that the washing lines were out front. So, we questioned that, we argued for it. We got the washing lines in the end, but it was a long struggle to get to that, instead of using the tumble dryers. There's a lot of things that we try and do but don't get passed because of people's ignorance or laziness or morals. The people that come here, they don't want to see a washing line hanging out...

I'm learning that not everything's perfect, actually, and anyway, there's always differences between everyone, there's always manipulation, the corruption. There's nothing perfect, anyway. Nothing's perfect, so. I'm learning that definitely. Even if you are a place that's mean to be perfect, like Lawson College is mean to be perfect, but it's really not. Not in any way. Nothing's perfect. (Adam, 18)

Stressing the importance of the College administration being "leaders themselves," Adam talks about how he has learned through the school's (lack of) action that, "nothing's perfect" – not even Lawson College.

Heidi, a Lawson student from Canada, is similarly critical of the College's lack of consistency with its stated values:

Environmental has gone through cycles in terms of how emphasized it's been. When we first came it had kind of, I don't know maybe, I wasn't here, so it might have been the 80's it was really environmentally sensitized, and then the last couple of years it hasn't been emphasized, and this past year we finally got enough people together who are interested in environmental issues and it's been re-emphasized, so that sort of cycles in and out. (Lawson teacher)

What do you think the teachers and the administrators involved are wanting to teach you, particularly in relation to socio-ecological issues?

Ecological, nothing! I mean, I was expecting teachers to be like, "I hope nobody hands me in a single sided assignment with margins that are that big." Like, I thought teachers would really say something like that. Um, I thought if students suggested anything ecologically more friendly, they would absolutely support it 100%, which they haven't. And in terms of classes, in English class or in Math class, the environment does not come up, at all. It does in Anthropology, but that's because it's a theory, and it's one of the theories that is part of the International Baccalaureate. I mean that's a huge part of it, I mean, it's based around the IB, which isn't tailored for Pearson environmental school...

We were in Systems class and we had count the stupid periwinkles, and rip them off the rock, put nail polish on them, and put them back on the rock, to do like a count, recount, I don't know, some way of counting species. Anyways, we said, "This is violence! Like, this is violence unnecessarily, or it's even violence whether it's necessary or not, that's not even to be judged. It's violence. You're doing something to something unwilling"...



Figure 17. Environmental Systems Class at Lawson College

I keep wondering how this is promoting peace. I mean, we had a special issues day on Peace and Conflict, which was the most condescending day I've ever seen in my life... "How do you peacefully resolve the problem such as your roommate is playing music too loud and you want to go to sleep?" Give us some credit! Give me a break, don't treat us like this please. And supposedly we're supposed to take metaphors from that and apply it to Israel! (Laughs) You know (laughs), "Okay, that's interesting." (Heidi, 17)

In Heidi's articulation of a discourse of inconsistency, it is particularly evident how her background with socio-ecological issues flavours her expectations of the

What about the message of the College in general?

The messages that the College conveys? Hm. I think there isn't much of a message that the College conveys.

Yeah, I don't know. Well, I know some students will go home and make their parents recycle, but it's nothing very controversial. (Lawson teacher)

College curriculum and frustrations with the ways the College's practice does not match its values.

Finally, a Lawson College teacher also expressed a discourse of inconsistency:

outlining various ways in which they felt the College's actions do not live up to

its mission statement:

What is Lawson College trying to teach students in relation to social and environmental issues?

Well in the mission statement it says that students who graduate are aware of environmental problems, high level of environmental awareness, and it doesn't really say anything about social, except it says international understanding - committed to the ideals of peace and justice, or something like that. But I don't know if it actually does teach those in a very profound way. In fact the curriculum doesn't really include them really significantly. There are some IB subjects that do, but they aren't taught here... But I don't think that those values - social issues, environmental issues - are really reflected in the curriculum. Things like International Affairs, where we have speakers coming through, definitely cover it. Current Affairs discussions do, some of the activities - but activities don't hit all the students, they're more specific, and then special issues days - we have one or two per term. But it's a very loose, fragmented approach. (Lawson teacher)

How do you see what is being taught here being complementary or contradictory to your own values?

I think one of the biggest contradictions is the amount of money it costs for each student to go here. Making it a lot more self-sufficient would be more in line with my values. There's lots of other contradictions too, like there's definitely a sense of valuing academic success... Yeah, actually in terms of educational philosophy, I think it's really important to ensure... that your institution really represents what you're trying to teach and there's many ways the College doesn't do that. Even having a Director - why do we need any hierarchy? Maybe we do, but we could at least try without for a while.

Yeah, something I've really noticed is all the lawn mowing that happens around here.

Leaf blowing.

Yeah, leaf blowing off the road, the dirt off the road. And those weed wacker things.

There's so many examples of that. Or like, I don't know if you heard about the floating dock? Why does Lawson need another building? Don't we have enough buildings already? I mean this room is never used. But it's because sometimes the school gets grants, but we could say, "No, we don't need that actually." I think there's a lot of contradictions.

What do you think in terms of what values are underlying things here, unacknowledged values?

Even the education is very much a Western curriculum. There's no sense of indigenous knowledge, or knowledge that doesn't have a scientific basis. (Lawson teacher)

The discourse of inconsistency, even if expressed by only a minority of students and teachers, does suggest a potential for adaptation and innovation in the program that is relatively rare. The Lawson College website suggests that over the course of the past year, a number of changes have taken place at the school, including new measures to make the College more sustainable through involving students in the preparation of their food and cleaning of their dormitories.

I think there's lots of teachers elsewhere in the system that have similar values. That's not so different. In some ways you almost have to be more idealistic, there are more idealistic teachers in the public system because with the public system, coming here is a bit of a private, elitist system anyways, so you have to compromise in that sense to even work here.
(Lawson teacher)

In this chapter I have outlined particular discourses of educational consistency, diversity, achievement, critique, and neutrality taken up by students and teachers at the three research sites. In the next two chapters I will examine the talk of students and teachers for discourses around subjectivity and socio-ecological (in)action, exploring in the final chapter how these various discourses may affect the socio-ecological subject positions available to students.

Chapter Four: Discourses of Socio-Ecological (In)Action

Interconnected with the discourses of education discussed in the last chapter, are discourses of socio-ecological (in)action that are evident at the three schools.

Students and teachers express a range of perspectives around socio-ecological “knowing” and “action” in talking about the programs they are involved in, and these suggest close ties with the broader discourses of education that they have also taken up. This chapter will explore this terrain, examining how students at the three sites articulate particular discourses of socio-ecological (in)action.

Knowing

A variety of discourses around socio-ecological knowing are expressed by the students and teachers at the three schools. These range from disengagement, to different facets of “awareness” and “ways of thinking,” such as gratitude, media literacy, and despair. In keeping with the focus of this research, I have chosen not to focus on other more conventional forms of “knowing,” such as students’

science-based understanding of environmental problems, which have been central to much previous research (Rickinson, 2001).

“I Think I Missed that Class”

That some students take up a discourse of disengagement is quietly hinted at all three schools. While a few students at Hillview indicated a lack of engagement around socio-ecological issues, none of the students at Kirkwood or Lawson explicitly take up this discourse. What students felt they “should say” to a researcher studying socio-ecological education no doubt played into the subtleness of this discourse, as did perhaps the expectations of the various programs. In talking about the majority of students at Lawson College wanting to “make a difference,” a teacher explained, “I mean there’s a small number who want to earn a lot of money and be successful, but... if they do want that, they don’t tell anyone (laughs).”

The discourse of disengagement articulated by students in the Hillview Global Education class seems to centre on ecological issues. Although “Nature and Humanity” is included as one of

Global Education Course Outline - Nature and Humanity

Here we will look at various environmental issues affecting us today. Some examples are:

- Pollution
- Deforestation
- Availability of fresh water
- Natural disasters
- Pesticides and other chemicals
- Global warming
- Nuclear technology, etc.

the four topic areas for the course, students' comments suggest they do not have a lot to say about ecological issues:

Is there much of a focus on environmental issues...?

We have talked about environmental stuff, like, I think I missed that class (laughs).

So it hasn't been a big focus.

No, it's more like, there's genetic engineering and cloning and stuff like that.

Which is local, because it's happening in our country too. But I think –I've paid more attention to, like, the global stuff 'cause that's what I wanted to learn, is like, what's actually going on in our world. (Corrine, 19)



Figure 18. Hillview School Front



Figure 19. Interior Courtyard at Hillview

What about environmental issues? Is that something that's been focused on in the class?

Shelley: No, we've done stuff on that too. We've done quite a few, like, worksheets on environmental stuff. Yeah.

You do recycling –

Miranda: Yeah. (Shelley, 16; Miranda, 18)

The talk of these students implies a lack of passion and concern regarding ecological issues. This apathy seems to be assumed to be okay, with environmental issues considered less important in “what’s actually going on in the world.” Tying into this discourse of disengagement may be a broader discourse of ecological apathy at Hillview, which is strikingly suggested by the physical setting of the school. The large two-story “rancher style” building sprawls over the sizable school grounds, surrounded in the front by a parking lot

containing hundreds of students' cars, and a small chain-link fenced grassy area off to the side. The interior outdoor courtyard of the school is completely surfaced in concrete, on which sit picnic tables and a number of potted plants. Despite the snowy mountains and treed vistas that are in sight, the feel of this school in spring is one of hot sun reflecting off of shiny car tops and concrete.

How a discourse of disengagement is contested and perhaps silenced at Kirkwood and Lawson is suggested in the following dialogue among graduates of the Kirkwood Montessori program:

And for you Cam, have your activities changed [because of the program]?

Cam: Um.

Daniel: What *do* you do?

Steve: Yeah, you don't do *anything*.

Cam: I really don't. (laughs)

Lena: But he's really smart.

Cam: Yeah, I don't volunteer. I'm one of the kids where forced volunteering didn't work.

Lena: I don't know if you do, but you shouldn't, like, there's nothing wrong with that. I think it influences people in different ways, right?

Cam: Well, I know it influenced me. It's just it didn't influence me to volunteer.

Lena: Yeah, I think it influenced your mind though. And, like, that has the potential to do whatever, right? I don't know what you want to do, but -

Cam: I don't either.

Steve: Sit at home...on the computer. (Focus group interview)

In this dialogue, Cam is forced to admit that he doesn't really "do anything" concerned with socio-ecological issues. Although he indicates that the Montessori program has "influenced" him, he does not articulate how and does not take up Lena's repeated suggestions that he can make a positive difference with his "mind." Through his portrayal as someone for whom "forced volunteering didn't work," Cam is positioned as having taken up a discourse of disengagement. The reasons for Cam's seeming lack of engagement are unclear, and may be related to a lack of engagement as discussed above, a discourse of individual achievement which pushes Cam towards other academic and financial considerations, and/or feelings of despair as will be discussed later in



Figure 20. Montessori Students

the chapter. What is clear is that the other students do not take up a discourse of disengagement, as they alternatively position Cam as having the potential for action or as selfish/lazy/bad in that he stays at home alone on the computer.

"It's an Eye Opener"

A much more prevalent discourse is that of "awareness" of socio-ecological issues. This discourse is closely linked with the discourse of neutrality discussed

in the last chapter, and is most commonly expressed by students in the Hillview Global Education class. A discourse of awareness implies an understanding of the world in which “open eyes” are possible, and are judged as better than having eyes that are closed. Kelsey, a Hillview student, articulates this discourse as follows:

I've just learned that there are issues and problems that people don't focus on, um, as much as they should and there's, you learn a lot of economical, like, you learn, um, financial problems that, like, the States for example have so much money and the government has so much money and they would never look, they would never look at Nepal and, and give up pennies for their health care and people are dying and people are getting sick and they've got, we've got medicines in Canada and in the States that, cure some of those diseases and stuff that they have in the Nepal, but there's no, there's no way of connection, like transferring them over there and people are dying because they have those diseases and they don't the cure for that. Like, it's just, I've just learned so much that, um, about, countries that can help, but don't, and just because they're blind - they don't, they don't take the time to, to figure out what's going on. (Kelsey, 16)

In her talk about inequity between North America and Nepal, Kelsey suggests that those who “don't take the time to figure out what's going on” are “blind” to the problems they could help solve. In contrast, Kelsey positions herself as aware: as having “learned that there are issues and problems that people don't focus on.” Awareness is posited as a matter of time and “figuring out,” and is seen as a responsible approach to the world.

So, in the long-term, do you think your experiences in the Global Ed will affect the way you live your life? I think so. I think for the rest of my life now, I'll be wondering what's going on, looking on the internet and watching CNN more so that I know what's going on. (Corrine, 19)

These same themes are repeated in the talk of four other Hillview students, who dialogue about how the Global Education class has caused them to “open their eyes” to global issues:

Sarah: in Global Ed, like, I don't know, it's just more interesting 'cause we know, like, what's going on, like, right now, like, like, I think a lot of people are just, like, isolated, like, "oh, we live in Canada, like, who cares what's going on, like, other places?" But this class forces you to, like, open your eyes and, like, see, that there's other people out there and you have to be, like, conscious of them too. Like, you can't just, like, think of yourself and, like, not worry about other people, 'cause we're all part of the same – in the same world.

Shelley: Yeah, it seems like it's been really, like, it's, like, amazing to learn how much what's going on in other parts of the world, like, we hadn't done, like, it's hard to identify with it 'cause it's so much different. Like, the things that we'd never, ever, like, dream of happening to us, and they're happening to other people every day.

Sarah: It seems like the things going there, like out there (laughs), it's not like other people, like, it may affect your life too maybe...

Vera: I think it brings a lot of the issues that you see on TV or whatever, it brings it home – more realistic. Yeah, a lot more realistic, you actually realize what is happening. (Vera, 16; Shelley, 16; Sarah, 18)

These students also express a discourse of “open eyes” as “more realistic...you actually realize what is happening.” This sort of awareness is described as

I'd say that what Montessori preaches and what other people practice are very different. Like in the mainstream they're so not accepting, so not gracious, so not environmental, so not aware, so ignorant of issues outside of themselves. (Jenny, 16)

necessary in order to not just “think of yourself,” and as causing you to realize that what is going on “out there,” could possibly “affect your life too maybe.”

The comments of students suggest that this perspective of awareness as something outside of bias, and as positive and desirable, is cultivated through a

combination of experiences that involve interaction with activities, places, and people. All of the students I spoke with from the Global Education class indicated a great respect and appreciation of their teacher, Ms. Scott, often talking about her care for them and her commitment to global issues. Students' similar expressions of valuing awareness suggest that they may well be taking up a discourse of awareness expressed by her. Several students describe the influence of Ms. Scott in the following ways:

Is Ms. Scott different from other teachers in the school?

Yeah, good teacher.

Yeah (laughs from all).

What makes her a good teacher?

Shelley: Um, I don't know, she has lots of like, world experience, of like being places and she knows – she's seen lots of places, so it's like, like, if somebody's talking about somethin' that they know nothing about it's harder to really, like, learn from what they're saying.

Sarah: Yeah... she's been to so many different places... so many different things, like, she's seen most of the stuff we've talked about, like, first hand and she's got so many stories to tell about it. It makes it easier to remember it when you hear about when she was in a place and she saw it, then you do when other teachers, just like, this is what happened, blah, blah, blah. (Shelley, 16; Sarah, 18)

Ms. Scott is identified as very knowledgeable about the world and as having “seen most of the stuff we’ve talked about...first hand.” Because of her experiences and the stories she tells about them, the students indicate that it “makes it easier to remember,” suggesting the focus of the class is “learning about” global issues.



Figure 21. Hillview Students



Figure 22. Hillview Classroom Wall

In addition to research projects, which also centre on developing a greater awareness of global issues, the Hillview students raised money for an orphanage in Nepal and also volunteered locally.

Doug relates how the unfamiliar experience of volunteering at a Vancouver soup kitchen for the mentally ill was a “good experience:”

So, do you think that your experience in the class will, in the long run, affect the way you'll live your life?

Uh, affect it in a good way I would say, maybe help it out and, I would know more about what's going on globally because of it, I guess? Things like that. And being on the field trip to, I'm not to sure, the homeless – that was a good experience, that helped me.

How did it help you?

I don't know, I'm just, never really liked the city very much and going there and seeing how all those people live and stuff like that is just, like, it's an eye opener, for sure.

What does it make you think – did it make you like the city more or less or? It makes you think of how they got there, and if you want to end up like that, right? Imagining yourself being in that same situation.

It gets you more motivated or?

Yeah. (Doug, 17)

For Doug, the Global Education class has meant knowing “more about what's going on globally,” and more significantly, seeing how other people

We have speakers come in and things like that and they tell us from their own perspective and things that they've learned through their lifespan. And we'll read things and if there's an interesting article Ms. Pryde will cut it out or something like that. They'll give us examples of what's actually going on in the world... and that's really important cause then we can have a, we have an image of how it's affecting the world, you know? They just bring to our eyes what's going on. (Mia, 16)

live and realizing that he does not want to “end up like that.” A discourse of awareness appears to be a central focus of the socio-ecological education experienced by a number of students, and one that is clearly linked to the discourse of education as unbiased, as discussed in the last chapter.

“It’s Kind of A Way of Thinking”

The prevalent discourse of socio-ecological knowing for students in the Kirkwood and Lawson programs seems not to be one of awareness, but instead

of “a way of thinking.” What this “way of thinking” looks like seems to vary among students and sites, but is commonly described as having changed students’ understandings of the world and the ways they interact with it. This goes beyond “open eyes” and instead suggests a sense of seeing in a certain way which is inextricably

linked with action. This discourse of “a way of thinking” seems to have woven into it the discourses of transformation and critique discussed in the last chapter, and to vary in whether it meshes with a discourse of neutrality or one of partiality.



Figure 23. Montessori Classroom Quilted Mural

I just kind of realized, I have more of a respect for Canada and more of a respect for different countries that I used to knock. There's a new program [which tells you] how many people give their GPA totals to different causes and the States gives 1%, whereas Sweden gives 8%, and it just kind of. I just learned about all these smaller countries that are contributing a lot more than they need to. (George, 16)

A number of students in the Kirkwood Montessori program talk about having come to think about the world in a different way. This way of thinking is described as being quite pervasive and as affecting their

actions, including their interactions with peers and family. Lena, a graduate of the Montessori program discusses how she took on an “anti” perspective during her time in the program, which has now shifted back towards a “middle ground” which is less extreme, but still a different way of understanding the world than the one she started with:

I think when you are exposed to something you tend to jump on the anti side, but it will come back in the middle.

So, when you started in the Montessori program you took on the values here pretty strongly?

Yeah... I guess in grade 10, 'cause grade 8 and 9 you still kind of want to be popular. Um, and then, by the end, no, was it the end, I don't know, sometime in grade 10, um, it all kind of just, I don't know, snapped into place. Then I thought I saw a bunch of conspiracies and things, which was I guess the extreme (laughs)... but um, it's kind of like an awakening. It's neat. And then you just get to react to everything differently. Um, I guess it comes about with more knowledge probably, or maybe a deeper kind of knowledge, more critical. (Lena, 17)

These articulations of “a way of thinking” suggest something transformative and born out of a critical approach to learning. Things “snapped into place,” as a

kind of “awakening,” suggest an implicit discourse of neutrality, but one that goes beyond “awareness,” to “a deeper kind of knowledge, more critical,” which causes Lena to “react to everything differently.”

