
**Postmodern Leadership and the Policy Lexicon:
From Theory, Proxy to Practice**

Trent Keough, Ph.D. & Brian Tobin, M.Ed.

prepared for the

**2001 Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda Symposium
Teacher Education/Educator Training: Current Trends and Future Directions**

May 22-23, 2001
Laval University, Quebec City

Abstract

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Institutions define their cultures through policies prescribing operations and functions that sustain the hyperreality implied in mission and vision. These institutional policies can manifest key attributes of postmodernism thereby influencing, and being influenced by, postmodern leadership practice.

A literature review of writings on postmodernism provides an essential link to ontological theory asserting the appropriateness of a postmodern lexicon for leadership and policy development. The rudimentary tenets of the postmodern lexicon exist in policy structures and are manifested in the policy lexicon of colleges.

Policy documents can outline the relationship between the Postmodern Proxy and organizational structure. The collective value drawn from individual volition evolves from the Postmodern Proxy giving life first to mission/vision and subsequently to institutional goals. Acceptance of a defined hyperreality linking the Postmodern Proxy to institutional identity is essential to stakeholder growth and development.

The institutional leader must concentrate on perpetuating a hyperreality, derived from vision and mission that cannot be destroyed by misguided interpretations of discourse, diminished by local narratives or dissolved by inept use of power. For the administrator and the leader within a postmodern institution, nothing is inherently stable -- not even the institutional hyperreality itself. The challenge for institutional leaders is to: retain an unwavering commitment to reflexivity, champion an awareness that administrative autonomy is fundamentally imaginative, and to acknowledge that privilege is a product of respect earned from nurturing positive and beneficial relationships.

Postmodern Leadership and the Policy Lexicon: From Theory, Proxy to Practice

Administrators at public colleges share the challenges of working with diminishing operational resources.¹ They grapple with the task of defining effective administrative systems. A bewildering number of best management practices and leadership theories are available to public college administrators. These administrators invariably take what they need from a plethora of leadership stratagems and administrative resources crossing numerous disciplines.² They are successful by adopting advanced business management and innovative leadership practices. Hierarchical management structures and vertical decision-making have evolved into team governance and consensual processes. Evidence based decision-making and zero-based budgeting have eroded presumptions of entitlement. Administrative accountability measures are commonly linked to key performance indicators. College administrative practices have also been revolutionized by: evolving expectations of acceptable career paths, linking program funding directly to guaranteed employability opportunities, redefinition of traditional learning modes and learner centered practices, utilization of technology in the classroom, and by competition from effective private colleges.

Openness to what works best reflects a proactive approach to necessary professional development. It also underscores the absence of fundamental consistency and shared vision in the field of college administrative practice: “Lack of a sense of stability and direction is one of the major problems of contemporary culture and is a factor in today’s reactionary trends in religion, politics, education, and other spheres” (Beck, 1993, p. 6).

Much of the legacy of [college administration theory] has and continues to be flirtation with faddish management trends and writers in the business arena. Previously intellectually dead concepts such as *trait theory* . . . are reborn as ‘habits’ as in Covey’s (1991) best-selling book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People or Senge’s (1990) The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization in which organizations assume human characteristics and cause and effect relationships are established. (English, 1997, p.14)³

Leadership theories isolated from the specifics of circumstance presume that institutions are static, that there is one leadership type applicable to every situation in time. Analysis of organizational biology indicates that this is not the case: “One way to examine strategic leadership development is to discuss what happens to an organization as it evolves over time” (Vicere, 1995, p. 11).

Alienation from local institutional realities creates a false apprehension as to what leadership strategies would be most applicable. A compulsion to adopt generic leadership solutions underscores the failure of critical self-reflection and inadequate attention to specific organizational circumstances: “For [D. Schön], the critical competence for all professionals is ‘reflection’ . . . This, in his view, is the key to acquiring all other competencies and to maintaining a process of continuous improvement” (Cheetham & Chivers, 1998, p. 267). College administrators must develop, through time, an arsenal of administrative and reflective practices

unique to periods of institutional growth and decay. The natural cultural impulse, however, is to dislocate the present moment from future prospects by the drive of urgency: “the present collapses past and future into an ephemeral now” (Berthon & Katsikeas, 1998, p. 152). This urgency is the result of attitudes to change: “It’s a hurricane season And everyone is restructuring, reorganizing, reinventing, downsizing, outsizing - - all at an ultrasonic pace.” (Kreigel & Brandt, 1996, p. 2).