Another Montessori student, Kim, also talks about how her understanding of the world has changed since entering the program, and links this change with the influence of peers and various activities:

Well, I'll be watching the news or, or, um, reading a newspaper, or listening to my brother talk, or something like that; and I'll realize, “okay, wow, these people really don't know much about global issues,” you know, like, there's a study that just came out about, you know, they found out that fish can feel pain and it was, like, “Well, yeah, like, hello, they're alive” (laugh). So, it was kind of, like, duh. And so some of the stuff they say on the news or whatever it's just like, “Yeah” (laugh), kind of obvious, you know, to people who are already thinking that way. It's kind of a way of thinking.

Do you think there's a way of thinking here, that's kind of shared amongst people here, that's a bit different than out in society in general?
Yeah. I don't know. It just kind of accumulates. Like, uh, you know, from [other students], like, they're kind of the vegetarian spokespeople for Montessori (laugh). There's other ones, but they're the two main ones, you know, and they're really against, or, for animal rights. They'll give leaflets to people - And then we have Off Ramp, which is promoting clean and safe transportation. And we have Evergreen promoting a green school and a green environment. And we just have all these groups, and they just kind of, mesh together, and together it's kind of like a super being, you know, kind of a super global issues/knowledge thing (laughs), and I just think that, everybody's hearing about this, you know, every day at class meeting or whatever things are brought up. Okay, so, Evergreen - they're planting. And people just start thinking about it. It just one of the things that's aware to them. You know, they'll hear someone say something and they'll be like, “Well, actually no,” um, you know, because they're more aware, just in general. We just have more knowledge in our head about global issues just from just hearing just little things randomly, throughout the day, about it. So, a lot of conversations are about that. (Kim, 15)

Extracurricular things such as going to help out Seymour Mountain or something, digging up plants and re-potting them and putting them other places, just things like that, that, you're going out and doing things - they've really made me, sort of, have a new look and an interest in the environment. (Lara, 14)

Kim indicates that she has taken on a new "way of thinking" as a result of the "super being...global issues/knowledge thing" she is faced with on a day to day basis in

the Montessori program. She suggests that the cumulative impact of being exposed to activist initiatives has caused her to "start thinking about it" and to intervene in activist ways. Although Kim describes this as a result of greater "knowledge" about global issues, there seems to be an understanding that this knowledge goes beyond having her "eyes opened" and involves an active response.

A similar discourse that describes new perspectives of the world as "a way of thinking" is suggested in the talk of students at Lawson College. The discussion of two students from Bolivia and Nicaragua suggests the drastic change in "knowing" that is also articulated by many other Lawson students:

Emilia: I went back home on summertime last year, and I think the shocking part was when, like, since you came to Lawson you start thinking in a different way, like, concerned with just so many different problems around the world, that nobody, not everyone back home is doing the same thing. So here, even though we have so many values at Lawson College and we have so many frank people, we all have something in common, that is, we want to do something. In so many different areas, we want to do something, to make something better. And

unfortunately back home I haven't find that. I, talking about young people I think we really need a huge place like Lawson in Nicaragua (laughs), to encourage people to do some initiatives and actually to make them think that we can do so many different things that we just don't know. So, I think that's going to be also a contrast. It was my contradiction back home. I mean, people were caring about what kind of shoes they should wear, and I was like, "Oh my god!" (laughs), "Where is my friend," or something like that you know, like, "The poor children"...

Beatriz: The way I think now, and the way that, it's like, for a moment I've been out of Bolivia, and I see Bolivia from outside, and I can see the problems, and I can compare them, and I can see the different things that I believe in and the things that I'm living now. And you kind of, if you want to talk about the things that you may do when you go back home, if you do it, it's completely different, because now you see Bolivia from a different perspective, and you see the weaknesses and the good points that it has. And when you go there, I hope you will try to work on the weaknesses and try to keep the nice things you have there. And even with your friends, you see your friends differently, your friends at home. You see now what things you were doing, and the things you do now with your friends, and what you want to do after Lawson is a big thing. I think Lawson is like two years of learning and two years of living in a completely different world. The two years fly, but after them I think that's when experience starts, but it's another stage, it's the real world, and, I think it will affect in the way I think, in the way I focus my interests, in the way I kind of solve the things I want to do....

Emilia: Of course, Lawson has inspired my soul, my spirit, my life, in the way that now I have so many goals, like physical goals but also internal goals, like, as I was saying before, like, converting the educational system in Nicaragua. I don't know, the way you see people, the way you talk to people, but also, the way you live. (Beatriz, 17; Emilia, 17)

Emilia and Beatriz repeatedly express how Lawson College affects "the way you see people, the way you talk to people... the way you live." This dramatic shift in their understandings of the world is linked with the development of a shared desire "to do something, to make something better."

I've changed a lot. I viewed life differently when I first came here. You know, I might have been a bit more racist. But being here has changed me a lot, I've had time to think about myself, the questions I've been asking myself, taking ToK, I don't know. I know, my friend in an energy course, and she asked me a few questions about myself and then it opens up a whole load of questions about yourself and about people in general, why we're here, and it's just opened up a whole new world. (Adam, 18)

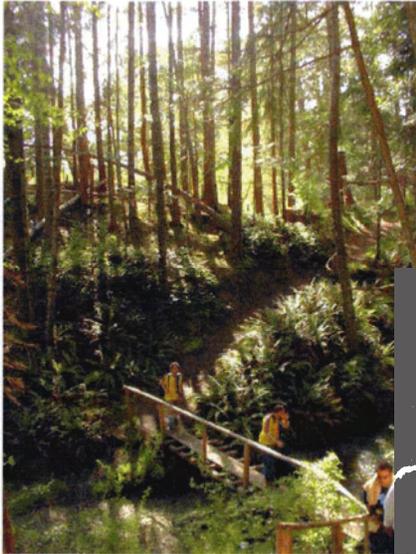


Figure 24. Lawson College Surroundings and Students

Students at Lawson talk about how their perspectives of shifted knowing have developed through their interactions with peers, activities, and place. In particular, experiences of “wilderness,” living with peers from around the world, and various activities such as Humanitarian Service, Current Affairs, and Eco-action, are described by students and teachers as

being pivotal in this process of taking up the discourse of a different “way of thinking:”

Being here, sometimes when I look out into the mountains or something, that especially makes me view life differently, when I'm in the wilderness. And then when I go home, I see the difference. When I'm flying over England and I see house, house, house, houses everywhere. (Adam, 18)

[At home] I was just very bookwormish and here I am doing many different things... I am doing lots of sports and I have been climbing and swimming and going running and everything. So humanitarian again has been to all these people with disabilities and for the first time it's given you, wow, it's really scary yeah because at home we don't have or maybe we hide them somewhere we don't want people to see them but, and I learned how to respect them and take care of them and see all their shiny eyes and that is very different... in our creative experience, like the dancing, we've been learning different dances from different regions and that's really important because we actually incorporate like different cultures in yourself and you start to feel how it, how it is to be in such a culture. And then of course the activity difference if I'd been in campaigns and current affairs, and you discuss many different topics and you see people's opinion and also just the fact that, like, presentation of, let's say one issue you say “Wow, and how, I didn't know that that existed,” or “I didn't know that you would think in such a way. Why do you think in this way?” That's very much I know how it changed me. (Violeta, 17)



Figure 25. "College Service"
Activity at Lawson College

In these comments, Violeta suggests how her experiences of spending time with people with disabilities, feeling through dance "how it is to be in...a [different] culture," and hearing different opinions through discussion, have given her an understanding of education as

going beyond a disassociated "awareness" to a more comprehensive knowing that has changed the way she understands the world. Similarly, Adam expresses how his experiences with the beautiful and remote physical setting of the College influence him to take up a discourse of now "viewing life differently." A Lawson teacher explains how they believe these kinds of experiences cause many students to develop a sense of compassion "as an operating principle," and presumably, to take up as a result, the

*The value of service... the education there is done a lot through the method of empathy, through Humanitarian Activities, where people go out and actually spend one on one time with people, and gain a sense of somebody else's common humanity through interaction and perhaps have a sense of compassion, if they didn't already possess it. I think everybody already does (laughs), but I think compassion is not just a nice feeling that you experience that slips by, but compassion as something that you take as an operating principle is developed through that kind of education. I think also the sense of compassion and responsibility towards other people is developed through the Active Citizenship program.
(Lawson teacher)*

discourse of “a way of thinking.” This discourse suggests that students view themselves as seeing the world in a particular way, one which promotes critique, compassion, and societal transformation.

“I Have the Easy Road”

Particularly suggested by students who take up a discourse of awareness, but also present in talk of “a way of thinking,” is a discourse of good fortune.

Through their changed perspectives of the world, many students indicate that they now realize how “good” they have it, and express feeling lucky and thankful.

This discourse of good fortune is most common in the talk of



students in the Hillview Global

Figure 26. Global Education Students at Work in a Downtown Soup Kitchen

Education class, with feelings of luck and gratitude seeming to accompany the

“awareness” achieved in the class. The following discussion with a group of

Hillview students suggests how this discourse is articulated:

What kind of values do you think are taught in the Global Ed class?

Mm, probably just, like, awareness of everybody and what other people are, like, what issues other people are dealing with... We're so lucky to be in Canada and, like, you realize how much you don't appreciate regularly.

Yeah, just like, I don't know, some of the things we read about, like, that happen in other parts of the world, I mean, it's unbelievable that nobody, like, that nothings

happened, like, and so many horrible things that go on, and we're so, like, we're safe here, like we're not always scared that somebody is going to do something to us...

So, in the long run, do you think that being in this class will affect the way you live your life?

...I'll probably, just like, I'm just, like, more grateful of what I have. Knowing that, like, everywhere out there people are, like, suffering, like, way more than I am, like, I shouldn't complain about stupid things because, like, I have it, like, really good here. Like, I have food and education and water and stuff, so. I have the easy road – everyone else is, like, suffering. I'm just more grateful.

But we learn more about, like, third world countries and... that makes us see how good we got it here. Like, I've realized not to take everything for granted anymore. Like, going outside and it's nice out and I got shoes to wear and I got my summer clothes. I don't have to wear – like, I don't take that for granted anymore. (Corrine, 19)

I think we'll all be more, like, appreciative. Not like, "what I have right now," you know...

So, do you think the stuff from Global Ed has come into your head? Have you had that experience at all?

Yeah. You'll be thinking about stupid stuff and then you'll stop and think, like, why and I concerned about what time I'm going to be leaving or something like that.

Or like, your dinner's not good enough or something.

Yeah, I, somebody just doesn't have anything, and you're complaining about that. (Vera, 16; Shelley, 16; Sarah, 18; and Miranda, 18)

In this discussion, the students talk about feeling lucky, taking things for granted,

When I came in, I wasn't as focused on global issues. I was more focused on, you know, me and my life. Now my eyes have been opened and I'm more aware of, you know, I have these petty little problems, "Oh, I didn't get the biggest part in the school play." You know, okay, too bad. People in Kenya are starving... So, you know, it helps me because whenever I think of my problems, I, automatically my brain compares it to somewhere else in the world, you know, where it's a lot worse. So, it's, definitely my values have changed that way. (Kim, 15)

being "safe here," and feeling "more appreciative." Perhaps most striking is one student's response to the question of whether they think the class will affect them in the long run: "I'll probably, just like,

I'm...more grateful of what I have." Realizing she has the "easy road" is understood as meaning she should complain less, and is not taken as a call to other forms of action.

"We Bash the Hell Out of the Media"

An anti-media discourse is articulated strongly at all three schools, alongside both the discourses of "awareness" and "a way of thinking." The anti-media discourse seems to have two foci: Media tells us lies about ourselves, and lies about what's going on around the world. Lara, a student in the Kirkwood Montessori program, articulates both of these perspectives:

Does what is taught here ever conflict with what is taught by other sources, for example your parents, or community, or entertainment?
Well, always media (laughs). Uh, especially magazines. They're always lying... Media obviously, cause they're all, "oh, you have to be more prettier. You have to be thinner, you have to be this and that, and taller." It drives me insane. I can't even stand it, so, I don't really read magazines much, unless my friends have them and I'm bored and want to laugh and so, um. And also, I know that American media a lot is, you know, "invasions on Iraq are good! And hurrah, it's a war now!" and things like that. And I'm so against that. I'm just, something about it, it doesn't suit me right, things like that. So, at Montessori it's sort of the same, they're saying, "We don't want this - we want the world to live." (Lara, 14)

Lara states that the media conflicts with what is taught in the program because, unlike the "neutral" Montessori program, the media is "always lying." In line with the Montessori program which promotes a position of, "we don't want this," Lara suggests she avoids magazines and is against war propaganda.

Other students also talk about understanding media as something that can affect their personal lives and the choices they make, and suggest that that “cutting the cable” is a good thing:

My viewpoints of what's cool and what's not in grade school was directly from the media, I guess you could say. I think, *now*, I've just changed, I've realized what's cool and what's not. Montessori helped a lot. Like kind of learning about child labour and that kind of stuff, questioning the companies and that kind of thing. (Daniel, 16)

I think [the Montessori program tries] to get us not to plug into the world of technology. Advertisements and that sort of thing.

Do you talk about where you get your values from?

Oh yeah! Media! Media. Media. That is a big part of my life. (Alix, 15)

In this age we're bombarded by so much and it's really all over the place, so, uh, like my dad had the idea that you just cut the cable. And ever since, like, I've just had a big hole where I would have been watching TV and stuff. But, uh, I just can't sit down and watch commercials or TV or anything. I just find it really doesn't have as much of an influence. (George, 16)

The comments of these students describe feelings of being “bombarded” and fed viewpoints “directly from the media,” with the Montessori program and family working to help them not “plug in.”

An anti-media discourse is also taken up by students at Hillview and Lawson, often with a focus on the different perspectives offered by different media around war and other world issues. This focus is articulated as follows:

I mean the media, obviously, we bash the hell out of the media, or the heck out of the media, in terms of popular media. And of course there are things that are trivial, I mean if you're watching CNN, you're going to learn different than if you watch CBC. I mean obviously there's conflict there [with what's taught at the College], but nothing that's dramatic, or nothing you can't sort out yourself. (Heidi, 17)

We've learned that the news is kind of biased and whatever country you're watching in you're going to hear that government's side more than what's actually going on. And I think that's kind of neat, that we found that out because you watch the news here and we hear some parts of the war on Iraq, right?, from our news channels, and then you watch American news – it's totally different and I just notice that. Before I thought it was two different things that happened (laughs) and now it's like the same thing, they just flip it. (Corrine, 19)

Does what is taught here ever correspond or conflict with what is taught by other sources such as parents, guardians, community, media?

It can be. I mean, the media's obvious..., the war in Iraq as an example, of course the American media are biased towards the American government, and also the press releases from the Iraqi government which is outrageous, they say like, "Oh yeah, we control the war." The next day U.S. troops invade Baghdad downtown. So, my biology teacher, I think he has a really good opinion of this: This war, besides being a military war, is a war of propaganda, as was the Vietnam War. The tactic is, the tactic is, which side is the evil one. And if the Iraqis can show that the U.S. are bombing their population, and they're just massacring the population, or if the Iraqis can show that we killed 1000 U.S. soldiers. All they want is that public opinion is against the government. This is one of the main weapons, tools used in wars these days - propaganda is really important. And at the same time, the Americans want to show the Iraqis that they have a ruthless dictator and they're losing the war, and that that regime did not win. (David, 17)

The relationship between school discourse around media and the discourse these



Figure 27. Hallway Art at Kirkwood

students have taken up

around media is

apparent in these

comments. Both Lawson

students suggest that media conflicts with what is taught at the school, and all

take up an understanding of media as biased, and as affecting perceptions of

world issues.

“That Spiral of Despair”

The final discourse of “knowing” that I want to focus on is that of “despair as inevitable.” This discourse is an articulation of a potential sense of being overwhelmed that can accompany “ways of thinking” that focus on socio-ecological concerns. Jenny, a student in the Kirkwood Montessori program, suggests the despondency and hopelessness that are the focus of this discourse:

I want to be in an age where we see some sort of environmental revolution, because it's really pathetic now. Really, really pathetic. You know, we should not even have come to a place where we need Kyoto. You know, we shouldn't be storing other people's garbage in our country because garbage is not sustainable. We should never have dreamt up garbage to begin with, right? We should live in a perfectly sustainable system. It's feasible, it's called nature, right? So, help that. But I really don't see how people can expect, you know, if people can't even, you know, I can walk around preaching, like, animal equality all I like, but if people can't even learn to accept people for their differences, how are they ever going to learn to live with the environment sustainably and live outside of themselves, right? We're not even accepting people yet, we're still fighting wars to feed people. That's just, yeah. Yeah, it's frustrating. I think we're going to be the death of ourselves for sure.

Do you find it overwhelming at times?

Yeah! (laughs). It's so hard, because people will walk into a store and, you know, grab whatever, who cares how much packaging it has, it doesn't matter. “Oh, you eat organic? Why? That's expense. Ha, ha, you're a hippy!” The fact that we have these negative connotations that go toward environmentalists and, you know, feminists and stuff, that's kind of gross. (Jenny, 16)

Articulated here is a sense of frustration and hopelessness – of how “really, really pathetic” the state of the world is, how frustrating people's inability to “live outside of themselves” is, and how overwhelming it is for people to have “negative connotations” of those trying to live with socio-ecological concerns in mind.

Heidi, a student at Lawson College, explicitly discusses the role these sorts of feelings can play as she takes up a discourse of despair as an inevitable part of socio-ecological “knowing:”

Can you describe any times in your life when you suddenly looked at the world differently?

An epiphany!

Yeah, an epiphany.

Um, I can, I went through a phase of, sort of, what's the point. Like, if you fix something here, there's just, you know if you make this community better, and you know more prosperous and working, is it just natural forces that somewhere else, like, there's been, you know free trade has just wiped them out, or whatever, or their coffee plantation, I don't know, whatever, has gone badly. Is it just always a balancing thing? And I think that came out of watching the movie Gandhi. And by watching that he worked so hard for something, but when he died, the partition of India and Pakistan and the violence that happened there. And so I'm doing my EE [extended essay] on that, that kind of area. So I think that I was sort of one day where I was like, “Oh. Maybe what I'm doing and what I'm trying to do, just really doesn't do anything at all, and it's just meant to be that way.” And I went home after, you know, for Christmas, and my best friend sorted me out and said, “Well, you can take that point of view and not do anything, but I think you believe in humanity, and so you're going to do something about it.” And I was like, “Yeah, you're right.” And so those are probably the two, major moments, when I went downhill and then went back up to where I was before.

Is that something that's talked about here at the College? ...

It's not talked about, um, but I think it's something that, like for me personally, I think it's something, I think it's really important that you do that spiral of despair and then bounce out of it, because then you know for yourself why you're doing that. And if you see someone else do it, you're like, you know what took you out of it, and that's just an experience like any other, that makes you that much stronger. And you can take a stance on something and have a real, concrete, fundamental reason for it. That's great, and so much more justified, and then you can explain yourself, and motivate yourself with that, as opposed to, “Well, I read a book,” or “A teacher once told me.” (Heidi, 17)

Suggested in Heidi's talk is a belief that a “spiral of despair” is something she is likely to see others go through, and is something she is now better prepared to deal with having been through the experience herself. Through the process of going “downhill” and then back up again, Heidi also indicates that she became

more able to “take a stance on something and have a real, concrete, fundamental reason for it.” According to Heidi’s discourse, “bouncing out of” despair can be a source of strength and motivation for those concerned with socio-ecological issues.

A teacher in the Kirkwood Montessori program also takes up a related discourse:

[There was] something you said earlier about your own struggle with not wanting to give them so much information that they become hopeless. Have you had that happen with some students?

Um, I’ve gotten the sense that, you know, that they’re almost like dogs with their tails between their legs, that, there’s so much crap and there’s so much, you know, because they feel responsible and they want to act responsibly, but there’s so much to do and there’s so many choices and decisions for them to make. “And gee, I just want to be a kid.” They’re kids. So they kind of have to balance that with themselves, like, what can they do, what can’t they do, what do they enjoy, what could they change a bit, without feeling downtrodden over it. (Kirkwood teacher)

As with Heidi, despair is understood here as an inevitable part of socio-ecological education which affects students’ “ways of thinking.” However, rather than

So, with your interest in environmental issues, are you hopeful about that, or overwhelmed?

I want to help - and I have done some stuff. I haven’t overdone myself. I don’t feel overwhelmed actually. I mean, there is a lot of stuff, but I can’t do everything. There’s other things I want to do. (Beth, 16)

suggesting that this process of despair can be a source of strength, this teacher indicates that a “balance” must be sought, with students coming to terms

with “what can they do, what can’t they do, what do they enjoy, what could they change a bit” so that they can avoid “feeling downtrodden.” The distinction

between these two versions of a discourse of “despair as inevitable” is intriguing and one that may well tie into how students in the Kirkwood and Lawson programs seems to take up different dominant discourses of activism.

Activism

Suggested in the talk of the students and teachers at the three schools are a variety of discourses of activism. These discourses are closely connected to, and perhaps inseparable from, the discourses of knowing described above. I will first outline a discourse of ulterior motives, before focusing on the key discourses of (not) changing the world through caring, little things, and influence.

“Ulterior Motives”

Students and teachers at Kirkwood and Lawson suggest that some students undertake activist work for personal reasons that have little to do with socio-ecological issues. This discourse of ulterior motives is taken up in talking about both those who use activism as a means to enhance their marketability in university or job searches, as well as those who are seeking popularity or influence.

Kim, from the Kirkwood Montessori program, is one of the students that articulate this discourse of ulterior motives, suggesting that her desire to be accepted at a particular College has led her “to do lots of volunteering:”

Specific goals would be to, yeah, again, live an environmentally and socially aware life. Um, but to go to the, uh, College of the Atlantic, I believe it is, in Wales, would be a big one, that’s really, I want to go there so badly (laughs). Um, so, everything right now is totally focused towards Wales, “Okay, what do they want to see on my resume, or whatever, my record.” Just my, you know, so kind of, trying to get the best grades and trying to do lots of volunteering, cause I know they look at that (laughs). Everything’s adding up to Wales right now. (Kim, 15)

Although iterating a wish to “live an environmentally and socially aware life,” Kim centres on her goal of getting into the College of the Atlantic. “Everything right now is totally focused towards Wales,” which means “trying to do lots of volunteering, cause I know they look at that.” Kim’s laugh following this statement suggests that she experiences a sense of discomfort or irony in making this admission, but then she continues on with

Community service is a little bit of a, not a double edged sword, but there’s an awareness among youth that community service is important in terms of getting employment, getting recognition for scholarships and awards, so it’s not a real altruistic reason why they go into community service. Um, you know, that I’m sure is really individual.
(Kirkwood teacher)

“everything’s adding up to Wales right now.” The discourse of ulterior motives that Kim takes up suggests that although to some extent her motives for volunteering may be questionable, they are a necessary part of the discourse of individual achievement which seems to strongly influence her.

This discourse of ulterior motives is also articulated and challenged in a discussion between two Montessori program graduates:

Steve: Yeah, for me it's less issues and going into that issue. It's finding my strengths and going into that strength. But then, I remember, I keep it in my head to use that strength to benefit - For Evergreen, really, I could care less. We did a replanting of native plant species at Trout Lake.

Daniel: Well, it's not like you're spending a lot of time, so you don't have to worry about it.

Steve: Yeah, that issue, the issue of bringing greenery into urbanized areas, it's making my community look nicer, but, (laughs). But the fact was that, I could give the presentation to the parents, I could give it them, so that's why I did it.

Daniel: So, basically it's all about you.

Steve: No but, that's really important. But then you get to know how you can contribute large scale when those opportunities get handed to you. (Steve, 16; Daniel, 16)

In this dialogue, Steve indicates that for him socio-ecological action is less about issues and more about "finding my strengths and going into that strength." In

I think a lot of people, they just don't, I mean, "What's protesting going to do? Who's going to see me." And they want to be either in the spotlight, or not at all. So either I'm leading the show, or I'm not part of it. Which is a bit of a problem around here, there aren't enough followers. (Heidi, 17)

discussing work he did with other Montessori students on greening urban spaces, Steve suggests that he "could care less" about this issue,

and got involved because he "could give the presentation to the parents." Steve mentions that he "tries to keep it in his head" to use his strengths to benefit things outside himself, and suggests he is at least developing his skills so that he

can one day “contribute large scale,” but does not seem to strongly disagree when Daniel proposes that “basically, it’s all about you.” In this discussion it is Daniel who most explicitly takes up a discourse of ulterior motives, suggesting that Steve’s intentions are questionable; while Steve half heartedly contests the way he is positioned as selfish by this discourse.

A number of students at Kirkwood and Lawson talk of students engaging in activism to be “different,” “trendy,” or “in the spotlight.” David, a student at Lawson College, suggests a distinction between those who “are really, really into it” and those who are “just showing off:”

Like, I go to other schools and I find, it's not so much at our school... where it's cool to, like, dress weird, it's cool to die your hair and have piercings and be like, the different people. And, like, in that way issues become a trend. And I know at the Red Cross, even, like, workshops that that we do, the people that are now all of a sudden interested have, maybe, ulterior motives sometimes. (Lena, 17)

I was a bit disappointed in the first month or so, and I thought that many people here were just preaching the values of the school just to show off. But with time, after seven months of being here, you can see, like, the dust has settled, and you can see that some people actually believe in what they're talking about and they're real leaders and they're real icons in the community, and other people are just showing off. We have now a huge issue with sustainability, and lots of students are making proposals for next year, and I think that, although some of them are from the bottom of their heart and they actually mean what they're saying, others have just, wanted to show off. I think there's a competition between those students, to see which one has the most outrageous proposal, which one is, "Yeah, look at me, I'm going to be the leader. Let's sleep in the forest, let's demolish our houses, cause we don't need houses." So lots of things like that. So, I think that some people are showing off, but other people are really, really into it, there's no doubt. (David, 17)

Taking up a discourse of ulterior motives, David suggests that some people are “just preaching the values of the school to show off.” Unlike those who “are

from the bottom of their heart,” others participate in socio-ecological initiatives to compete to see which one is “going to

Campaigning skills. It's kind of a weird activity... it is almost campaigns for campaigns sake which I really despise. What are we going to get upset about now (laughs)? ... but luckily we've had the war to keep us busy this year. Luckily (laughs). I'm not really attracted to the personalities who want a lot of attention - who want to be out front there standing there. And they all fight with each other when you put them together. "No, let's do it my way!" "No, my way!" "No, my way!!" (Lawson teacher)

be the leader.” The prevalence of this discourse at Lawson suggests ways that the discourse of individual achievement plays out in the dynamics of the school, with students being more or less committed to social transformation.

“Obviously You Can’t Change the World, but You Can Help It”

Connected to the discourse of awareness so dominantly expressed by the students in the Hillview Global Education class, is a discourse of inactive caring. Many Hillview students indicate that they have “grown to care” for others “less fortunate,” and some talk of wanting to find careers that enable them to help, but this caring does not seem to carry with it a sense of being able to make any substantial change. This intriguing discourse of inactive caring is suggested in the following discussion with Doug, a Hillview student:

What kind of values do you think are taught in the Global Ed class, both consciously and unconsciously?

Uh, good things about the world and things that are going on globally, right. That, that's a good thing, like we're not just centring, on like what's around here, so it's all about global things that going wrong and what can we do to help things that are going wrong in certain areas of the world, and not just worrying about Canada's problems here. We're actually caring about other people that are having the same problems as us, if not a lot worse...

What do you think [Ms. Scott is] wanting to teach you in the Global Ed class, particularly around social issues or environmental issues?

Uh, how the world is and how it runs and problems around the world and things you can do, that you can do personally, obviously you can't change it, but to help it. Things like that.

So, how does she teach you those things?

Projects and stuff like that, making us search up, like, what's wrong with things in certain areas and, like, I don't know, what's that eating thing that, with that food, aw - I forget what it is though, but that sort of thing, [GMOs?]. Yeah, like going into that and not eating as much genetically modified food or whatever...

So, do you think the class has affected the types of activities that you're involved in, or things that you do outside the class at all?

Um, yeah, I mean like, the recycling, stuff like that. I always did recycle in the first place, but now that she, she's always told us to make sure when we see people throwing cans in the garbage, to ask them to go throw them in recycling, or something like that. I, I, I'd do something like that. So, that's one thing.

Any other examples?

Um, not really. That, that's probably the main one I can think of. (Doug, 17)

Indicated in Doug's talk is a sense of "caring is good," as he suggests that through the class, "we're actually caring about other people." Doug suggests

that he has learned "things you can do, that you can do personally" to help the world, however emphasizing that "obviously you can't change it."

When asked if the class has affected his actions, Doug can only think of

I believe that, like, we learn how to care about other people other than, like, locally. Like, everyone cares when you drive down the lower eastside, you care about what happens there - like, that's bad. Like, that's right in your backyard. But we learn more about, like, third world countries and ...we grow we care about all the people there and how much they're going through. (Corrine, 19)

recycling as an example of how he may be enacting his learning about caring.

This discussion evokes a feeling that while Doug has learned that it is “important to help,” and possibly cares about world issues more, he has not felt empowered to act. His comment that “obviously you can’t change [the world]” is particularly



Figure 28. Hillview Student Making Jello at the Soup Kitchen

telling, suggesting a powerful sense of lack of agency.

Whether this stance of “you can’t change the world” is

something Doug has learned through a lifetime of

experience, or whether it is something that has been

received from the Global Education class is unclear,

but in either case it is an integral part of the discourse

of inactive caring that is so prevalent in the talk of Hillview students.

Another Hillview student, Kelsey, articulates a similar understanding of caring

that is restricted in its ability to affect major change:

[Ms. Scott] tells us...how if people don't take action and people don't do, um, certain things and we don't have these people in the world that care about these things then it's just going to go downhill and, and um, she makes us think a lot about our future and just taking action is the big, the biggest thing... I enjoy learning about other people and how we can help other people. That's what interests me. And the whole Nepal thing. You know, it interests me to see how we help them exactly because the shelter in Nepal is so far away it seems like it would be difficult to help them, but actually it's not.... Some students, or other students, don't really seem to care...for me myself, it's just that I know that I've done like my best to help, or to do what I can, not to make the world a better place, but just to make individuals feel like they're, um, that they mean more and that they actually matter and knowing that I've help and at least made a little bit of difference or at least put, like, a smile on someone's face that wasn't smiling beforehand...

You've kind of already answered my last one a little bit, but do you have any specific dreams for the future?

That's pretty much it. Just doing, whatever it is, I just want to - it's helping out people that are less fortunate than I have, you know, than myself growing up. To at least make other people happy and just look at their life positively - because I know I'm not going to be able to help them dramatically, and make them rich when they're not and, but just, I don't know exactly where I want to go with it, but I do know I want to do something along that line. (Kelsey, 16)

Kelsey also takes of how the Global Education class "makes us think a lot about our future and just taking action." She indicates the experience of raising money for an orphanage in Nepal interested her in that "it seems like it would be difficult to help them, but actually it's not." Despite this learning, Kelsey seems to retreat to a position where she wants "not to make the world a better place," but just make "a little bit of a difference or at least put, like, a smile on someone's face that wasn't smiling beforehand." This modest understanding of her potential affect on the world is again reiterated with "I know I'm not going to be able to help [less fortunate people] dramatically."

A discourse of inactive caring is also suggested in the discussion of a number of other Hillview students, with the locus of potential change situated as residing somewhere other than within them:

What do you think we can do as a world population to get things more on track? I think that, like, a big thing, I think something really needs to be done to stop, like, using up, like, cutting down forests and stuff, 'cause it's affecting, like, it's affecting more than just the earth, it's affecting people too. I think that we need to think of better ways to do things instead of, like better cars to drive and stuff, instead of just, driving our cars around and like burning up the ozone layer and stuff. I think that that, like, we need to help the environment to help people too.

Do you think international development is a way to go? Is that a good thing or a bad thing? So, in countries where there is more poverty and struggling, what's the solution to those problems – is it to make those countries more like Canada in terms of industrialization - ?

I guess in a way. I think to help 'em, we need to stop exploiting them, like, there needs to be, somebody needs to set up the rules that benefits both sides. Like, both developing and developed countries, so that, like, there can't be any more sweat shops and stuff 'cause I think that before, like, developed countries started going into those places, a lot of them were running okay and then we started exploiting them and stuff and now everybody is so poor there....

Is consumerism something you talked about in class?

Yeah, a little bit, like when we had that, what's that group, "Check Your Head." They came in and they were talking about, um, like, sweatshops and stuff. But, I don't know, it's kind of hard for me to know, like, what else to do. Like, I know, like, most of the clothes I'm wearing have been made in sweatshops, but I really don't know where else to buy them from.

We tried to look up on the internet a place where they sold clothes that weren't made by sweatshops and we couldn't find any, like, they said that there were some, that were made, like, not by sweatshops, but you had to buy them on the internet and they didn't say where. They said they were out there somewhere.

That makes you feel kinda like there's nothing you can do, like, even when you feel bad about, it's just like, well, I got to get clothes from somewhere (laughs). (Shelley, 16; Vera, 16; Miranda, 18; Sarah, 18)

Phrases such as "something really needs to be done," "we need to think of better ways to do things," and "somebody needs to set up the rules that benefit both sides," suggest an understanding of the potential for action as located beyond themselves as students in a Global Education class. In discussing a local community group that came in and talked about sweatshop labour, the students again express feelings of a lack of agency, saying, "I know...most of the clothes I'm wearing have been made in sweatshops, but I really don't know where else to buy them from." After an unsuccessful look around "out there" on the internet for places that sold non-sweatshop clothes, they seem to have given up and feel "kinda like there's nothing you can do...I got to get clothes from somewhere."

My parents never really talked about global issues. Now they do, 'cause like I come home and I'm like, "oh my god, guess what happened," or "this is what I learned today" and now my parents are realizing more... My dad's kinda closed minded. He's like, whatever, right? But now I've got my dad to realize, like, not whatever, this is what's going in this country and it's not a good thing and usually he'd be like, "I don't have to worry about what's going on here," and now he's more like, he'll listen. (Corrine, 19)

The discourse of inactive caring taken up by the students in the Hillview Global Education class seems closely related to the discourse of awareness discussed earlier. The "awareness" of global

issues that students take on as part of their involvement in the class seems to include the perspective that caring and action are important. And although students express being moved to care through having their "eyes opened," they do not seem to feel empowered to act, whether because of outside circumstances (including the discourses of their home and community), the limitations imposed by the short time span of the class, and/or limited perspectives on action that they receive through the class.

"Every Little Thing Counts"

I saw this kid wearing Nike and I said, "Do you know they use sweatshop labour," and he said, "Yeah." So then I asked him, "I'm just wondering why you wear it." (Tess, 16)

Unlike at Hillview, students in the other two programs articulate much more active expressions of socio-ecological caring. For students in the Kirkwood Montessori program, the dominant discourse seems to be one of "lifestyle activism," in which "every little thing counts." This approach to "making a

difference" is integral to the "way of thinking" that is articulated as being taken up by these students.

The following discussion with three Montessori students indicates the enthusiasm with which they seem to take up a discourse of lifestyle activism:

What do you think the teachers involved in the Montessori program are wanting to teach you during your time here, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues?
You can make a difference!

Yeah (laughs). That is the number one lesson they say - like, every little thing counts.

Be informed. To know what's going on.

And, and, involve others. Outreach. To your friends, kids. Anything to get out there and get stuff spread, kind of thing...

So, do you believe your experience in the Montessori program will affect your life in the long term?
Totally. Yep.

Why?
Take shorter showers. The way you eat... Recycling. Just little things. Little things you do that affect the global environment.

And getting involved. Just, like, even when I'm in grade eleven, and out of the Montessori program, I still want to get involved in workshops and things like that. (Alix, 15; Camille, 16; Tess, 15)

So what do you think the teachers in the Montessori program are wanting to teach you?

Definitely to be aware, and to be considerate, and to make smart choices. Like, you know, don't buy Nike because they're using child labor or whatever. Just be aware of better alternatives, like fair trade coffee and organics and different, you know. Yeah, you know, there's just so many clubs started out of Montessori things, like, you know, they made connections with the Red Cross and then Max went to the Red Cross thing and now he's started a global issues club and, it's, a lot of stuff. So definitely to be aware, and to take initiative... I walk around (laughs), I'm such as, I'm such like a, what do you call them, such a dumpster digger; I walk around the school and I'll grab the pop cans in the garbage, put them in the recycling that's like two centimeters away. (Jenny, 16)

As these students explain, the dominant discourse of activism in the Montessori program seems to be one of valuing the many “little things” that can be done to

It is really easy just to say, “okay, this is only one can and it’s not going to make a difference.” But if everyone in Vancouver or in East Van said, “it’s only one can,” then there would be millions of cans, right? So... everyone can make a difference. (Mia, 16)

“affect the global environment,” including staying informed, making conscious lifestyle choices, and spreading the word to those around you.

For a number of the Montessori students who articulate this discourse of lifestyle activism, it seems to be taken up alongside the discourse of individual achievement discussed in the last chapter. As Kate suggests in her talk, this can mean lifestyle activism on the fringes of an otherwise “normal” life:

Do you believe your time in this Montessori program will affect the way you live your life in the long run?

I think it will. Because, I think it, if I hadn’t been in this Montessori program, I, I wouldn’t have known a lot of the things, so, you know, when I go out to buy my house now I’ll probably buy with a low flow toilet and, um, and it’s more important that I have a shower rather than a bath because baths use much more water than a shower, a 20 minute shower. Um, just, you know, I’m environmentally aware of the energy that’s being used, um. My aunt and uncle are currently building a cabin and they were asking me, they know I go to Montessori, and they know, “Okay, so what’s the most energy efficient way to heat and light our home?” So, you know, I could give them a little bit of advice on that, and just, I’m more aware of what kind of house I’m goin’ to buy. When I have money to make the decisions on my eating habits, I can do that. I can buy organic and shade grown and that kind of thing. So, you know, I’ll make those decisions to, um, eat to save the planet. (Kim, 15)

In contrast, Mia takes up the discourse of lifestyle activism in a more pervasive way, describing how she envisions a sustainable lifestyle for herself:

What is the program trying to teach students in relation to social and ecological issues?