An effect of this ‘urgency’ is the undermining of sound but conventional management practices, and the de-valuing of traditional administrative traits not couched in current jargon: “To deny continuity and commonality where it in fact exists . . . betrays an absolutist attachment to such values as innovation, originality, and diversity” (Beck, 1993, p. 4).⁴ For example, there is a common error in leadership and administrative discourse of linking *manager and management* with *bureaucracy and hierarchy* thereby implying that management skills are not applicable outside of a bureaucracy: “There is not much interest in the old mainstay management training. Managers are often seen as bureaucrats whose major contribution is to create complexity and manage the status quo” (Fulmer & Vicere, 1995, p. 1).⁵

According to Robert P. Gephart (1996), hierarchal management structures can be linked to the evolution of modernism. Modernist management theory evolved in the confines of industrial capitalism and was built on the premise of organizational hierarchies (p. 92). The same preponderance on reason, rationality, and authority that gave rise to the scientific methods of modernism were focal in the evolution of management theory and practice: “. . . management education was developed in an effort to create a force or ‘carrier’ for technical rationality in organizations” (p. 92). A decline of management hierarchies, then, signals a broader cultural shift in the apprehension of reason and also in the practice of management theory. The demise of hierarchal management structures also reveals the fallen nature of modernist management practices. The parameters of this complex cultural shift are defined within the dialectic of the modern-postmodern debate.⁶

Current modernist culture believes in the exclusivity of objective truth defined by reason and in the primacy of authority; *current* postmodern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority.⁷ In any college organization there are those individuals who are modernists working with, and against as circumstances determine or permit, those who are postmodernists. College administrators often fail to see how the two groups clash, support and encourage each other. Few college administrators have engaged in sufficient reflexivity so as to ascertain their own propensities for one or the other: “The most significant challenges in educational administration posed by postmodernism are to the concept of a stable knowledge base upon which to determine best or reflective practices” (English, 1998, p. 426). Better understanding of the postmodern, as a ‘platform of stability,’ will enable college administrators to make informed choices and facilitate more effective understanding in their workplaces.

The keynotes of postmodernism can be identified as: authority, power, victim status, language, relativism, accelerated time, introspection, spontaneity, and hybridization: “As a general cultural phenomenon, it has such features as the challenging of convention, the mixing of styles, tolerance of ambiguity, emphasis on diversity, acceptance (indeed celebration) of innovation and change, and stress on the constructedness of reality” (Beck, 1993, p. 2).

Postmodernism has been defined in literature, architecture, music, politics, sociology and numerous other disciplines.⁸ Yet, “[d]espite its significance in the past three decades the modern/postmodern debate has had relatively little direct impact on the study of higher education” (Bloland, 1995, p. 522).⁹ Critics of postmodernism inaccurately separate the *modern* from the *postmodern* to create binary oppositions:

Exhibit [A]: A comparison of modernity and postmodernity’s epistemological presuppositions.

Modernity . . .	Postmodernity . . .
Consensus	Dissensus
Conformity	Plurality
Homogeneity	Heterogeneity
Universality	Multiplicity
Generalizability	Localization/contextualization
Commensurability	Incommensurability
Hierarchy/subordination	Non-hierarchical
Hegemonical	Anti-hegemonic
Metaprescriptions	Case by Case
Foundational	De-foundational
Totalizing	Diversity
Erection of boundaries	Collapse of boundaries
Subject/object dialectics	Subject/object dissolution
Normalizing	Temporizing
Stability	Impermanence
Suppression of difference	Pursuit of difference
Ignore silences	Identify silences
A priori essences	Rejects such essences
Macropolitics	Micropolitics
Centering	Marginality
Continuities	Discontinuities
Patterns	Ruptures
Order	Displacement
Definitional	Anti-definitional
Mystifying	De-mystifying
Legitimizing	De-legitimizing

(English, 1998, p. 433)

The two are not separate but part of a singular whole, albeit an oxymoronic one to be sure. The duality grows out of importance given to individual volition in the definition of acceptable vested interests. Postmodern culture can be traced to the celebration of the individual’s right to be different, to dissent, to live a life of non-conformity. There is some concurrence that popularized existential phenomenology furthered the evolution of postmodernism.¹⁰ Existentialism makes relative each and every assumption typically ascribed to

conventional patterns of self-definition. Individual volition, freedom to choose, supplants any concept of predetermination authorized by nature/nurture or godhead.¹¹