Hm. Well, definitely awareness and ultimately, that that awareness will affect how they live their life, will affect the decisions they make in terms of what food they choose to eat, how they take care of their body, how they treat other people, um, what community involvement they get to be a part of. (Kirkwood teacher)

I'd like to completely build my own house... corn husk houses are really economical and keeps the heat in, and keeps the cold in too, like in the summer; so you don't have to spend a lot of money on electricity and waste it and stuff. And also just how you can conserve water and things like that, cause I want to have a nice farm right? I don't want to have, to cut down all these trees and plough up the ground to put in my own waterline, that's stupid. And composting and things like that. So really I just want to be a farmer, that's pretty much it. And not for like a mass farm, like when I said a farmer, I don't mean a thousand acres, and I want to have only wheat, and I want to make it for export to the United States for lots of money. No, I just want to farm for myself and maybe I'll sell a little bit of it. Have a small inn where people can come in, eat good food and be relaxed. (Mia, 16)

The dominance of lifestyle activism discourse at Kirkwood may connect back to the discourse of despair articulated by the Montessori teacher, in which she

I'm also trying to teach, to help students learn about stuff that they can use, like, so that when they go somewhere they'll feel comfortable starting a garden, or they realize that you can build a house out of natural, local materials. And also to try to really be as strongly principled as possible, so that you don't just accept that paper is being photocopied on one side, and that small things are important too. (Lawson teacher)

indicated the importance of students'

balancing their own needs with their

commitments to making a difference

in order to avoid feeling

"downtrodden." It seems possible

that a lifestyle activism is promoted by

the Montessori program as a more manageable discourse of activism than something that involves taking on a greater sense of “responsibility” for changing the world.

4.38 Billion	638L	128L	36L	12.5L	10.5L	2L
People	British	Germany	Kenya Per	Toilet Flush without Water Saving	Toilet Flush with Water Saving Device	Water required to sustain human life for one day
Suffering Serious	Columbia Per Capita Consumption	Per Capita Consumption	Capita Consumption			

This toilet has been equipped with a 2L water saving device.

Figure 29. Sign Posted on Toilet at Lawson College

This discourse of lifestyle activism that is so prevalent in the talk of the students in the Kirkwood Montessori program, is much less commonly articulated at Lawson College. This suggests it is not as pervasive a discourse at this school,

Maybe because at home you have organic food, and you have natural buildings, and you have, lots of green space, and you don't value them, as important as they are. And coming here, I saw Canada as a country that's trying to... get back to the organic farms, and building cob houses, and that kind of encourages me, to think more about what I do at home, and what does my country do about environment, and if we are really taking care of it. I, I believe that as soon as I get home I'll do a compost and (laughs), I'll start changing my living habits in easy ways, but that I'm sure that will help the environment, because now I'm concerned about it. At home I would be, maybe, but here I am really concerned about it. (Emilia, 17)

perhaps resulting from less emphasis on the importance of balance, and/or a greater focus on “international understanding” than on more specific ecological and global issues which are perhaps better suited to bite size forms of activism. Also coming into play is the dominance of a different discourse - that of activism as influence.

“You Have to Climb the Ladder of Power to Impact the World”

Evident in the talk of many students at Kirkwood and Lawson is the notion that social transformation can best be achieved from positions of power. This discourse is closely linked with that of individual achievement discussed in the last chapter – where students view themselves as being able to “do anything” and to turn that power towards visions of social change. Students who take up this discourse talk about it as a manifestation of their “way of thinking,” and most often as something they have learned through their time at school. Although there are indications that activism as influence is viewed as incompatible with a comprehensive lifestyle activism, a number of students appear to take up both discourses.



Figure 30. Peace Pole Garden Created by Montessori Students at Kirkwood

The following discussion between graduates of the Kirkwood Montessori program fleshes out the discourse of activism as influence, suggesting the ways in which these students take up or resist this discourse as they struggle to identify what it might mean for their lives:

So, where do you think you are now after being in the Program versus if you'd been in mainstream for grades 8, 9, and 10?

Lena: Well, I think it's just, the Program makes you aware about it and then you take the initiative...it's not like they give you everything.

Steve: George and I are in Evergreen and we're doing the tree planting and I'm doing some volunteering with the Student Council. Cause that's all we can do right now. But I'm seriously considering joining CIDA after high school. But I'm going to go to university first.

Daniel: What's CIDA?

Steve: Canadian International Development Agency - they help other people. You know! They give presentations to us every year man. That guy came in.

Daniel: Oh, the guy! Oh yeah, I remember the guy.

Lena: But foreign aid, and the way they use it, is kind of questionable.

Steve: Oh yeah, I know completely what you're saying. But, they are the ones with the money, so - They are given money by the government, so may as well join them and change it, then try another program.

Lena: Yeah, no you're right.

Steve: Yeah well, Red Cross is awesome, but CIDA has money.

Lena: Yeah, well, go where the money is. Well, because maybe you get to be a part of where and how they get to spend it.

That kind of ties into my last question, which is, do you have any specific dreams or goals for the future?

Lena: For me I guess international relations is the closest thing I can see right now to the way that one person could actually make a really big difference in the world, like I think if you want one person to make, like, a drastic change in the world, it's almost easier to go through it evil than good. You know what I mean?

Daniel: Like, Saddam Hussein?

Lena: But, it's so much easier to just play up the other part, but um, I guess this is the only way I could see of actually making a big difference. But it's okay, to make little differences too.

So how are you wanting to make a difference?

Lena: In the future? Well, I always joke about world, like -

Steve: Dictatorship (laughs).

Lena: Dictatorship, yeah (laugh). Under good rule I think it could work. But um, I don't think I want to do politics. Honestly, I don't know. That's what I haven't got figured out. I know what I care about. I don't know how I'm going to do stuff about it.

Any one else have any dreams - at this point in your life, anything that you think, "yeah, I really want to do that," or something you want to keep in mind?

Steve: ...I want to influence, people. Maybe as a kindergarten teacher, or a prime minister - I want to influence. That's all I have to say really.

Daniel: Teaching - I want to do that too. Just like [past Montessori teacher] has inspired me and Mr. Karim and Ms. Pryde.

George: Yeah.

Lena: That's so cool. Thinking of the stuff that's breeding in the room and there's only, like, four people, five people.

Steve: Ms. Pryde - she's influencing people.

Cam: I think influencing and inspiring people is definitely something that is important to me, but I don't think I'd go into a career over it. Um, outside that, I don't know. I mean, I've got ideas of what I want to do, like, career-wise.

Lena: What do you mean?

Cam: What am I going to do? Uh, well, considering I know more than anyone else in the school, except for [a teacher] about computers, maybe something related to that. Maybe something related to English because I really like that too. Maybe a combination of the two.

Lena: Wow.

Cam: But, yeah. Nothing too admirable.

In this discussion, Lena, Steve, George, Cam, and Daniel talk about what they want to do with their lives and how it relates to their participation in the

Montessori program. No doubt influenced by my questions and the responses of the others, these students indicate that they “want influence.” Cam indicates that he is interested in a career in computers, “nothing too admirable” he says, and thus suggests a resistance to taking up a discourse of activism as influence. The other students, however, take up this discourse quite passionately, deciding that it is better to “go where the money is...because maybe you get to be a part of where and how they get to spend it.” This path is seen as laudable as it enables the exertion of influence in directing an organization otherwise seen as questionable, towards desirable activist ends. International relations, teaching, and politics are also proposed as possibilities for “actually making a big difference,” with Lena expressing confusion about the best way to go about affecting change. The students express excitement as they uncover “the stuff that’s breeding in the room,” and the important ways in which they see themselves as influenced by the Montessori program.

Students that want to take on leadership, when they actually experience it and how very difficult it is to motivate other people, um, they can become quite discouraged and they can become quite negative to people that don't feel their way, you know. And frustrated. And so, we talk about, “Well, you know, you can change the way you live your life, but it's very difficult to change how other people live their life, okay.” We can only provide the information. We can only create an educated group of people so that they know of the choice they're making. Because, you know, some of the teens that get really zealous and really passionate about what they believe in will become quite irate and short and frustrated with other people that won't support them. So that's a growth experience as well, is just learning what leadership is and what group motivation is. (Kirkwood teacher)

Many of the students at Lawson also articulated a discourse of activism as influence. According to

Overall, yeah I think, [I want] to be a good person, to have influence on other people, but maybe that's wrong, you know, like trying to convince everyone, I don't know. (Jenny, 16)

David, a student from Portugal, the College is too focused on "small change" and developing "community leaders;" which "will never produce a big impact on the world:"

As for myself, I had quite a sceptical approach to the values of this College. I thought, of course I want peace in the world, but I also have to have in mind the kind of people that are in power in the world and we have to perceive their mentality, and we have to know, we have to understand that things are not going to be our way. Even if I'm a local community leader, things in the world are not going to be my way. You have to, to, to climb the ladder of power in order to make some big decisions that will impact, that will have a big impact on the world. And that was one of the things that I questioned this place is that I wonder the impact that our small change might have in the world, I wonder that if we all, if the objective of this program is to create leaders to local communities so that the total will make a relevant change, I thought if it wouldn't be better to use another, a different approach, which is to educate everyone in a broader and more international way, and to make people aware of who's in power, and how the system works, and risk having only two or three leaders per Lawson generation, but leaders that will make a change, rather than having 200 local community leaders which will never produce a big impact on the world. So that's how I approach this place. But I think they're really, the intention is really good, but I, I, sometimes I see some problems with the technicalities. (David, 17)

David recommends a "broader and more international" way of educating which would better enable students to "climb the ladder of power in order to make some big decisions that will... have a big impact on the world." When asked about his goals for the future, David responded:

I want to study biotechnology and, I'm hoping that, it's a recently new field of study, and I'm hoping that keeping always ethical parameters and carrying out our research ethically, I'm hoping we can achieve some great good that can help humanity. But also we have to be aware that technology might play a really big role in social evolution. I think that some of the social evolutions that have

happened are in part due to technology, and globalization would never be possible without certain technologies. So that's why I also want to study epistemology and philosophy, so that I can have a greater awareness, I can know a bit better what it is to act ethically and to weigh the consequences of our actions. And like I said, I hope that some day I can do some good for the world, for the whole planet.
(David, 17)

Clearly taking up a discourse of activism as influence, David expresses his commitment to achieving “some great good.”

Many other Lawson students talk of teaching, starting schools in their

home countries, or working in international development, as ways that they imagine bringing about socio-ecological change. A Lawson teacher alludes to the prevalence of the discourse of activism as influence at the College, suggesting that despite other discourses that may also be at play, most students want to “contribute” in order to “improve the world in some way:”

***Do you ever have any dreams or goals for the future?**
Yeah well, I don't know. I, I really want to study economics. So I believe that once I study this I can do many, many different things and I really would like to, to work in the United Nations or some just international organizations so that I can go an visit different cultures or different countries or at least try to help people in a certain way and with economics I think that that's the best way. (Violeta, 17)*

I think most of the students definitely want to improve the world in some way. I think a lot of them are motivated by different things. There's definitely some students who are motivated by the desire to have attention and stuff like that. And then there are some that are definitely motivated by God, which for some is a really strong force. And then there are definitely a group of students who are just here to move on, to get their degree somewhere else. But I think even those students see this as a process and then they're going to try and do something after they finish, try and contribute. Like I think everyone wants to contribute.
(Lawson teacher)

These comments suggest how other discourses of ulterior motives, religion, or individual achievement may influence one's positioning within a discourse of change as best achieved through positions of power.

I just have one more question - do you have specific dreams or goals for the future?

I thought I did, when I first came here, in terms of wanting to be head of Oxfam or something like that, but, and then as I've come here I've been like, I've kind of, I'm between the lines of just taking care of myself and my immediate area, like you know, having a nice farm and an orphanage of some sort, like very small. I'm torn between that and running Nike so that I can make it so there aren't sweatshops. You know, it's kind of one extreme or the other - how do help the most? And is helping the most important, or do you want quality, quantity, ahhhhhh!! All that kind of stuff, so I'm torn between that. That will just sort of, time will tell. (Heidi, 17)

This chapter has explored a variety of discourses around “knowing” and “activism” that are expressed by students and teachers at the three schools. I have suggested that these discourses overlap and/or conflict with the discourses of neutrality, critique, achievement, diversity, and consistency discussed in the last chapter in many subtle and not so subtle ways. The next chapter will focus on how students at the three schools understand themselves as (not) exerting agency over the taking up of these various discourses in “who they are” and how they “act.”

Chapter Five: Discourses of Subjectivity

Okay, what I was saying was that when you are born you start receiving and perceiving certain feelings and emotions and that, the first, I think the first, even when you are in the body, you start, kind of, having a concert between your mum and you and that, that concert makes you what you are at the beginning. And you start growing and you start going to kindergarten, or even if you have brothers or sisters you start playing with them and watching TV and having certain relations with the media and with your surroundings, and, and that influences a lot on what you are, what you believe, what you think about life. And then you start going to school and then you start growing, and growing, and then you're a teenager and you start doing your own choices, you start, uh, having different influences - the media, you change your friends and you change the way you behave and the way you wear, and be around things that may influence on you. And then when you are away from home, then you are you and the world, and you kind of, kind of, make your own decisions, and then you are a human being on the world, you are you, and the culture, and the language, and all the values and all the emotions that you have received from your parents - then you start reflecting them on what you are and the way you behave. (Beatriz, 17)

In this eloquent perspective of human subjectivity, a Lawson College student from Bolivia touches on a number of discourses that will be explored in this chapter. Beatriz suggests that once you are born you “start receiving and perceiving certain feelings and emotions” from influences such as family, media, and your surroundings – implying a discourse of socio-cultural constitution. Various influences also come into play in adolescence, Beatriz indicates, as the media, different friends, or other factors affect “what you are, what you believe.” Here the “you” is clearly perceived as more autonomous, perhaps struggling to

maintain its authenticity in the face of competing and conflicting influences – suggesting a discourse of authenticity. At the same time, you have begun to make “your own choices,” and to “kind of, make your own decisions” – signifying a discourse of agency. Beatriz seems to wrap all three together in her final statement of, “then you are a human being on the world, you are you, and the culture, and the language, and all the values and all the emotions that you have received... then you start reflecting them on what you are and the way you behave.”

It is particularly difficult to separate out these three areas of discourse – constitution, authenticity, and agency - because they are so often woven together in the talk of students and teachers at the three schools. However, in this chapter I focus on each in turn, drawing attention to different aspects of students’ understandings of themselves and their potential for action.

Constitution

Without exception, students at the three schools talk about themselves as having been influenced by various factors such as family, friends, and culture. In this section I will explore this discourse of socio-cultural constitution, as well as a

related discourse which suggests that some students view these different influences as causing them to experience “multiple selves.”

“Even the Little Butterfly Flapping its Wings Could Influence Me”

Students at the three schools take up a discourse of socio-cultural constitution in talking about how they have been influenced by various people and experiences over the course of their lives. The talk of Kim, a student from the Kirkwood Montessori program, exemplifies this discourse, as she comments on the ways in which she understands herself as having been constituted:

What kind of things do you think have affected who you are today?

Probably the people I've met, is the biggest one. Um, it's, there's so many different people... just all the different opinions that I've heard, you just learn so much being with these people. Um, some of the other grade 9's I've been with since elementary school and I just know all of them so well. And they all have such different values and opinions. It's just, it, it's affected me. All the teachers I've had, affected me in, in how I turned out I guess.

What about your family?

Um, my family is, is also a big thing, um, they're, I think also that, uh, the way you're brought up says a lot about how you are as an adult, um. You know, you learn by example, so a lot of the time, you know, I've been around friends, teachers, and parents. So I learn by the examples of them. Um, so, my family and my friends. (Kim, 15)

Indicating that she believes she has been influenced by her friends, teachers, and family, Kim comments that “probably the people I’ve met, is the biggest one.” She suggests that hearing “different opinions” and learning “by example,” have been central in her constitution. Kim foregrounds the way in which she has

picked up this discourse of socio-cultural constitution by repeating statements she has more than likely heard elsewhere: “the way you’re brought up says a lot about how you are as an adult,” and “you learn by example.”

Lara, another student in the Montessori program, also articulates a strong sense of constitution, suggesting that she will continue to be influenced by “everything:”

When I was 6-12 years old, I did rhythmic gymnastics. And when I was six years old I was doing six hours a week, um, you know, being stretched and pulled and, phff, in every direction, you know, “Stretch more! Stretch more! Stretch more!” You know, Romanian and Estonian coaches, and then you know, it became 12, 13, 14, 15 hours a week; and so that is where the dedication came out of. “Halloween? I don’t care if it’s Halloween, you have gym!” So, I think that’s a lot of where my dedication came from. (Heidi, 17)

What things do you think will affect who you are 10 years from now?
(Laughs). Whoa, uhhh, everything really. Uh, my friends will probably affect who I am in 10 years, what I’m interested in, especially theatre will probably be something that will affect me. English will, because I *love* English. I love writing, things like that, as my friends can all attest to (laughs). Um, and, I don’t know. Just everything around me. Even the little butterfly flapping its wings I guess, could influence me in some way. It’s hard to pinpoint certain things. Uh, books and readings - that’s one of the things that will majorly influence me. I’ve been a reader since I was little so, things like that. Those are the main points I think. (Lara, 14)

An understanding of potentially endless possibilities for socio-cultural influence is contained in Lara’s response. She takes up the familiar Montessori metaphor of “a butterfly flapping its wings” to describe a belief that even the smallest thing can have considerable influence, suggesting that the Montessori program has contributed to her perspectives on socio-cultural constitution.

Indeed, a teacher in the Kirkwood Montessori program outlines a view that emphasizes how pervasive the influences of media and family can be in determining what students consider important:

It's no surprise that their life is pop culture and when they put in a CD, when they turn on the TV, when they go see a movie, when they pick up a magazine, they are being targeted as a marketing group. And they are being sold a consumer lifestyle. So, that's totally juxtapositioned to what we're asking them to think about. And it's everywhere, it's pervasive. So, we're really swimming upriver with the kind of power that that has on them. Home life can mean a big difference because the choices that their parents make for how they run their household and how they spend their family time and all that kind of thing is what they're growing up thinking is the right way to live. Those are the two most important, you know, areas of influence. (Kirkwood teacher)

Suggesting that the Montessori program itself works to influence students, this teacher proposes that the program is "swimming up river" against the

My parents have always had a big effect on me. They've always given me advice and I always ask their opinions on what's going on and I really value what they have to say, most of the time. And I really have a lot of interests that they do. (Max, 16)

"consumer lifestyle" students are "being sold" by the media. In addition, how parents "run their household and how they spend

their family time" is put forward as a strong influence on what students grow up thinking "is the right way to live."

This discourse of socio-cultural constitution is also emphasized at Lawson College, where being away from home is discussed by students as having highlighted the ways in which they have been constituted through their previous life experiences. This position is

The family is a big factor, most particularly with young people that's always a big factor. Um, religion's a big one for some of them. Regional place and the issues from the place that they're from, including like everything, like obviously Palestine/Israel, you know, your standard kind of example, but even our kids from the prairies and Canada with, you know, big issues like gun laws and things. Um, none of them mention their previous education, in terms of values coming from there, although, except for maybe a few who've gone to really elite schools, they maybe talk about the structure of that place. (Lawson teacher)

indicated in the comments of Violeta, a Lawson student from Bulgaria, who suggests the influence of culture, friends, teachers, and family:

I am really proud to be Bulgarian. It, it gives me a lot. And now that I'm here, I realize what it gave me. Because, we've always, like, we are a very strong people and we have lots...of interests, and lots of hospitality, and lots of drinks, and that's what I like. We're not very, we're not... we never, I think, give up. We always fight. And that's what I very much find has influenced my growth, because even though you don't realize it, you see all these people around you, so you get strong as well, no? ... And I think this part I still keep it in myself and that's what influences me a lot. Um. Otherwise, friends, and friends I think, and teachers as well in the same way they influenced me, and my parents as well. They, they showed me this, every single person showed me different things in life. (Violeta, 17)

Violeta indicates that she has been affected by many people during her life, and that now that she is at Lawson, she realizes how being Bulgarian has “influenced her growth.”

If I volunteer in a developing country, I think that will have a huge impact on my life... if I volunteer in, in India or, I don't know, in an African country, or anywhere that's got very intense poverty, than I think that will really affect me. (Lydia, 18)

Many Lawson students also talk about the ways in which they view the experiences at the College as changing their values and “ways of thinking,” suggesting that this dramatic process of (re)constitution has influenced their taking up of the discourse of socio-cultural constitution. That the process of (re)constitution is topical for Emilia is evident by her description of some of the contrasts that she has faced in leaving Nicaragua and coming to Lawson:

I just came out of... a West Side elementary school and then I came to the East Side, which was probably a good reality check, because everyone I went to school with was pretty rich. (Max, 15)

Let's say abortion or something, that back home it's no use, it is very hard for a girl to have an abortion and for us, that is an anti-value, to make an abortion, but for some countries like Canada or U.S. it wouldn't be a anti-value. It's not actually the action, but the thinking, the way you think, like, what do you think about abortion or what you don't think about abortion... in my personal experience at Lawson, there have been so many contrasts, like abortion, sexuality, like even the behaviour of the person, and even the way you dress, it's so different. But I, I have learned to change some of the values that I had learned back home, but at same time to value the ones that now I think are valuable for me, at least for my, for my country they are important values... Coming to Lawson was (laughs), was really, really important for me. I took, you know, brought back, the way I see myself now, I'm dynamic, yes, that came to my mind; and the new ways of thinking that I've gained. (Emilia, 17)

Emilia describes the “contrasts” in “thinking” between home and Canada, indicating that she has “learned to change some of the values” from home, but “at the same time” to appreciate other values that are important in Nicaragua. Coming to Lawson has been “really, really important” for Emilia, as she now sees herself as “dynamic” - implying a new understanding of herself as socio-culturally constituted.

“I View the World Totally Differently When I’m Back Home”

Hinted at in Emilia’s comments is the possibility that this feeling of being

“dynamic” could go so far as to give

students a sense of having different

sets of values/being different people

when in different environments.

Indeed a number of students talk

about this phenomenon, particularly at Lawson where the contrasts between

home and school are often so great.

How would you describe your values? What things are important to you?

Uh, that fluctuates (laughs).

Um, what’s important to me - I think, in different environments different things are important to me. (Jenny, 16)

Most of them do identify this as a life changing experience. And watching them leave this place, is pretty heart wrenching. In some ways, it’s hard because I think in our successes, it also can cause problems for later on because they have a hard time re-integrating. I mean I guess it ties in with that other stuff, but they have a hard time re-explaining. That’s probably something that, um, they learn a lot, but then how they pass that learning on to others is difficult... a lot of them talk about having two personalities, they talk about having two homes and the different people one place to the other. (Lawson teacher)

Lawson student, Adam,

suggests this taking up of a

discourse of multiple selves

in talking about how he is

different at school and at

home in England:

I view the world totally differently when I’m back home than here. I take on a, say for example at Christmas, I decided to forget everything that I’ve ever done at Lawson because I wanted a break, right? I didn’t recycle, I didn’t do anything. I forgot about Lawson totally. I forgot about all the experiences that I’ve had. I just went back to my old way of life. Then I realized when I got back here that I did, that it was a waste of time, that I didn’t like what I was doing back home, and it made me feel really bad for what I did. Cause when I came back here, I

again reviewed everything that I was thinking, and put it into one and decided, you know, what I want to do. So I viewed life differently, and the world differently, when I came back after Christmas of my second year. And I've really refined my skills and knowledge and stuff. Being here has definitely been the most changing time of my life, definitely...

How would you describe yourself now after being here for close to two years? Personally I've become a lot stronger, in myself. My interests have changed. That's my biggest change, is my interests. And I think they've changed for the better. Cause I've always wanted to do something like this, but, I've always had the interest of wanting to do something, like, for money; whereas now it's just environmentally or fun-orientated. So definitely, I've changed a lot, in a lot of ways, personally, for the better. But back home people won't think so. Like for example, the clothes I wear, I wouldn't, I don't care what I wear. I just grab something. Whereas back home I couldn't do that, 'cause I'd either get looked on as a freak, or as someone who doesn't fit in. So it's hard to go back and not, I don't know, there's a line where I'm going to switch off, and I have to say, "No, I can't go back." Cause otherwise, everything will be forgotten, and it will be a total waste, unless I come back here again. It's just, England's such a hard place to live in, for society reasons. It's horrible. (Adam, 18)

In this discussion, Adam talks about the challenges of viewing the world “totally differently when I’m back home” than when at Lawson College. Adam indicates

having switched “back to my old way of life” when home for the holidays, and then having realized this on his return to Lawson, he “reviewed everything” and “put it into one.” These comments suggest a sense of Adam struggling to shift his two different selves into one

My first year... I listened to all these ideas, yah? And maybe I didn't incorporate them as I have them now, but still I listened to them. And I listen, and I listen (laughs). And I go home and I see, "Op! This doesn't work, because this doesn't apply to the real world," and I was very upset, because everything was so different and the attitudes of people at home, it's very different towards, like, because people have so many troubles and so many difficulties and you can't expect all of them to be very enthusiastic of what's happening in the world when they have, like, they don't even have their, their bread. So, that was, I think, the big change. Moreover, all your friends and all your parents, they're used to you being in a certain way and then suddenly you say, "No, I'm changing." And they say, "No, you're not" (laughs). And I think that was a big challenge, but, but now I believe I'm really ready to go home because I, because I not only listened to the ideas, but I incorporated them and changed according to my way of understanding them, so, I think now it feels better. (Violeta, 17)

consistent whole that he can feel better about.

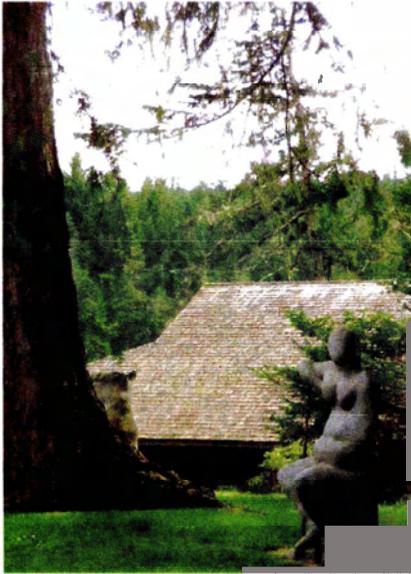


Figure 31. Art Installation at Lawson College

However, despite Adam's promising comments that he has "really refined" his skills and knowledge, he later suggests his concern about what will happen when he goes back home again: "It's hard to go back and not... there's a line where I'm going to switch off, and I have to say, 'No, I can't go back.'" Here, Adam suggests that he may "go back" to being his old self again, and that

ultimately, being unsuccessful at switching his old self "off" could mean

"everything will be forgotten, and [Lawson College] will be a total waste."

Authenticity

Embedded within many students' comments around constitution seems to be an understanding of "authentic" personhood – a sense of a relatively stable core that remains unchanged despite various social and

Your friends are the people you hang out with the most, well, other than your family, so they influence the way that you feel about things. I mean, like, everybody is their own person but, if you don't agree with your friends then, I don't know, it causes a lot of conflict. (Sarah, 18)

cultural influences. Students' comments around their identification with a particular group, suggest that feelings of belonging contribute to this sense of stability. This section will discuss both of these related discourses of "authenticity" and "group identity."

"I'm Pretty Stable in Terms of Who I Am"

A number of the students articulate an understanding of their own subjectivity as consisting of an underlying stable core, yet with outward beliefs "shifting" as a result of different life experiences. As Hillview student, Sarah, suggests, "everybody is their own person," although subject to influences such as friends. The mutual taking of up a discourse of "authenticity" along with a discourse of "socio-cultural constitution" is clearly evident in the

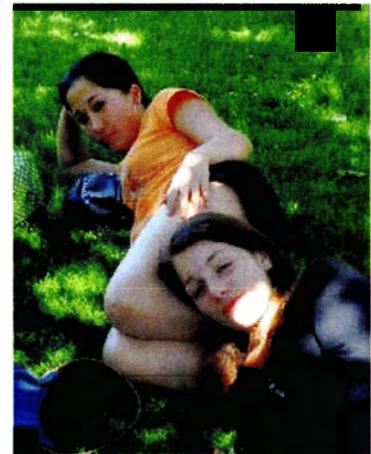


Figure 32. Montessori Peers

following conversation with Heidi, a Lawson College student from Canada:

I was wondering whether those things, like working in a horse barn or going to Central America, whether those things influenced you or whether they were more the expression of interests you already had?

I know, I know I've always liked teaching, and being in charge, and helping people, and that sort of thing. Mm, I don't know where that came from. I think it was just something, one of those things I was sort of born with. You know it started off in, you know, I can remember in grade three where it started off as a very bossiness thing, "No, I'll show you how to turn the skipping rope!", and that's evolved, thank goodness (laughs). But I think that's just something, I've sort of had. In terms of giving, and service... that's just sort of come out of caring, and caring for other people, and that kind of thing. I really don't know, where that comes from...

Any thoughts on things that you think will affect who you are ten years from now?

I think the same that has: teachers, movies, um, I think, I'm pretty stable in terms of who I am, in terms of, like, characteristics. Like, I'm always going to have, like, a sense of humour, I'm always going to be dedicated to things. Things strike a chord, like, someone will call me something here, like, "Oh, you freak," which is a nickname that I had at home, and when that happens, because that's happened, I know that that's who I am. Like, people will call me, they're like, "Oh, you're such a freak," and that used to be my nickname, like I have it written inside of my grad ring. Someone here called me a loose cannon, they're like, "Oh, you're such a loose cannon," and another teacher called me that at home when I put a pie in someone's face at an assembly, unsuspectingly, so that kind of stuff. So I know that, that's who I am. And then, change in opinion, change in the slant of that, that'll just come from small things - teachers, movies, books, events, experiences, the regular stuff..

You described yourself earlier coming in, you talked about ten years down the road being, yeah the same with some variation, is there anything you want to add to that in terms of how you are after one year in the program? In terms of strengths, and challenges, and values.

I don't think I'm that different. I like to think I'm not. Um, no, I wouldn't say. I don't think I've changed that much, in terms of, I mean I see things differently, but that doesn't change who I am.

What do you mean you see things differently?

Well, I see my old school, I see my parents, I see what's going on, I see my friends, from a very different perspective. I mean, one cause I'm away from it, which is, you know once you're out it's much easier to see. When people say something like, I mean even just on the news, I mean CNN will say, "Actual people have landed in Baghdad." "Actual people? As opposed to who already lives in Baghdad." I mean, like that kind of thing. More critical, smarter, you know, I think more. But that doesn't change who I am, I don't think.

You think more, and is that because of classes like Theory of Knowledge?

Oh, TOK, god. Uh, no, joke.

Okay, not TOK.

Yeah, yeah, and just the environment, and being challenged, and the movies, and the books, and the friends, [Eco-action teacher], (laughs). (Heidi, 17)

<p>Like the way I am isn't because of Montessori, it's just who I am. (Mia, 16)</p>

Throughout this conversation Heidi takes up a discourse of authenticity, suggesting that, "I'm pretty stable in terms of who I am." This sense of "who she is" seems to be determined by the "characteristics" others have identified for her: a sense of humour, and being a "freak" and a "loose cannon." In commenting on

being told these things about herself by different people, she says, “when that happens... I know that’s who I am.” In

Do you believe your time in the Montessori program will, in the long run, affect the way you live your life?

I think I would have ended up here even if I didn’t go. It would have just been harder and I might not have been as sure of it. Like, if all my friends had been like, “No, what are you doing you idiot? Stop volunteering.” I think it still would’ve happened, it just would’ve taken longer before I would have been part of. (Steve, 16)

contrast, “change in opinion, change in the slant of that, that’ll just come from small things – teachers, movies, books, events, experiences, the regular stuff.”

This “small stuff” may cause her to see things “from a very different perspective,” but according to Heidi, “that doesn’t change who I am.” The final

I think I’ve always had a pretty consistent view about the world... I try not to change, I try to keep consistent with what I believe, but of course in certain senses I’m going change, change gradually. (David, 17)

time Heidi makes this statement, she adds the words, “...I don’t think,” suggesting some, however fleeting, sense of possible doubt in the discourse of authenticity.

“In This Class You Can Be Who You Are”

Heidi, the Lawson College student from Canada, also articulates a discourse of “group identity,” suggesting that perhaps contributing to her sense of authenticity is identification with a group of others:

So, I’m still trying to get a sense of why you were like, “Turn off the lights” before? I’m still not getting that. How did you get your values in the first place? Like you talked about your family, and there wasn’t anything you

really looked to and said, "Oh yeah, that's how I got these values." Do you most of your friends have those same values, in terms of "Turn off the lights?" No, no, no (laughs).

So, where did that come from? I mean we've talked about this already I know, but it's still kind of a big question mark for me, so I'm going to ask one more time!

(Laughs). Uhhh. I guess, uhh, I mean it was easy just because my parents are not, like, huge consumers or anything, so in terms of, like, "Why do you need a new pair of running shoes," or not buying new clothes. I mean that was, that was from my parents and that was just their standard upbringing. I guess I just always wanted to be part of Oxfam, and Sierra Club, and wanted to be part of that crowd, thinking the hippie movement was really cool, listening to Beatles music. I've, it's something that, I mean ever since elementary school where, and they do teach you, you know, turn off the lights and don't take, you know, a shower uses less water than a bath; we did learn that stuff in elementary school. And I think that's just something that stuck with, like to see waste, has always just sort of bothered me. And I think that was probably a combination of wanting to belong to that type of person, like that liberal - TV is bad for you, corporations are, like when that Quebec City thing was going on, I really wanted to be there, maybe my cousins and then they were in Quebec City, but it was even before that, it was just, I don't know. I guess, I think maybe, I kind of think that people choose one or the other, they choose to go along with what they're told, like in terms of that country club, and they choose to go along with their parents and the rest of their family; or go the complete opposite. Which I can see just by looking at my family, there's three of us, no four of us, who are vegetarian, protesters, you know, screw the WTO, that kind of thing; and the rest of them, head of research for the Bank of Canada, they all have their CAs, they're all accountants, have businesses, that kind of thing, live in Toronto, we live in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa. I think that's all the, I don't know, I guess that's probably part of it. You can go along with, yeah, and there's the whole thing of even just ditching the country club... When everybody's extreme one way, I just sort of go the other way. Actually now that I think about it, I do that a lot. When everyone's like, like when everyone loved Will Smith, I hated Will Smith; when everyone loved Barbie, I hated Barbie. Like, "Barbie's the worst!", "Why?", "Cause you like Barbie," or I wouldn't say that, just, you know. Whatever everyone loved I had to hate, what everyone hates I had to love. (Heidi, 17)

In this discussion, Heidi draws upon a number of different discourses. She takes up a discourse of socio-cultural constitution in suggesting the possible influence of parents and elementary school in determining her values. Yet, dominating this is a discourse of authenticity, as Heidi suggests how she is different from others: "When everybody's extreme one way, I just sort of go the other way."

However, Heidi's discussion suggests that her sense of who she "is" draws strength from group identification. She, along with others, has chosen *not* "to go along with what they're told," and has instead become "vegetarian, protestor, you know, screw the WTO, that kind of thing." This fits with Heidi's desires "to belong to that type of person," as she "just always wanted to be part of Oxfam, and Sierra Club, and wanted to be part of that crowd." Indeed, Heidi's taking up of a discourse of authenticity, her sense of "who she is," seems integrally connected to her identification with a certain "type of person."

This sort of mutual taking up of the discourses of authenticity and group identity is particularly common with students in the Kirkwood Montessori program. The

following discussion between Alix, Camille, and Tess, suggests a discourse of group identity, and one student also hints at accompanying feelings of being more comfortable "being myself" in the Montessori program:

How would you describe yourself at the beginning of the program last year, in terms of your interests?
Well, the only thing different between grade 8 and now is, like, in grade 8 I tried to be more like everybody else. I got over that. It had nothing to do with Montessori though. I just, I made different friends. I started hanging out with different people and then I stopped caring what people thought of me.
(Beth, 16)

A lot of kids [in mainstream], they don't know, or they think we're tree huggers or something. Mind you, when the grade sevens came in, I told them we were tree huggers.

I know this kid and he said to me, "you're in Montessori - oh, my gosh, all the Montessori students are such freaks!" (laughs) I was like, "why, what do they do?" And he was, like, "they're dancing and everything!" I think mainstream kids care a lot about what other people think, a lot. And I have to say, I do kind of wonder what other people think of me too, but then, I, I, don't care about it as much, really, after I got into Montessori.

Um, we have such a mix of kids... there's not the cool group and the outsiders, it's more just we're all kind of things here. And they're all just good friends - there isn't like, but then we intermix really well.

So, how do you think that happens? Why doesn't it sort of arrange itself like outside, how does that get broken down?

But it's small. Everyone is everywhere. So, all we know, we all bond. (Alix, 15; Camille, 15; Tess, 15)

This discussion suggests a feeling of intimacy in the Montessori program, in which the students "all bond," and where there is no "cool group:" "it's more just

Do you feel different on the days that you're in this program versus the days that you're outside the program - does your thinking change in one place to the other?

Occasionally, yeah (laughs). I know in this class, um, I've occasionally worn my pyjamas to school (laughs)... Whereas in the regular, I wouldn't do that.... So, just sort of that, it's sort of more relaxed here I guess. It's more relaxed on things like individuality - you can be who you are, things like that. Whereas regular program is more, is a bit more stiff about that. (Lara, 14)

we're all kinds of things here." There is also further suggestion of a sense of Montessori identity in the comments around the students being "tree huggers" and "freaks." This discourse of group identity again seems to complement a discourse of authenticity, as one student comments that, "I do kind of wonder what other people think of me too, but then, I, I, don't care about it as much, really, after I got into Montessori." Implicit in

this comment is the suggestion that the Montessori program has contributed to a greater sense of being comfortable with who she “is,” regardless of what other people may think: Through solidarity, a sense of autonomy is achieved.

The comments of a Montessori teacher also suggest a connection between the discourses of group identity and authenticity:

Well, I guess I influenced other people, 'cause I provided information. But most people don't, they haven't connected yet! The grade eights are more, like, haven't really become Montessori enough! Yet. (Alix. 15)

Even though our program, you know, sort of fosters certain values of environmental understanding and global awareness, that isn't something that every student embraces. It's hard in an urban centre to be really clued in to the environment - the natural environment, #1. And their, now culture is such that it's like, not promoted at all. So, they almost need to be on the fringe, culturally, of their group of teenagers to take a first of saying, this is important to me, this is where I want to spend my time. Now, I think one of the things that the students do find with being in the program is because there are students of similar value systems it's easier to speak out and to be active and involved in that area, because they've got someone there that's going to support them. They're not doing it all on their own. And if they do receive any kind of flak, um, you know, there's strength in numbers. (Kirkwood teacher)

I'm most similar to a lot of my friends in that we all have environmental views and um, just we think of animals as the same of us, and we like to stick together as a community group. (Mia, 16)

In this discussion there is a sense that through identification with a group of students with “similar value systems,” it becomes easier for

students to “speak out and be active,” because “they’re not doing it all on their own.” Students who might otherwise “be on the fringe” because of “who they are,” are able to find identification and “strength in numbers.”