Ability to exercise the right of individual choice and the opportunity for self-satisfaction are essential in postmodern culture. In prior times, the individual was valued by his or her ability and willingness to suppress individual desire in favor of advocating for family structure, community, institution. The value of the institution was determined outside of the individual. Individuals were cogs performing for some greater good for which they suppressed their individual wills: “Research indicates that when employees feel part of a team they are more inclined to give up their limited self-interest for the overriding welfare of the group” (Kriegel & Brandt, 1996, p. 263). The individualism which is focal to postmodernism makes relative prior assumptions of self-effacement. The individual is not expected to commit, perform, or contribute unless the collective vision is supportive of personal vision. There is no longer the assumption that an employee will perform the assigned task as intended by another unless there is a correlation between the assignment and personal interest¹²: “Many organizations today fail to tap into their potential. Why? Because the only reward they give their employees is a paycheck. . . . Successful organizations take a different approach. In exchange for the work a person gives, he receives not only his paycheck, but also nurturing from the people for whom he works” (Maxwell, [1998], p. 61).

In our postmodern epoch, individual human agency (ontology) is given to organizational structures (cf. English, 1997, p. 14). The authority once ascribed to the modern CEO or the patriarch of pre-modern times is disembodied, taken from a specific individual, and reconstituted in or projected to the organization itself. Authority is granted to the organization via the individual’s proxy, not by any other means. To date, this proxy has not been articulated in terms of postmodernism but may be conceptually presented as follows:

The Postmodern Proxy

I am here voluntarily; I could easily choose to work elsewhere. My work has real value and my skills are essential to the organization. Obligations I undertake are self-chosen and have the force of my convictions.

I commit to making X-contribution as defined by my contract of services to be rendered. I will receive financial remuneration as well as other intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for these services.

Dedication to these services symbolizes my devotion to arriving at X-institutional goals as articulated by my personal appreciation of and commitment to institutional mission and vision statements.

Achievement of these institutional goals marks the fulfillment of institutional purpose and my successful contribution to it.

Organizational purpose is measured as the total value accrued by unity of collective services. I have to be interested in and value others' efforts and contributions as their works directly impact on my own success.

Without commitment to institutional success, the achieving of organizational purpose, I have no basis for contribution in the institution. Hence, I freely choose to belong, to commit, to serve, and to seek personal fulfillment at work.

Individuals choose to align personal interests with the health and well-being of an organizational structure embodied, in hyperreality only, by the alignment of the Postmodern Proxy with the self-image projected through institutional mission and vision statements¹³: "The postmodern corporation . . . does not control the symbolic reality of its members per se. Rather individuals participate in the symbolic reality postulated by the organization" (Schultz, 1996, p. 169).

The hyperreality or 'symbolic reality' created by the success of the Postmodern Proxy gives the organization a self-image drawn via group assent. The organization becomes a projection of its individual constituents' assumptions of personal empowerment. Pamela D. Schultz argues that postmodern organizations are "intentional actors" (1996, p.179); each "postmodern corporation must develop and sustain its own personality, which is key to corporate success" (p. 180).¹⁴ The organization is humanized in terms of mission and vision statements which mimic the natural human impulse, as defined in existential phenomenology, to permanently define/objectify the self in time and space. In the context of humanizing an organization's mission, administrative leaders take on somewhat missionary roles wherein they bring the 'word' of institutional vision to their potential fellows: "Postmodern leaders . . . assist the group in deriving a sense of mission to guide their work"(Sackney, Walker & Mitchell, 1999, p. 46). A focus on the expertise of postmodern leaders, a recognition of the primacy of specialized knowledge associated with visionary leadership, gives only momentary credence to the thesis that contemporary leadership is even more sophisticated in its manipulatory practices than its modernist predecessor (cf. Gephart, 1996, pp. 92-93). Visionary leadership inspires change wrought from voluntary choices, not subtle/overt coercion.

Postmodern theory assumes the demise of authority figures.¹⁵ Yet, when we write of postmodernism we adhere to modernist and conventional patterns of linear logic and use specialized language empowered with authority. Why? One part of the answer is, 'Tradition.' Academics are invariably creatures of tradition. There must always be a beginning, middle and end to our written works. Further, there is consensus on what constitutes a legitimate academic voice with appropriate textual authority. Authors who lack the requisite credentials have only marginal legitimacy when discussing postmodernism. Even the Ph.D. is required to meet conventional expectations, perhaps manifested as house editorial rules, when preparing the written discourse for publication. This commissioned work you are reading is nothing different . . . only to this very point.

The article opens with introducing the topic of public community colleges. It then quickly moves to the tenet or thesis that there's merit in examining college leadership in the context of postmodernism. In fact, it goes so far as to state that it can only be that way as postmodernism is inescapable. It then gives a brief analysis of postmodernism. At the point in the writing where the thesis needs fine tuning, where the movements of the argument should be fully presented, we stop, here, to become self-reflexive and meta-critical. We had reached the point where the authors should silently indicate to the editors their fulfilling the terms of commission as presented in the original research proposal:

2. Research Issue: Educational Leadership in Postmodern Culture

Educational institutions are undergoing a period of radical self-invention. Forces causing this identity crisis include: the Internet's erasure of time and space constrictions, corporate enterprise entering the field of education, the decline of the Baby Boomer population, and the use of technology in the classroom.

There are a bewildering number of leadership strategies touted to ground educational administration in this time of chaos; none, however, realize that the only applicable style of educational leadership in the postmodern is postmodern leadership.

Educational institutions reflect the broader sociological underpinnings of their host cultures. Administrators are being challenged to define new organizational structures and find innovative leadership styles while responding to the varied needs of contemporary society.

Hierarchical management structures supported authoritarian leadership styles in the modern era. In the postmodern, horizontal management structures dictate collaboration and team-play for their success. Generalities aside, cultural self-definition is a complex and subtle process. Fortunately, the objective of this research is not to define postmodern culture; sufficient discussion of that domain already exists. This research project will use college policy statements as parameters defining institutional culture. Institutions define their cultures by strategic and operational policies

which prescribe day-to-day actions reflecting institutional vision and mandate.

In a postmodern college, these institutional policies should reflect the minute and general cultural attributes of postmodernism and prescribe effective postmodern leadership practices. This research will explore the role and explain the function of postmodern culture in the definition of contemporary educational administration and its leadership.

A standardized definition of postmodernism will be critically assessed in the context of four key institutional policies defining community college culture in Canada: Student Discipline, Program Development, Electronic Information, and Professional Development.

Fundamental research questions to be considered and/or answered include: Are public colleges postmodern? What are the effective leadership attributes of postmodern, educational leadership, as presently manifested in postmodern colleges? Are public colleges responding to postmodern culture? How can public colleges become purveyors of the postmodern? Are there stylized attributes of colleges struggling with the effects of postmodernism?

Instead of conforming to conventional expectation, the authority of the medium, the article itself, and the legitimacy of the authors' and article's authority now come under covert attack. The reader/editor each asks if the terms of the proposal have been fulfilled? You, the present reader, are trapped in this self-reflexive moment where the topics of writing, authorial power or intention, and the finished text or article each become subject. The commodification of scholarship is drawn to the foreground as the present work is commissioned. Content and process come under scrutiny so as to undermine any constructed authority, the authority of rhetorical argument presenting command of specialized knowledge.

This present moment of critical hyperreality, one set out in an academic context of meta-critical reflexivity, is neither ingenious nor original, but faux. Writing about writing, writing about the authority of writing, or writing on the act of writing embodied as reading is passé in postmodern circles. Only a modernist in transition will find it intellectually stimulating. In striving to foreground the idea of breaking conventional patterns of academic discourse we are, in fact, following strict rhetorical guidelines defined within postmodern tradition. Postmodernism eschews tradition as a false construction but supposedly has no conventions establishing its own

historical practice. But why, in the postmodern era, do we conform to tired modernist conventions pertaining to rhetorical argumentation?

Are we ignoring the power of Marshal McLuhan's much quoted adage that "the medium is the message"? Is the present thesis both the medium and subject? Or, is there an unstated game at work? Are the authors problematizing the process, so as to deflect attention from their work's weaknesses? Are we invoking the cult of knowledge ('Only a modernist in transition . . .') so as to demonstrate the modernist conventions of postmodernism or are we exhibiting our own smug superiority? Is the intent of the present questioning to stage a monologue, couched as a dialogue with the reader, so as to create a hyperreality of rhetorical engagement? Is this questioning meaningless? Does what you think have impact here? The words are fixed; the text, in its current iteration, is closed to the addition of words, to your input, but the meaning of the words themselves is indeterminate as language lacks closure.