George: In everything else, you’re trying to get to the top. But in Montessori you sort of step back and watch everyone trying to get to the top, and laugh.

Steve: And say, we’re all winners.

Daniel: Pretty much. That’s what’s going on.

Lena: I’m so happy that I took Montessori...

George: We should make a book club.

Lena: Sure.

Steve: I think we should revitalize the chess club.

(Program graduates Lena, 17; Daniel, 17; Steve, 16; George, 16)

Agency

In reading between the lines of students’ talk there are suggestions of discourses around agency. This final section will explore these discourses of lack of agency, of agency, and of contingent agency.

“I Should Try Better, But I Just Don’t”

As previously discussed, a number of students from the Hillview Global

Education class appear to take up a discourse of inactive caring. The sentiment

of “obviously you can’t change the world” expressed by Hillview student, Doug, and echoed by several other students, suggests a strong sense of a lack of agency.

Another example of the taking up of this discourse is provided by Shelley, who says:

When we had a silent auction in the fall it was neat, like that, like, it was just our class and we managed to get a lot of stuff and raised lots of money and put on, like, a big event right, and that’s something that, I don’t know, you just wouldn’t see, like it’s hard when you’re just thinking by yourself you wouldn’t think you’d ever be able to do that. (Shelley, 16)

In this comment, Shelley suggests that the idea of organizing a silent auction is beyond what she thinks she would “ever be able to do” on her own, implying a limited sense of control over her environment that is striking in its contrast, for example, to the big plans for effecting change that many Lawson College students express.

Doug’s talk of his school/job predicament is another troubling example of the discourse of “a lack of agency” articulated by Hillview students:

What things do you think will affect who you are ten years from now?
What will affect me? Probably I will regret my grades in school. I should try better, but I just don’t right now. That’s one thing I should be doing. If I wanted to get a better job down the road. And, I don’t know. That’s probably the most important one.

Great. And do you have any specific dreams or goal for the future?
Uh, I’d like to be a personal trainer, but that’s just a lot of school work and I’m not very good with school, so - but, just live a steady life and have a family.

Do you have plans for next year?
Uh, I’m just going to get a job and then, after I work here for a bit I want to go the oil rigs. Go to the oil rigs for a couple of years. (Doug, 17)

Comments such as, "I should try better, but I just don't right now," and "I'd like to be a personal trainer, but...I'm not very good with school," suggest a life that is not viewed as being fully in Doug's control. In suggesting that he likely "will regret" his grades, is unable to be a personal trainer, and is "*just* going to get a job," Doug also expresses feelings of dissatisfaction at his lack of agency.

"Going Where You Want to Go"

Expressed by several of these same students, as well as many others, is the view that they are able to determine who they are and what "choices" they make in their lives. However, there are differences in how this discourse of "agency" is taken up, with some students articulating a more comprehensive sense of control, and with others seeming to take up agency as a dominant discourse, despite underlying feelings of a lack of agency or ability to affect change in the world.

This latter situation certainly appears to the case with several of the Hillview Global Education students: The feelings of lack of agency exhibited by these students often seem to coexist along with outward expressions of control over their lives. Doug's response to the following question highlights the taking up of this form of a discourse of agency:

How do [your] values affect the choices you make in your life?

Uh. With the future – going where you want to go. Knowing that you're going to get there. Pretty much, if you live how you want to live, that's how it's going to be, like, you're going to have a good time if you live how you want to live. (Doug, 17)

Despite Doug's suggestions that he feels limited in his academic and job possibilities, here he indicates that the values that affect the choices he makes in his life include "going where you want to go [and] knowing that you're going to get there." Doug suggests that one can choose to "live how you want to live," indicating his taking up of a discourse of agency.

Corrine, another student in the Hillview Global Education class also expresses a discourse of agency, despite underlying suggestions that she has been "acted on" by others in various ways:

Last year (laughs), at this time?? I was kind of, a lot different. I was, mean. I can't say the word I going use, but, I was mean. And not as helpful and caring. I've changed a lot since the beginning of the year.

How come?

My boyfriend (laughs). And I stopped hanging out with the people I was hanging out with. And I realized the effect I had on people. Like, there's still a couple of people when they look at me they're kinda like, "ugh," right – cause when I moved here I got in with the wrong crowd and then I kinda scared people I guess. I, now I'm trying to get those people not to be afraid of me.

So, did it sort of start with starting to go out with your boyfriend?

Yeah.

And he just talked to you about it, or - ?

Well, not really. It's just that the people he hung out with were so different from the people that I was hanging out with. They were more open to other people, like, I hung out with people that just hung out with each other, and that's about it. Like, I'm, I felt lucky that I actually got included with those people because they never let other people in. And then I realized that that's not the right crowd to be with. And then I started going out with my boyfriend a year and a half ago. It took me like half a year basically, to figure out, like, this is not the person I want to be. (Corrine, 19)

Indicated in this conversation is Corrine's feeling that she can determine what kind of "person I want to be." Despite the influences of starting at a new school, her boyfriend, and the different groups of people she has been "hanging out with;" Corrine seems to take full responsibility for being "mean" before, as well

So how do those values affect the choices you make in your life?

If I do something that does not go with the kind of person I want to be, it's, I beat myself up more. Yeah.
(Jenny, 16)

as for her "realizations" about who the "right crowd to be with" is, and the person she wants to be.

Along with a number of students from the Kirkwood and Lawson programs, Heidi, a Lawson College student from Canada, expresses a discourse of agency which seems to be "backed up" by underlying feelings of power:

I came into the school very confident. Because I got into grade seven very unconfident and I didn't make many friends doing that, and since then I've become very confident, and I figured, well, might as well keep going!... Dedication is usually one of the things that I sort of pride on, in terms of, I don't just say I'll do something, or "that's a great idea!" and then not do anything about it. When I decide to do something I'm very committed to it and I follow it through. (Heidi, 17)

Articulating feelings of control similar to those expressed by the Hillview students, Heidi says that she decided to come into the school very confident, because she had learned in grade seven that she "didn't make many friends" being unconfident. However, the discourse of agency articulated in Heidi's comments seems to be consistent with other expressions of power over her life and the various initiatives she is involved in. Heidi, and others, articulate a

strong discourse of agency which is carried through to their taking up of other discourses, such as that of individual achievement, or the feeling that “I can do anything.”

“What Do I Take and What Do I Push Away From?”

Finally, a few students articulate a discourse of agency along with iterations of a discourse of constitution – suggesting a discourse of “contingent agency.” Rastha and Emilia, two Lawson College students from the Maldives and Nicaragua, suggest a sense of agency that works in the spaces of their constituted selves:

I'm from a very large family, and there were all these, all of them, all of my family are quite different from each other, and I'm the youngest of them, and there was a lot of pressure on me from other members of my family. And I needed to sort of focus on, “Okay, what do I take from it, and what do I push away from?” And sort of coming away, providing a space for me to sort of reflect on what I want. (Rastha, 18)

My experience has made me the way I am. Because you go to so many different experience and so many different things through the span of your life, and then the way that you react to those, to those experience is the way you are making your own personality, and I would say that's the way. Of course, what informs them? My parents, my culture, my religion, and everything, so, yeah. (Emilia, 17)

Both Rastha and Emilia take up a discourse of socio-cultural constitution in talking about how their previous experiences have exerted pressure on them/made them the way they are. The possibility of agency within this state of constitution is suggested in their comments that their reactions/reflections are “the way you are making your own personality.” Rastha in particular articulates agency as occurring through a process of asking, “Okay, what do I take... and

So, have your interests and values changed at all as a result of the Montessori program?

Um, it's hard to differentiate between what's high school and what's the Montessori program; like, what's been changing it? Like whether it's just points in my life and just being outside has affected, you know, the choices I make for what kind of person I want to be; or whether it has to do with Montessori. (Jenny, 16)

what do I push away from:"

Agency is suggested to be the working with/against ways of viewing the world (discourses) that have been introduced through various influences. This is an

understanding of agency as contingent on previous constitution, but as allowing some degree of determination to be exerted.

The role that contrast plays in the taking up of this discourse of contingent agency, is hinted at by Rastha, who says that "coming away" from home gave him the "space" to reflect on who he wanted to be. A number of other students also relate exposure to new ideas, people, places, or experiences to understandings of themselves as capable of contingent agency, as is evident in the following comments of Violeta, a Lawson College student from Bulgaria:

I think, I remember reading some study that said that some families have, like, 80% influence and school has, like, 10% influence on value systems; but probably such a study would be pretty suspect, I don't know how you come up with such numbers. But I think families have a big impact... But then it also seems like you can move beyond everything and become your own person. I don't know (laughs). (Lawson teacher)

So, how would you describe yourself before coming to Lawson?

Wow. What a question. I don't know, I think quite a lot, I believe, and yeah, the thing is that here, because you're always in such a community of these 200 people, so it's not only studying with these people, but it's also living with them and seeing them all the time, and it's like a family. And I was really scared before I came. I was very, very, very different before I came. I was very shy and I would never communicate as much with people, because I used to study all the time and just don't pay attention to outside things. But when I came here, you see all these people who are your age, which is even better, because it's different to communicate to your parents than to people at your age, no? So you see all these people your age who are all ready to give you love and compassion, and all ready to show you their own words and their own way of understanding the words and sharing their own experiences. So I started to communicate more with people and then I saw, "Wow! Why don't I do this activity?" Or "Wow! Why don't I do this way and not my way?" So, it's changed quite a bit. And, in the first year I believe, it was very stressful because it was different, so I needed some time, because I'm very conservative I think, so I needed some time to make the change. But now I think in the second year, now that I have time to think about why I'm doing things and think about my values and why I'm choosing to be like this. Now I think I chose my way, and it feels now much more, confident and comfortable. (Violeta, 17)

Violeta articulates an understanding of herself as constituted through various means. As included earlier, she indicates that being Bulgarian "has given me a lot," and here suggests how the experience of living with 200 students and "seeing them all the time," has caused her to think, "Wow! Why don't I do this way and not my way?" Now nearing the end of her second year, Violeta has had "time to think," and says, "Now I think I chose my way, and it feels now much more, confident and comfortable." Through this discussion, Violeta articulates an understanding of herself as expressing a contingent agency – a sense that her



Figure 33. End of the Year House Soccer Match at Lawson College

tentative control over her life (“I think I choose my way”) derives from a certain amount of back and forth between old and new understandings of the world.

In taking up a discourse of contingent agency, a number of students suggest that at times their sense of agency is overwhelmed by forces of constitution.

This is particularly evident at Lawson College, where so many students worry about “losing” the ways of thinking they have gained at school, once they return home. Violeta expresses her concern as

follows:

Do you believe this experience has affected the way you will live your life? I hope so. It's, I hope so because, yeah. It's because again it's true that this is very, very much in a way idealistic, um, but as long as again I told you I've incorporated these ideas in myself I try for them and like fight for them but it depends very much on the environment where I go because if, for example, if I go home, if I am still able to do these things but it will be much harder. And I hope, just, I dearly hope, that I don't give up with the first failure, because I know if I go home I will have lots of failures with incorporating these ideas but I will try at least. That's maybe, that's what matters, no? Not the result but the process of achieving something, so -. That's what I don't know. (Violeta, 17)

Everything basically has gone against my parents, 'cause of my culture, the racism, I took it all in and I was racist towards other people as well. But now I know it's really wrong to do that, and there's actually really cool people who come from different backgrounds. And so you can't judge anyone... but going back home and hearing different views, like what I used to have, it's scary, it's horrible. And basic things that I stand for now, are just beaten down back home. Like, I'll go, "No, that's wrong. You're totally wrong." Everyone in the room's like, "No, you're wrong," you know. It's really hard to adjust back in. Cause you can't just go back to the way you were, and take it back, cause that would be wasting the experience of Lawson, so you have to be strong to keep it, but it's really hard because you just knocked down completely all the time. (Adam, 18)

My family, they don't even like what culture promotes as the perfect type of person, and again with the I'm not comfortable with my body kind of thing, they're totally with me and say that I'm a good person and I'm also beautiful, like, how I am. It's really easy if you just watch culture and everything like that to get really disoriented about which direction you should go in and how you should look and what's going on. It's really confusing. And um, just you're not a worse person because you don't make a million bucks. And you're not a worse person if you're a little bit chubbier.
(Mia, 16)

Here, Violeta articulates how despite her best efforts at fighting for the ideals she has taken on at the College, "it depends very much on the environment... And I hope, just, I dearly hope, that I don't give up with the first failure, because I know if I go home I will have lots of failures."

In this chapter I have outlined a number of discourses of subjectivity that are suggested in the talk of students and teachers from the three schools. Exploring the often overlapping discourses of constitution, authenticity, and agency provides a picture of the ways that students understand themselves and their abilities to act. In the next, and final, chapter I will examine how the three different programs make particular subject positions available to students through the discourses of education, socio-ecological (in)action, and subjectivity that are dominant at each site, thus developing a deeper and more complex understanding of how *students* are the subjects of socio-ecological education.

Chapter Six: Pedagogies of Positioning

Montessori people are type cast. Completely... They think Montessori students are more stupid, so we all have to be stupid together. We all have to be tree huggers together. Cause, "yeah, sure, you can dress cool, but you're in Montessori so you're lame." That's pretty much how it is. There's lots of people in Montessori that wear the correct clothing, especially grade 8's, when they first come in, they wear the correct clothing, they're, in some cases, they're not letting their true form come out. I know one girl that for a long time did exactly what everyone wanted her to be, and now she's decided, it's like a caterpillar looks exactly like every other caterpillar, and then she gets the chance and she goes and her metamorphoses makes her turn into the most vibrant, crazy butterfly with like ten wings and four proboscises uses, and every colour in the rainbow; and doesn't like to eat nectar from flower, like's to eat leaves, or something like that, you know? Completely different from everything else, because she had the chance to completely let herself shine. People in mainstream seem to be really, maybe they're not, maybe they like being like that, but they're kind of single minded in a way. Like, for instance, there's a lot of homophobia, and there's a lot of racism, and just because music, puts it in like it's an okay thing. They don't understand the connotations that go with the words that they're saying. They're kind of like parrots, you know? (Mia, 16)

Mia's analysis of students as parrots and butterflies vividly illustrates a central theme of this study: the outcomes of education are inextricably intertwined with the ways in which students are positioned, or position themselves, in a complex discursive field. Mia draws on a number of different discourses as she suggests how students in mainstream schooling and Montessori are differently positioned as insiders/outsidere, single minded/colourful, constituted/authentic,

static/transformed, collectivistic/individualistic, and powerless/powerful. As Mia suggests, education supports the taking up of these and other subject positions by students, and students' positioning affects the ways in which they understand, and act in, the world. Viewed in this light, students become the "subjects" of socio-ecological education.

Subject Positions

The process of "subjection," as suggested in Chapter One, can be understood as involving both constitution of the subject through discourse and the enactment of discourse by the subject. So while students may be exposed to any number of possible discourses, and thus possible subject positions from which to act, not all of these will be equally "taken up" by all students. The push and pull of different discourses encountered through interactions with family, culture, media, peers, school, and so on, can be viewed as determining which subject positions are most commonly enacted by each student. However, the dominance of certain discourses at particular times in history, and in particular settings, means that the subject positions associated with those discourses are, correspondingly, also more dominant, and thus more likely to override other discourses promoted by family, culture, and so on.

In the previous three chapters I have provided an analysis of the talk of students and teachers from the Hillview Global Education class, the Kirkwood Montessori Program, and Lawson College, interspersed with other data in the form of photographs and text excerpts from various sources. This analysis has suggested how certain discourses related to education, socio-ecological (in)action, and subjectivity, can be heard across one or all of the research sites. Each of the three programs seem to have certain discourses that are voiced most loudly by its students and teachers, suggesting that the accompanying subject positions are among those most likely to be taken up by students in that school.

At Hillview, some of the discourses suggested as dominant include those of neutrality, achieving enjoyment, modest aspirations, diversity as disparity, socio-ecological disengagement, socio-ecological awareness, fortune, media literacy, inactive caring, socio-cultural constitution, authenticity, and lack of agency. Absent is the articulation of any discourses of critique or inconsistency. The prevalence of different discourses in the talk of the Hillview Global Education students suggests the subject positions commonly taken up by students in this class. Students variously position themselves through these discourses as: *objective, individualistic, unaspiring, insider, disengaged, aware, fortunate, media*

gazer/critic, caring, lacking power, capable of agency, influenced, authentic, and uncritical.

The discourses indicated as dominant through the talk of students and teachers in the Kirkwood Montessori program include those of neutrality, transformation, critique as a way of learning, individual achievement, alternative “success,” welcoming diversity, “a way of thinking,” media literacy, despair as inevitable, ulterior motives, lifestyle activism, socio-cultural constitution, authenticity, group identity, and agency. Correspondingly, the subject positions that can be seen as most likely to be taken up in association with these discourses are quite different from those taken up by students at Hillview. Kirkwood students position themselves as: *objective, transformed, critic, individualistic, achiever, leader, accepting, righteous, media gazer/critic, despairing, balanced, activist, influenced, authentic, different, belonging, and powerful.*

Finally, at Lawson College, dominant discourses suggested in the talk of students and teachers include those of partiality, transformation, social critique, individual achievement, social change, welcoming diversity, selectivity, homogeneity, inconsistency, “a way of thinking,” media literacy, despair as inevitable, ulterior motives, activism as influence, socio-cultural constitution, multiple selves,

authenticity, and contingent agency. The subject positions taken on by students in relation to these discourses are again, different in many respects from those in evidence at Hillview and Kirkwood, and include students as: *partial, transformed, social critic, individualistic, achiever, accepting, homogenized, disillusioned, media gazer/critic, despairing, hopeful, attention seeking, activist, powerful, multi-sided, and conflicted.*

Despite talk of butterfly individuality and the ubiquity of a sense of agency across sites and students, the proceeding examination of discourse and the different ranges of subject positions that are correspondingly available to students at the three schools, suggest that each group of students is to some extent “parroting” discourses common to their context. As suggested in Chapter one, this situation resembles that evident in the broader fields of global and environmental education, in which both “normative” and “critical” perspectives of how students understand and act in the world can be linked with the promotion of particular “world views” or discourses of socio-ecological education.

The idea that education, particularly socio-ecological education, is “socializing” students, or advocating certain perspectives, certainly is not new. But what is of

note here is the pervasiveness of this influence, and the evidence of how seemingly unrelated “discourses” can play a significant role in students’ positioning, and thus action, around socio-ecological issues. The close analysis of students’ discourse may therefore reveal new dimensions in the “hidden” socio-ecological curriculum of each of the three schools. In some cases prevalent discourses appear to work against the stated objectives of the programs, while other discourses may be in-line with program aims, but take worryingly narrow or contradictory approaches to socio-ecological concerns. For example, encouraging students’ positioning as neutral, disengaged, lacking power, “aware,” homogenized, individualistic achievers, and so on, carries possibly undesirable implications for students’ positioning as socio-ecological activists, as suggested by the analysis of the past three chapters.

What this research asks, then, is what happens to socio-ecological education if we take up a discourse that responds to questions of how students see and act in the world by suggesting that we are all *necessarily* positioned as “parrots?” What happens if students (and educators) are introduced to discourses which seek to engage them in the process of their own constitution through a “pedagogy of positioning?” How might this sort of pedagogy encourage more consistent or powerful forms of activism, and yet be more sensitive to social and cultural

diversity? What could this pedagogy look like, and why might it mean the positioning of students *both* as parrots, and as butterflies?