A polemic of resistance emerges though silent and overt engagement with the editors and readership. There is a refusal to meet modernist expectations as to how an article on post-modernism should look: "To embrace conflict is a useful impetus for learning and growth. By facing openly and honestly the conflicts and the challenges encircling us, we are better equipped to avoid the temptation of considering the familiar to be the correct" (Sackney, et al., 1999, p. 45). How then are we to discuss, explore and discern postmodern college leadership when there is no certainty? When the very "article" is fraudulent, we are compromised at the outset. Not only do we lack a voice of authority, but we have no legitimate means to proceed. Frustrated? Such are the intellectual high jinks of academic discourses on postmodernism. We approach the self-constructed paradox of textual inappropriateness only to empower ourselves, the authors. Here we have only figuratively resisted academic patterns of explication, so as to show how true vision exists only at the margin: "Postmodern educational leaders need to establish relationships that break down the power differentials between positions" (p. 47). Nevertheless, we are left to complete the circle and demonstrate how leadership is determined in postmodern colleges

Leadership is not brought to or imposed within a postmodern college. Effective leadership of a postmodern college is determined within the organization itself. This leadership is characterized by the forming attributes of its present moment. Effective leadership of the future is designed by present circumstances and projected forward. According to Albert A. Vicere (1995), the most successful organizations manifest evidence of "adaptive creativity and innovative creativity" (p. 2) in the processes of self-conscious leadership development. This definition of an organization given to openness fits well with a leadership style drawing from the force of collective vision located in a hyperreality celebrating mutual consent and collaborative processes. Vicere says that "commitment to an ideal, a vision or a strategic intent is not sufficient. The organization also must have the ability to implement that ideal, to bring the ideal as close to reality as possible" (p. 5). The skills and techniques used to effect the necessary hyperreality for effective postmodern leadership are commonly described. In "Postmodern Conceptions of Power for Educational Leadership", Larry Sackney, Keith Walker and Coral Mitchell (1999) argue that the postmodern organization is "shaped by individual and group constructions and deconstructions of organizational reality" (p. 36).

These “individual and group constructions and deconstructions of organizational reality” are articulated by the Postmodern Proxy underlying the organization’s hyperreality. The idealized institutional identity postulated in the hyperreality is effected not through group theory wherein the individual loses primacy of self and assigns value to another, but by affirming the self’s value through the presence of others. This connection between the agency assigned to the postmodern organization and the hyperreality effected by the Postmodern Proxy is easily understood via the complex negation theory underling postmodernism.¹⁶ In Jean-Paul Sartre’s dichotomy of *pour soi* and *en soi*, the human *cogito* is being-for-itself (*pour soi*); “The *cogito* is only the manifestation of consciousness. In knowing I am conscious of knowing” (Satre, 1967, p. 114). Everything without the *cogito* has a being-in-itself (*en soi*), as inanimate objects and animals have no knowledge of being conscious of knowing (Grossmann, 1984, p. 201).

Sartre argues that it is a fundamental of the human condition to seek an idealized self-image that can only be attained through the affirming consciousness of another. The Sartrean “‘I which knows’ the ‘*soi*’ is always another who is capable of seeing the other ‘I’ as an object of perception (Satre, 1967, p. 123). Because we are incapable of apprehending ourselves as objects (of existing as beings-in-ourselves), incapable of escaping subjectivity, any apprehension ‘of the whole of consciousness’ entails a negation founded upon an internal contradiction. Sartre states that the *cogito* reflects a situation in which thoughts of the condition of self-attainment are only realized in the affirmations of another:

Thus the man who discovers himself directly in the *cogito* also discovers all the others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence. He recognizes that he cannot be anything . . . unless others recognize him as such. I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself [as an identifiable object], except through the mediation of another. . . . Thus, at once, we find ourselves in a world which is, let us say, that of ‘inter-subjectivity.’ (Sartre, 1970, p. 45)

The distinction between the self’s desire for the condition of *en soi* and its temporal realization in the consciousness of another, where the physical being of the opposing self is made into an image-cum-object and therefore given temporal meaning, creates an intersubjectivity founded upon negation.¹⁷ Herein lies one explanation for why postmodern leadership strategies can never be generic. The institution’s projected image exists only in the context of its constituency’s projected consciousness. The postmodern organization caters to a fundamental human impulse for self-definition.