A Pedagogy of Positioning

Over the past decade or so, others have advocated poststructural notions of discourse and subjectivity, suggesting that a view of oneself as socio-culturally constituted can actually open up the possibility of agency, and thus possibilities for social change. Bronwyn Davies (2000), for example, proposes that in poststructural analysis,

Choices are understood as more akin to “forced choices,” since the subject’s positioning within particular discourses makes the “chosen” line of action the only possible action, not because there are no other lines of action but because one has been subjectively constituted through one’s placement within that discourse to want that line of action. By making clear the way in which a person is subjected by discourse, poststructuralist theory shows how agency is fundamentally illusory. However, it opens up another possibility, related to the idea of the speaking/writing subject who can use some of the understandings of poststructuralist theory itself to regain another kind of agency. The speaking/writing subject can move within and between discourses, can see precisely how they subject her, can use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse or go beyond the other, both in terms of her own experienced subjectivity and in the way in which she speaks in relation to the subjectivities of others. (p. 60)

Jane Flax (1993) suggests how this sort of understanding of the discursive formation of subjectivity can be a political force: “Only multiple subjects can invent ways to struggle against domination that will not merely recreate it” (p.

92). Similarly, Nancy Fraser (1992) indicates how a theory of discourse can provide valuable perspectives on how people's social identities are fashioned and altered over time, how social groups as "collective agents" are formed and unformed under conditions of inequality, how cultural hegemony of dominant groups is secured and contested, and how "emancipatory" social change may be achieved.

In the context of socio-ecological education, the prospect of initiating students into a process of "seeing what frames their seeing" suggests powerful possibilities for more systemic activism. As Vincent Leitch (1996) indicates, poststructural pedagogy, "stresses critique and invention rather than techniques of knowledge transmission and discipline... It seeks to empower students to interrogate representations of subjectivity and society" (p. 139). By introducing students to notions of their own discursive formation, the door is opened to the possibility of students exploring and critiquing the subject positions that they are taking on in relation to social and ecological issues, and creating their own "vision and imagination for what might be" (Fine et al., 2000). This potential for invention and agency occurs in the spaces between discourses, as one discourse enables a critical look at another.

This is not merely a revamping of earlier “values clarification” or other so called “relativist” approaches to socio-ecological education (e.g., Raths, Harmin, Simon, 1966). A pedagogy which calls students to examine their own positioning does not function under a pretence of neutrality, but instead takes up a discourse in asking students to explore the ways that dominant, and less dominant, discourses position them, as well as their teachers, school, and culture(s).

Accepting that, as I suggested in Chapter One, we will always experience “warp” among our multiple, partial, shifting, and conflicting perspectives, a pedagogy of positioning indicates the possibility of students becoming more “conscious” of their socio-cultural constitution and, thus, of exerting some degree of “choice” in which subject positions they take up.

Chet Bowers (e.g., 1995, 1997, 2001) critiques critical and poststructural perspectives for containing an underlying assumption that change is good.

Pedagogy which engages students in a process of questioning and transformation is viewed by Bowers as taking up post-Enlightenment understandings of “change as progress,” and thereby undermining forms of knowing viewed as “lower status” which value tradition and community continuity. Initiating students into a life of constant and ubiquitous change does indeed have worrisome implications for cultural and ecological diversity.

Bowers (2001) suggests that educators should act as “gatekeepers” in deciding for students which ways of life are socio-ecologically harmful, and therefore should be questioned, and which are healthy traditions, and therefore, should be left unexamined and unchanged. However, it seems that many of the students in this study have already taken up a discourse of constant change, as reflected in their talk around individual achievement and the influence the media has on them. Rather than placing teachers in an impossible role as “guardians,” in charge of policing the ever increasing number of discourses that students are introduced to through media, peers, cultural diversity, and so on, a pedagogy of positioning engages students as their own imperfect “gatekeepers” in examining the discourses they take up, including that of constant change.

The work of Megan Boler (1999) is helpful in its exploration of what such a pedagogy might look like in practice. Boler indicates that “discomfort” is a central aspect of pedagogy which calls students and educators to hone their awareness of how our modes of seeing have been shaped by dominant discourse, and to engage “in the discomforting process of questioning cherished beliefs and assumptions” (p. 176). This involves a process of “collective witnessing,” which Boler describes as follows:

In contrast to the [Socratic] admonition to “know thyself,” collective witnessing is always understood in relation to others, and in relation to personal and cultural histories and material conditions. To honor these complexities requires learning to develop genealogies of one’s personalities and emotional resistances...An ethical aim of a pedagogy of discomfort is willingly to inhabit a more ambiguous and flexible sense of self...A pedagogy of discomfort invites students to leave the familiar shores of learned beliefs and habits, and swim further out into the “foreign” and risky depths of the sea of ethical and moral differences...[This] calls not only for inquiry but also, at critical junctures, for action – action hopefully catalyzed as a result of learning to bear witness. (pp. 178-181)

Collective witnessing, as suggested by Boler, is a means of developing “genealogies” of the subject positions one takes up in relation to socio-ecological issues, examining how these positions with their accompanying “learned beliefs and habits” are implicated in various “ethical and moral” issues. This process of bearing witness seeks “to identify when and how our habits harm ourselves and others” (p. 186), and while “not a demand to take one particular road of action” (p. 179), is nonetheless a call to respond to what is learned through this process.

In her book, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Boler (1999) focuses on the idea of “testimonial reading” as an activity through which collective witnessing can be achieved. This differs from reading practices which aim at “passive empathy,” “sympathy,” or “compassion,” which Boler discusses as being akin to “putting oneself in the other person’s shoes” through an imagining of one’s own vulnerabilities. This sense of “passive empathy” echoes the discourses of “good

fortune” and “inactive caring” expressed by students in the Hillview Global Education class, in which “caring” about others “less fortunate” was most often linked with feelings of fear for oneself and/or gratitude. With passive reading, Boler suggests her students experienced “an untroubled identification that did not create estrangement or unfamiliarity” (p. 169), but instead encouraged feelings of “familiarity,” “insight,” and “catharsis.” Boler asks, “What is gained and/or lost by advocating as a cure for social injustice an empathetic identification that is more about me than you?” (p. 159). In response, Boler suggests that, “Passive empathy produces no action towards justice but situates the powerful Western eye/I as the judging subject, never called upon to cast her gaze at her own reflection” (p. 161).

Instead, testimonial reading places a responsibility on the reader, requiring a commitment to rethinking assumptions and challenging one’s world views. Drawing on the work of Felman and Laub (1992), Boler suggests that in engaging in testimonial reading, “the reader recognizes herself as a ‘battleground for forces raging...to which [she] must pay attention... to properly carry out [her] task” (p. 168). Testimonial reading “pushes us to recognize that a novel or biography reflects not merely a distant other, but analogous social relations in our own

environment, in which our economic and social positions are implicated” (p. 170).

Boler suggests that all “texts” can potentially be read testimonially, and I would suggest that perhaps “experience” can also be “read” in similar ways. Students at all three of the schools in this study highlight experiences of interaction with activities, places, and people as central to their socio-ecological learning. These interactive experiences are repeatedly expressed as differentiating the programs from other “normal” schooling, where education is described as “boring,” “empty,” and as focused on “textbook learning.” Many of these experiences are discussed as engendering feelings of “gratitude,” “awareness,” “concern,” and other states of socio-ecological “knowing,” that seem to parallel those evoked through the “passive reading” discussed by Boler. However, suggested in the comments of some students are hints of “testimonial readings” initiated by experiences, indicating that a process of “collective witnessing” may be at work for some students.

At Lawson College, the unfamiliarity of the school setting and social norms, along with the dominant discourses around necessary partiality and critique, appears to engage a number of students in “testimonial readings” of their lives at

home and/or at the College. In some cases, the experience of living with students of varying nationalities, religions, and sexual orientations within tight quarters, appears to promote in students a sense of their own implicatedness in various social issues. The previously cited comments of Adam, a student from England, hint at this possibility:

Everything basically has gone against my parents, 'cause of my culture, the racism, I took it all in and I was racist towards other people as well. But now I know it's really wrong to do that, and there's actually really cool people who come from different backgrounds. And so you can't judge anyone... but going back home and hearing different views, like what I used to have, it's scary, it's horrible. And basic things that I stand for now, are just beaten down back home. (Adam, 18)

Adam suggests a "testimonial reading" initiated through his time at the College, which he sees as having caused him to question himself as racist. This now makes going home "scary" and "horrible" because of the racism he can now "see" as existing there, and as possibly influencing him again.

However, as the following comments from a Lawson College teacher suggest, "collective witnessing" is not necessarily central to the mission of the College, with its mandate of "international understanding:"

Implicit teaching about ecological and social concerns I suppose, the thing is greatest importance is simply the experience of living with others from other cultures, empathizing with people from other cultures, and caring about the rest of the world. So that if there is a problem with human rights, in a country, if there is a war in some other part of the world, if there is environmental devastation somewhere on the other side of the planet, that it's part of the circle of concern of the individual student. (Lawson teacher)

The comments of this teacher suggest more of an aim of “passive empathy” in the idea of students experiencing an expanded “circle of concern,” as a result of their time at the school. While students are encouraged to become “community leaders,” there is not a central focus on exploring the ways in which they are implicated in harming others (including non-human others), both locally and globally. Happening perhaps more by accident than by design at Lawson College, an integral part of students’ abilities to embark on “testimonial readings” of past or current experience may well be their taking up of a discourse of “contingent agency,” as discussed in Chapter Five. In having a sense of themselves as constituted in multiple ways, students are placed in the often discomfoting position of feeling they can, and do, move about among various positions, and that they are, indeed, responsible for how they understand and act in the world.

“Testimonial readings” of experience are also suggested in the talk of students in the Kirkwood Montessori program. In particular, students talk about learning to question their own eating habits after spending time with vegetarian and vegan peers, as well as being asked to call into question other socio-ecologically related practices through interaction with guest speakers and program teachers. Kim, a student in the Montessori program, hints at the way a presentation by a group of

youths cycling across the country impacted her thinking about her own implicatedness in global issues:

We had a group come in and speak on various global issues in Kenya and they talked about water and health and AIDS and various different issues, and it just makes us aware. And they said just a few things we could do, um, you know, not eat at fast food restaurants that don't have recycled paper; when you have showers, have staggered showers, so, you know, just turn off and on the water as you need to; um, just various things, you know; get a low flow toilet. There are so many things to save energy, water, food, everything, so - That's enlightening: the speakers we have come in and the field trips we go on... Otesha, was a big one. That's the one I remember - because it was recent and because it was just really, um, they shared their stories about when they were Kenya, so that was just a, you know, "Whoa. Okay." (Kim, 15)

Kim suggests that hearing stories about issues experienced by people in Africa from Canadian youth similar to her, brought home the ways in which her lifestyle is connected to global problems.

Although engaging in "testimonial readings" initiated through various experiences such as this one, students in the Montessori program do not tend to express a sense of "contingent agency" in the ways that they view themselves, but instead suggest quite stable and authentic perceptions of self. The pedagogy that they are engaged with focuses, not on their positioning in relation to discourses of neutrality, individual achievement, critique, and so on, but on a discourse of lifestyle activism which runs the risk of bringing about surface change while leaving more systemic concerns unexamined.

As suggested by the discourses of “good fortune” and “inactive caring” expressed by students in the Hillview Global Education class, I did not detect signs of “testimonial readings” at this site. For me, one of the most striking facets of this research has been a greater sense of how issues of class play into efforts at socio-ecological education. The discourses of “modest aspirations” and “lack of agency” expressed by Hillview students, stand out in stark contrast to the discourses of “individual achievement” and “agency” that are so much a part of the lives of many of the middle and upper class students at Kirkwood and Lawson. The parallel contrast between the socio-ecological discourses of “good fortune/inactive caring” common at Hillview and those of “lifestyle activism/activism as influence” prevalent at Kirkwood and Lawson are made much more poignant in this context. Exploring how pedagogy seeking to engage students in “testimonial readings” and “collective witnessing” of their own experience would fare across settings and classes remains for further examination, as it seems more than possible that related subject positions of self-critic and contingent agent are less likely to be available to working class students.

Other educators and researchers have suggested how a more systemic exploration of socio-ecological subject positioning might be encouraged through more intentional readings of the “text” of experience (e.g., Davies, 2000;

Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994). In discussing her own teaching, Rachael Martin (2001) writes:

In the classroom, students will often dismiss statistics regarding discrimination as inaccurate or outdated and personal accounts as too subjective. When we try to prove the existence of bigotry, we can feel like we're banging our heads against a wall. A different approach is to disentangle how it is we come to think and see what we see, making it possible to think and see differently. (p. 54)

This disentangling entails questioning "[i]dentity locations and understandings constructed in the [student's] everyday experiences such as school, textbooks, family and community, television, video games, and so on" (Luke & Luke, 1995, p. 372). These experiences can be seen as "texts" and as repositories for social constructions (Hill Collins, 2000). The reading of the text is the curriculum, "a curriculum designed not so much to oppose a counter-hegemonic meaning system against a dominant one as to ask us to insert ourselves into the discourses that envelop us" (Lather, 1991, p. 145). Martin (2001) provides some examples of the types of questions that may be helpful for students and teachers to work with in their "disentangling" readings: (i) who benefits from presenting this idea as fact?, (ii) how is it your (our) self-interest to believe...?, (iii) how does it work against you (us) to believe this?, (iv) who has something to gain from asking these very questions?, and (v) who has something to lose? (p. 54).

Addressing “that spiral of despair” that can be brought on by a resulting “shattering” of previous ways of viewing the world, Boler (1999) suggests two positive responses:

To question the familiar may lead to a greater sense of connection, a fuller sense of meaning, and in the end a greater sense of “comfort” with who we have “chosen” to be and how we act in our lives. Second, the conceptual tool of learning to bear witness to ourselves allows a breathing space. Rather than feel immersed in a torn, excavated, gutted sense of self we can undertake discomfort as an approach: an approach to how we see. Through the capacity to shift our positionality and modes of seeing, we can allow ourselves to inhabit the “old, familiar” spaces and begin our process of inquiry by noticing where we are presently situated. (p. 197)

In contrast to Bowers’ (2001) fears, a pedagogy which emphasizes our positioning through an examination of discourse and a sense of “contingent agency” does not need to mean a leaving behind of *all* that is familiar, but rather perhaps a less conflicted connection to those “traditions” seen as worthy of upholding. In this there seems a potential for supporting more consistent and powerful forms of activism, which do not entail an erasure of diversity: students as butterflies *and* parrots.

Final Words

My principal concern in this text has been to suggest the ways in which socio-ecological education programs, and all of us as educators and researchers,

participate in a complex web of discourse that makes certain subject positions more readily available to students, with consequences that may run counter to our pedagogical intent. If we leave this process of discursive positioning to function under the level of conscious awareness, we limit our abilities to develop more powerful and consistent forms of socio-ecological action. The programs included in this study stand out from many others in their efforts to engage students in socio-ecological knowing and activism. Yet the talk of students and teachers suggests the critical role played by students' subjectivity in determining program outcomes. This exploration of the complexity and contradiction inherent in these programs seeks to encourage greater consideration of the possibilities for "collective witnessing" of the world views, or discourses, that underlie teaching and research in the arenas of "global" and "environmental" education.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS
ROOM 2105 STRAND HALL



BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: 604-291-3447
FAX: 604-268-6785

September 13, 2004

Ms. Marcia McKenzie
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Dear Ms. McKenzie:

**Re: Parrots and butterflies: Students as the subjects
of socio-ecological education – Ref. #34231**
Title Change

Your application for a title change from, "Student knowing and being in the world otherwise: education concerned with social and ecological issues", has been categorized as Minimal Risk and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with REB policy.

The Board reviews and may amend decisions made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair, at their regular monthly meetings.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director
Office of Research Ethics

c: Dr. Mark Fettes, Supervisor

/jmy

Appendix B: Validity Check List

Transgressive Validity: A Simulacrum (Lather, 1993, pp. 685-686)

Ironic validity

- foregrounds the insufficiencies of language and the production of meaning-effects, produces truth as a problem
- resists the hold of the real; gestures toward the problematics of representation; foregrounds a suggestive tension regarding the referent and its creation as an object of inquiry
- disperses, circulates and proliferates forms, including the generation of research practices that take the crisis of representation into account
- creates analytic practices which are doubled without being paralyzed

Paralogical validity

- fosters differences and heterogeneity via the search for “fruitful interruption”
- implodes controlling codes, but still coherent with present forms of intelligibility
- anticipatory of a politics that desires both justice and the unknown, but refuses any grand transformation
- concerned with undecidables, limits, paradoxes, discontinuities, complexities
- searches for the oppositional in our daily practices, the territory we already occupy

Rhizomatic validity

- unsettles from within, taps underground
- generates new locally determined norms of understanding; proliferates open-ended and context-sensitive criteria; works against reinscription of some new regime, some new systematicity
- supplements and exceeds the stable and the permanent, Derridean play
- works against constraints of authority via relay, multiple openings, networks, complexities of problematics
- puts conventional discursive procedures under erasure, breaches congealed discourses, critical as well as dominant

Voluptuous validity

- goes too far toward disruptive excess, leaky, runaway, risky practice

- embodies a situated, partial, positioned, explicit tentativeness
- constructs authority via practices of engagement and self-reflexivity
- creates a questioning text that is bounded and unbounded, closed and opened
- brings ethics and epistemology together

Appendix C: Participant Introductory Letter

4125 Fairway Place
North Vancouver, BC
V7G 1Y8, Canada
mdmckenz@sfu.ca

April 7, 2003

To Students and Parents or Guardians,

I am writing with hopes that you will be interested in participating in a research project involving [particular setting at school name]. The project is being undertaken as part of doctoral thesis research in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University.

The overall goal of the project is to explore various perspectives on how education concerned with social and ecological issues may affect students' knowing and acting in the world. The following issues indicate the type of questions the research will focus on:

- What is taught in the [setting] that relates to social and ecological issues?
- What factors may be influencing what is taught in the [setting]?
- How does what is taught correspond or conflict with what is taught by other sources?
- What is learned in the [setting], explicitly and implicitly, that relates to social and ecological issues?
- What is the impact of the [setting] on students' current and future lives?

As part of this research, I will be observing classes in the [research setting] and conducting interviews and possibly focus group discussions with interested students and teachers currently or previously involved in the [setting]. In addition, I am hoping that students, teachers, and parents or guardians will be interested in completing a survey on their experiences with the [setting] and/or commenting on their experiences online. This research will take place between April and June, and possibly September and October, 2003. The enclosed information document outlines the project in more detail and is accompanied by forms for students and parents or guardians to sign indicating their consent of student participation in this research project.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the address above.

Sincerely,

Marcia McKenzie

Appendix D: Participant Information Document

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Research Project Information Document

Name of project: Student Knowing and Being in the World Otherwise: Education Concerned with Social and Ecological Issues

Place: [school name and location]

What the participant will be required to do in the project:

In consenting to participation in this research project, you are indicating your willingness to be observed in class or extracurricular interactions on up to 15 occasions and to be audiotaped, videotaped, or photographed at these times.

You are also indicating your interest in possibly being involved in one or several recorded interviews and/or focus group discussions that will be from 30 minutes to 2 hours in length and will take place at a time least disruptive to you, as well as possibly completing a narrative survey form and making other text contributions by paper, e-mail, or online.