Postmodern organizations respond directly to the need of the *pour soi* to seek the fixity of the *en soi* by linking individual self-definition to the group image/purpose articulated via mission and vision statements. While Sackney, et al. (1999), posits that the postmodern organization is characterized by: sharing of vested interests not craving of absolutist power (p. 44), a reliance on dialogue and discourse (p. 45), supposition of teamwork, utilization of “an interactive model with consensus-based committees, task forces, product development teams and problem-solving groups” (p. 46), there is no indication as to how a postmodern leader would enable, facilitate or

lead this organizational behavior. One way to achieve this knowledge would be to reflect on the function of negation theory in the definition and articulation of institutional mission statements and policies.

Postmodern college administrators are those capable of creating excitement about collectively defined goals wrought from an acceptable institutional mission. This mission is distilled into goals supporting the attainment of individual interests. Hence, the importance of the Postmodern Proxy. The goals are clear enough to open themselves to numerous strategies drawing from resident expertise of all stakeholders. In this way, the organization is projected as an embodiment of individual desires finding a positive congruence. The success of the organization cannot be separated from the fulfillment of individual stakeholder desires drawn into the hyperreality of organizational identity. On what basis, however, can we ascertain whether or not the characteristics of postmodernism have invaded the minds and modus operandi of college administrative leaders?

What good is all this discussion of multiple subjective truths, the demise of authority figures, *en soi* and *pour soi*, and a postmodern lexicon if it has no practical application to the administration of colleges of today? Is this exercise devoid of practical implications? Higher order thinking on this issue of postmodern leadership is essential.

Theory must be fundamentally rooted in practical experience if it is to be of value. The common professorial disclaimer that we are not 'equipped' to talk about practical matters appears humble but is in fact arrogant; and it betrays a lack of understanding of theory. *If we are not equipped to talk about practice, we are not equipped to talk about theory.* We must as far as possible address both theory and practice. That is the most effective way to contribute to education, which is our responsibility. (Beck, 1993, p. 10)

Administrators of colleges are predominantly concerned with filling seats in their institutions -- and with keeping them filled, not with enlarging philosophical discourse. With respect to the latter, you will find practical debates raging on enrollment strategies, retention issues, disciplinary procedures, technology integration and progressive program development. Such discourse will scarcely mention a word from the postmodern lexicon. Better yet, the policies that guide, and are guided by, administrative skill, knowledge and practice have not been developed with a manual on 'modern versus postmodern influences' at the ready

The degree of connectivity between self-conscious awareness of theory and practical application can be explored in relation to policy statements, the operating language of all colleges. Policy statements frame the idealized character of a college. These inevitably fall under the umbrella of the college's mission and/or act of government, and provide members of the college community with the capacity to perpetuate or undermine the culture projected for the institution. As a starting point, the language of policies will be compared to the language of postmodernism. Consider an adapted version of the 'postmodern lexicon' as stated by Hardy and Palmer (1999) relative to the 'policy lexicon' of colleges advanced in Table I.¹⁸ The 'policy

lexicon' was derived through identification of the typical headings used in policy statements by member institutions of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.¹⁹ Table I also illustrates the degree to which postmodernism influences the policy lexicon of colleges across the country. A sampling of actual words and phrases which typify the content of existing policy documents are provided under the 'Policy Sample Statements' heading. No attempt is made to identify specific colleges from whose policy documents the words and phrases have been excerpted. The intent here is not to focus on specific institutions but on relevant generalities.²⁰