In addition, you are consenting to possibly having these data included on the research project website with the approval of faculty members at [school name].

Overall goal of the project:

The overall goal of the project is to explore various perspectives on how education concerned with social and ecological issues may affect students' knowing and acting in the world. Some guiding questions in this exploration include:

- What is taught in the [class/program/school], intentionally and unintentionally, that relates to social and ecological issues?
- What factors may be influencing what is taught in the [class/program/school]?
- How does what is taught correspond and/or conflict with what is taught to students by other sources?
- What is learned in the [class/program/school], explicitly and implicitly, that relates to social and ecological issues?
- What is the impact of the [class/program/school], if any, on students' current and future lives?

Risks and benefits to participants, third parties, or society:

The potential risks of participating in this study include the time and effort involved in responding to survey and/or interview and focus group questions. There is some possibility that these questions, the discussions they provoke, or the results of the research may be distressing for participants.

The potential benefits of participating in this study include the possibility of developing a greater understanding of oneself and one's community through learning instigated by the research process and results. Other potential benefits include helping further the practical and theoretical foundations of education concerned with social and ecological issues.

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity:

Efforts to ensure confidentiality will include changing names of research participants in all written documents, as well as keeping all research documents in a locked location throughout the study and for five years following its completion. Following that period, data will either continue to be kept in a locked location or will be destroyed.

Although names *will not* be associated with video footage or photographs included on the research project website, it is possible that participants may be identified by website viewers.

Approvals that may be required from agencies, communities or employers:

Approval for this research project has been granted by the Research Review Board at Simon Fraser University.

Please contact me at the address below with any questions or concerns. Thank you very much for your participation in this study!

Sincerely,

Marcia McKenzie

4125 Fairway Place
North Vancouver, BC, V7G 1Y8
mdmckenz@sfu.ca

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent by Participants in the Research Project

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the project, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by the law. You will not be required to write your name on any other identifying information on research materials. Materials will be maintained in a secure location.

Name of project: Student Knowing and Being in the World Otherwise: Education Concerned with Social and Ecological Issues

Investigator name: Marcia McKenzie

Investigator department: Faculty of Education

Having been asked to participate in a research project, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the information documents, describing the project. I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part in the project or experiment, as stated below.

Risks and benefits:

The potential risks of participating in this study include the time and effort involved in responding to survey and/or interview and focus group questions. There is some possibility that these questions, the discussions they provoke, or the results of the research may be distressing for participants.

The potential benefits of participating in this study include the possibility of developing a greater understanding of oneself and one's community through learning instigated by the research process and results. Other potential benefits include helping further the practical and theoretical foundations of education concerned with social and ecological issues.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics or the researcher named above or with the Director of the Faculty of Education as shown below:

Director of the Faculty of Education: Dr. K. Toohey or Director of Research Ethics: H. Weinberg

at 8888 University Way, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Canada.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting:

Marcia McKenzie
4125 Fairway Place
North Vancouver, BC, V7G 1Y8
mdmckenz@sfu.ca

I understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study of this kind.

What the participant is required to do:

In consenting to participation in this research project, you are indicating your willingness to be observed in class or extracurricular interactions on up to 15 occasions and to be audiotaped, videotaped, or photographed at these times.

You are also indicating your interest in possibly being involved in one or several recorded interviews and/or focus group discussions that will be from 30 minutes to 2 hours in length and will take place at a time least disruptive to you, as well as possibly completing a narrative survey form and making other text contributions by paper, e-mail, or online.

In addition, you are consenting to possibly having these data included on the research project website with the approval of faculty members at [school name].

Participant Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Participant Contact Information: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Witness: _____

Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Appendix F: Parental Consent Form

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Minors:

Consent by Parent or Guardian to Allow Participation in Research Project

Name of project: Student Knowing and Being in the World Otherwise: Education Concerned with Social and Ecological Issues

Investigator name: Marcia McKenzie

Investigator department: Faculty of Education

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and to ensure your full understanding of the procedures, risks, and benefits described below.

Risks and benefits:

The potential risks of participating in this study include the time and effort involved in responding to survey and/or interview and focus group questions. There is some possibility that these questions, the discussions they provoke, or the results of the research may be distressing for participants.

The potential benefits of participating in this study include the possibility of participants developing a greater understanding of themselves and their community through learning instigated by the research process and results. Other potential benefits include helping further the practical and theoretical foundations of education concerned with social and ecological issues.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project; that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document; and that you voluntarily agree to allow the minor named below to participate in the project.

Name of Parent, Guardian or other (PRINT): _____

Who is the (*relationship to minor*) (PRINT): _____ of

First name of minor (PRINT): _____ Last name of minor (PRINT): _____ at [school name and location].

I certify that I understand the procedures to be used and have fully explained them to the minor under my care. He/she knows that I or he/she has the right to withdraw from the project at any time, and that any complaints about the research project may be brought to the chief researcher named above or to:

Director of the Faculty of Education: **or** Director of Research Ethics:

Dr. K. Toohey

H. Weinberg

at 8888 University Way, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Canada.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting the researcher named below:

Marcia McKenzie
4125 Fairway Place, North Vancouver, BC V7G 1Y8
mdmckenz@sfu.ca

Last Name of Parent or Guardian: _____ First Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G: Educator Consent Form

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Consent by Teacher or Administrator to

Allow Student Participation in Research

Name of project: Student Knowing and Being in the World Otherwise: Education Concerned with Social and Ecological Issues

Investigator name: Marcia McKenzie

Investigator department: Faculty of Education

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and to ensure your full understanding of the procedures, risks, and benefits described below.

Risks and benefits:

The potential risks of participating in this study include the time and effort involved in responding to survey and/or interview and focus group questions. There is some possibility that these questions, the discussions they provoke, or the results of the research may be distressing for participants.

The potential benefits of participating in this study include the possibility of participants developing a greater understanding of themselves and their community through learning instigated by the research process and results. Other potential benefits include helping further the practical and theoretical foundations of education concerned with social and ecological issues.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project; that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document; and that you voluntarily agree to allow the students under your care to participate in the project.

Name of Teacher or Administrator (PRINT): _____

Who is the (*relationship to participants*) (PRINT): _____

of the students at [school name and location].

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H: Interview and Focus Group Guide

The following are examples are the types of questions that were asked in interviews and focus group discussions with students and teachers participating in the research:

Students

- How did you get involved in this class/program/school?
- How would you describe your values? What things are important to you?
- What kinds of things do you think have affected who you are today (e.g., culture, surroundings, life events, people, lessons, etc.)?
- What things do you think will affect who you are ten years from now?
- What kind of activities do you participate in and how are these activities similar or different, if at all, to those you participated in before their involvement in this class/program/school?
- How do your values affect the choices you make in your life?
- Do you have any specific dreams or goals for the future?
- What do you think you are learning in this class/program/school?

- Can you give me an example of a time you learned something really valuable in this class/program/school? What made it valuable to you?
- How does what is taught here correspond and/or conflict with what is taught by other sources (e.g., parents or guardians, community, media, entertainment, etc.)?
- Do you believe your experience in this class/program/school has affected the way you will live your life?

Teachers

- How do students get involved in this class/program/school?
- How would you describe the values of the students that you work with?
- How would you describe your values? What things are important to you?
- What kinds of things do you think have affected who you are today?
- Are you involved in any activities outside of your work here?
- What are trying to teach students in relation to social and ecological issues?
- What kinds of philosophies or methods do you consider in your teaching around social and ecological issues?
- What do you think students are learning, implicitly and explicitly, in relation to social and ecological issues?

- Can you give me some examples of times that stick out in your mind from your work here?
- How does what is taught here correspond and/or conflict with what might be learned by students from other sources (e.g., parents or guardians, community, media, entertainment, etc.)?
- How do you see what is taught here being reflective or contradictory to the cultural values of yourself, your students, North American society, etc.?
- What kinds of other activities do your students participate in and how might they be similar or different, if at all, to those they participated in before their involvement in this class/program/school?
- Do you believe the education these students are getting here will affect the ways they will live their lives?

Appendix 1: Survey

www.otherwise-ed.ca **Research Project Survey for Students**

As part of a research study on how education concerned with social and ecological issues may affect students' knowing and acting in the world, I would really like to hear your views on the questions below. More information on the study is available on the second page of this document. Please take as much space as you need to answer the questions and when you are finished please save this survey to your computer and then e-mail it to Marcia McKenzie at mdmckenz@otherwise-ed.ca as an attachment. **Thanks very much for your contribution to this study.**

1) Are you connected with one of the research sites and, if so, which one? If not, how did you hear about this survey and where are you a student?

2) How old are you and what is your cultural background?

3) How would you describe your values? What things are important to you?

4) What kinds of things do you think have affected who you are today?

5) What kinds of values do you think are taught in your class, program, or school both consciously and unconsciously (if you are connected with one of the research sites, please respond with that setting in mind for all of the following questions)?

6) What do you think the teachers and administrators involved in your class/program/school are hoping to teach students in relation to social issues or environmental issues, if anything?

7) Do you think what is taught in your class/program/school corresponds and/or conflicts with what is taught by other sources (e.g., parents or guardians, community, media, etc.)? Please explain.

8) What do you think you are learning or have learned in your class/program/school in relation to social issues or environmental issues, if anything?

9) Do you believe your experiences in your class/program/school have affected the way you will live your life? Please explain.

10) Do you have any other comments on related topics?

References

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Althusser, L. (1984). *Essays on ideology*. London: New Left Books.
- Barron, D. (1995). Gendering environmental education reform: Identifying the constitutive power of environmental discourses. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 11, 107-120.
- Baudrillard, J. O. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.
- Bell, A. C., & Russell, C. L. (2000). Beyond human, beyond words: Anthropocentrism, critical pedagogy, and the poststructuralist turn. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 25 (3), 188-203.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Borgmann, A. (1992). *Crossing the postmodern divide*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bowers, C. A. (1995). *Educating for an ecologically sustainable culture: Rethinking moral education, creativity, intelligence, and other modern orthodoxies*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Bowers, C. A. (1997). *The culture of denial: Why the environmental movement needs a strategy for reforming universities and public schools*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Bowers, C. A. (2001). *Educating for eco-justice and community*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

- Britzman, D. P. (2000). "The question of belief": Writing poststructural ethnography. In E. A. St. Pierre & W. S. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 27-40). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1995). Contingent foundations. In S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell, & N. Fraser (Eds.), *Feminist contentions: A philosophical exchange*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 35-58.
- Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. London: Sage.
- Casey, K. (1995). The new narrative research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 211-253.
- Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. E. (Eds.). (1986). *Writing culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Conley, V. A. (1997). *Ecopolitics: The environment in poststructuralist thought*. London: Routledge.
- Connelly, M., & Clandinin, J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19 (4), 2-13.
- Constas, M. A. (1998). Deciphering postmodern educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 27 (9), 36-42.
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20, 43-63.
- Davies, B. (1993). *Shards of glass: Children reading and writing beyond gendered identities*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Davies, B. (2000). *A body of writing: 1990-1999*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Davies, B. (2003). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales: Preschool children and gender*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd Ed.)*, (pp. 1-29). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Ellsworth, E. (1989, August). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59 (3), 297-325.
- Erickson, F., & Shultz, J. (1992). Students' experiences of the curriculum. In P. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 465-485). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crisis of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fien, J. (1993). *Education for the environment: Critical curriculum theorizing and environmental education*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. R. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (1st Ed.)*, (pp. 70-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1996, Sept). Writing the "wrongs" of fieldwork: Confronting our own research/writing dilemmas in urban ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2 (3), 251-275.
- Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1998). *The unknown city: Lives of poor and working class young adults*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S., & Wong, L. (2000) For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd Ed.)*, (pp. 107-132). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flax, J. (1993). *Disputed subjects: Essays on psychoanalysis, politics and philosophy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (1992). Introduction. In N. Fraser, & S. L. Bartky (Eds.), *Revaluing French feminism: Critical essays on difference, agency, and culture* (pp. 1-24). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings (1972-1977)*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

- Foucault, M. (1982/2003). The subject and power. In P. Rabinow, & N. Rose (Eds.), *The essential Foucault* (pp. 126-144). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.
- Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In M. M. Gergen, & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender* (pp. 50-64). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gaudelli, W. (2003). *World class: Teaching and learning in global times*. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2000). Qualitative inquiry: Tensions and transformations. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed.), (pp. 1025-1046). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gough, A. (1997). Founders of environmental education: Narratives of the Australian environmental education movement, *Environmental Education Research*, 3, pp. 43-57
- Gough, A. (1999). Recognizing women in environmental education pedagogy and research: Toward an ecofeminist poststructuralist perspective. *Environmental Education Research*, 5(2), 143-161.
- Gough, A., & Whitehouse, H. (2003). The "nature" of environmental education research from a feminist poststructuralist viewpoint. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 8, 31-43.
- Gough, N. (1991). Narrative and nature: Unsustainable fictions in environmental education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 7, 31-42.
- Gough, N. (1993). Environmental education, narrative complexity and postmodern science/fiction. *International Journal of Science Education*, 15(5), 607-625.
- Gough, N. (1999). Rethinking the subject: (De)constructing human agency in environmental education research. *Environmental Education Research*, 5 (1), 35-48.

- Grumet, M. (1991). The politics of personal knowledge. In C. Witherell & N. Noddings (Eds.), *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education* (pp. 67-77). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. *Modernity and its futures* (pp. 273-316). S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: The Open University.
- Hart, P. (2003). *Teachers thinking in environmental education: Consciousness and responsibility*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000). What's going on? Black feminist thought and the politics of postmodernism. In E. A. St. Pierre & W. S. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 41-73). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hollway, W. (1984). Gender difference and the production of subjectivity. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn, & V. Walkerdine (Eds.), *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity* (pp. 227-263). New York, NY: Methuen.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jackson, P. W., Boostrom, R. E., & Hansen, D. T. (1998). *The moral life of schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed.), (pp. 567-606). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kilbourne, J. (2000). *Killing us softly 3: Advertising's image of women*. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
- Kramer-Dahl, A. (1996). Reconsidering the notions of voice and experience in critical pedagogy. In C. Luke (Ed.), *Feminisms and pedagogies of everyday life*, (pp. 242-262). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. London, England: Routledge.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34 (4), 673-693.
- Lather, P. (1995, March). The validity of angels: Interpretive and textual strategies in researching the lives of women with HIV/AIDS. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(1), 41-69.
- Lather, P. (1996). Troubling clarity: The politics of accessible language, *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 525-545.
- Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Lee, A. and Poynton, C. (Eds.). (2000). *Culture and text: Discourse and methodology in social research and cultural studies*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Leitch, V. (1996). *Postmodernism: Local effects, global flows*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 275-289.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (2000). The seventh moment: Out of the past. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd Ed.)*, (pp. 1047-1065). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lousley, C. (1999). (De)politicizing the environment club: Environmental discourse and the culture of schooling. *Environmental Education Research*, 5(3), 293-304.
- Luke, A. (1997). Theory and practice in critical discourse analysis. In L. Saha (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the sociology of education*. St. Louis, MO: Elsevier Science.
- Luke, C. & Luke, A. (1995). Just naming: Educational discourses and the politics of identity. In W. T. Pink & G. W. Noblit (Eds.), *Continuity and contradiction: The futures of the sociology of education* (pp. 357-380). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

- Lyotard, J. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacLure, M. (2003). *Discourse in educational and social research*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Mansfield, N. (2000). *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press.
- Martin, R. (2001). *Listening up: Reinventing ourselves as teachers and students*. Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook Publishers.
- Martusewicz, R. A. (1992). Mapping the terrain of the post-modern subject: Post-structuralism and the educated woman. In W. F. Pinar, & W. M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text* (pp. 131-158). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- McKenzie, M. (2003). Beyond "the Outward Bound process:" Rethinking student learning. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 26(1), 8-23.
- McKenzie, M. & Blenkinsop, S. (in press). *An ethic of care as curriculum theory*. The Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning.
- McKenzie, M. & Fettes, M. (2002). *Imaginative education as praxis*. Unpublished research report, Imaginative Education Research Group, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.
- McLeod, J. (2000). Subjectivity and schooling in a longitudinal study of secondary students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 21 (4), 501-521.
- McTaggart, R. (1997). *Participatory action research: International contexts and sequences*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics & moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Orner, M. (1992). Interrupting the calls for student voice in "liberatory" education: A feminist poststructuralist perspective. In C. Luke & J. Gore

- (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 74-89). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Palmer, J. (1998). *Environmental education in the 21st century: Theory, practice, progress and promise*. London: Routledge.
- Pennycook, A. (1994). Incommensurable discourses? *Applied Linguistics*, 15 (2), 115-137.
- Physics World (1988, March). Comic. Used by permission of P. Rodgers (Ed.), *Physics world magazine*. London: Institute of Physics Publishing Limited.
- Pike, G. (2000). Global education and national identity: In pursuit of meaning. *Theory into Practice*, 39(2), 64-73.
- Pile, S., & Thrift, N. (1995). *Mapping the subject: Geographies of cultural transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Raths, L. E., Harmin, M., & Simon, S. B. (1966). *Values and teaching*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Richardson, L. (1988). The collective story: Postmodernism and the writing of sociology. *Sociological Focus*, 21(3), 199-208.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd Ed.)*, (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rickinson, M. (2001). Learners and learning in environmental education: A critical review of the evidence. *Environmental Education Research*, 7 (3), 207-320.
- Ruddick, J., Day, J., & Wallace, G. (1997). Students' perspectives on school improvement. *ASCD year book*, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Russell, C. L., & Bell, A. C. (1996). A politicized ethic of care: Environmental education from an ecofeminist perspective. In K. Warren (Ed.), *Women's voices in experiential education* (pp. 172-181). Dubuque, IO: Kendall/Hunt.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1997). *Research method in the postmodern*. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

- Seidman, S. (1994). *Contested knowledge: Social theory in the postmodern era*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- SooHoo, S. (1993, Summer). Students as partners in research and restructuring schools. *The Educational Forum*, 57 (4), 386-393.
- Søndergaard, D. M. (2002). Poststructuralist approaches to empirical analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15 (2), 187-204.
- St. Pierre, E. A., & Pillow, W. S. (2000). Introduction: Inquiry among the ruins. In E. A. St. Pierre & W. S. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 1-26). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1996). Farewell to criteriology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 58-72.
- Tye, K. A. (1991). *Global education: From thought to action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tye, K. A. (2003, October). Global education as a worldwide movement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85 (2), 165-168.
- Walkerdine, V. (1989). *Counting girls out*. London: Virago.
- Walkerdine, V. (1997). *Daddy's girl: Young girls and popular culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walkerdine, V. (Ed.). (2002). *Challenging subjects: Critical psychology for a new millennium*. London: Palgrave.
- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H., & Melody, J. (2001). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press.
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Whitehorse, H. (2001). Not greenies at school: Discourses of environmental activism in Australia. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 17, 71-76.

Whitehorse, H. (2002). Landshaping: A concept for exploring the construction of environmental meanings within tropical Australia. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 18, 57-62.

Willinsky, J. (1998). *Learning to divide the world: Education at empire's end*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Van Galen, J., & Eaker, D. J. (1995). Beyond settling for scholarship: On defining the beginning and ending points of postmodern research. W. T. Pink & G. W. Noblit (Eds.), *Continuity and contradiction: The futures of the sociology of education*, (pp. 113-132). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.