TABLE 1

Policy Sample Statements	Policy Lexicon	Postmodern Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Enablers ... The College and Institutes Act. • Policies govern the operations and direction of the college. They provide a framework for decision-making and one within which the college can adapt to change. • The purpose of this policy is to describe the process that governs the approval of all new programs.... 	<p><i>Mission/Purpose/Policy Title/Topic/Subject-</i> Such terms as these are used to set the parameters of the hyperreality and evoke the objects of which they speak.</p>	<p><i>The linguistic turn</i></p> <p>The language that we use does not reflect reality, but rather it defines what we know and how we know it. Language produces the objects of which it speaks.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... shall encourage the development and maintenance of appropriate policies and procedures which will foster the achievement of the ... mission. • Students are members of a complex community and as such are required to obey the laws of the Dominion, the Province, and the City; to observe the rules of ... College; and to conduct themselves within the commonly accepted standards of behavior. • This policy applies to all registered students at the College. • This document, in conjunction with institutional policies and Ministry guidelines, provides a rational and consistent process to regulate the development and approval of all new ... programs.... 	<p><i>General Statement, Overall Concept and/or Scope of Policy</i> enable the connection between the Postmodern Proxy and the linguistic turn thereby creating the hyperreality.</p>	<p><i>Hyperreality</i></p> <p>Reality does not exist; it is simply an image created by the language we use; there are multiple realities, none of which are more or less real than the others; hyperreality is a reproduction of a reality, a real illusion.</p>

Policy Sample Statements	Policy Lexicon	Postmodern Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed below are the underlying principles which guide our practice ... • In areas where Board approved policy does not exist, the Administration will act based on a reasonable exercise of judgment. 	<p><i>Considerations and Beliefs/Principles</i> provide qualifying statements which may be interpreted as serving to constrain an overabundance of interpretations of the hyperreality.</p>	<p><i>Representation</i></p> <p>Because there is no single reality, any situation is open to multiple interpretations and, therefore, multiple representations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of policies ... policies are congruent with a system of policies so that there is consistency and coordinated effort. • The Internet Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the ... Committee, including at least the Webmaster, representation from College Relations, instructional areas, the Library, and other areas of the College. • Any change to this policy must be agreed upon by the Faculty Association and the Board of Governors. 	<p><i>Related Policy/Related Procedures, Documents and Definitions/Relevant Policies and Agreements</i> – A dominant characteristic of policy documents is that they reference other policies thereby creating a web of connectedness that affirms the institution’s personality. This personality is determined by the interrelation-ship of the hyperreality, Post-modern Proxy and mission statements.</p>	<p><i>Decentering the subject</i></p> <p>Individuals are not distinct, identifiable, autonomous actors that possess specific characteristics but are embedded in webs of relationships that produce multiple, fluid identities for them as well as constrain and enable the actions they take [as defined in Sartre’s negation theory].</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy and its attendant regulations provide an orderly process by which proposals for new courses and programs, can be evaluated prior to their introduction ... • Procedures are chronological sequences of steps to be followed in realizing policies. • Inherent with any right goes responsibility; students, therefore, are expected to conduct themselves in the best interest of the College and themselves. They are expected to apply themselves to their studies and act with propriety and conformity with College policies, rules and regulations. 	<p><i>Specific Policy Statements/Procedures/Regulations/Guidelines</i> articulate the very institutional identity they espouse and undoubtedly reinforce the value of their existences. These afford a discourse that is open to conflicting and competing interests. The strength of the identity and its relationship to the Postmodern Proxy reduces the potential for destructive conflict.</p>	<p><i>Discourse</i></p> <p>Discourse refers to the statements, texts, activities, practices, and interactions that surround and constitute a phenomenon that often creates an image of inevitability and naturalness that invisibly and pervasively reinforces their existence.</p>

Policy Sample Statements	Policy Lexicon	Postmodern Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs Division • There are levels of policy appropriate to each aspect of the institution's affairs ... 	<p><i>Division/Department/Applies to/Levels of Policy</i> are used to represent either the domain from which the policy was generated or, more typically, the domain to which it applies. This strategy provides authority for the institution's local narratives.</p>	<p><i>Local narratives and lost voices</i></p> <p>No single grand theory explains the world; instead, situations must be studied and understood at a local level, with particular attention to diversity and to those voices at the periphery.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Plan: A process that gives employees the opportunity to upgrade their skills directly related to their responsibilities ... • Consultation is a process of acquiring the opinion and input of those who have a special understanding or knowledge related to a specific issue. Consultation is a process for gathering input, which may be diverse and irreconcilable, prior to the appropriate authority making a decision. • Decisions are made by those who have the authority to make decisions and are accountable for the outcomes of a decision. 	<p><i>Definitions/Glossary of Terms/Supersedes/Keywords/Appendix/Policy Number</i> – Considerable effort is expended ensuring that policy documents 'make sense.' The categories noted here are used to create meaning in policies by referring to other terms, situations or documents. Meaning is always contextual and relative by definition. Consequently, difference, the lack of consistency, mirrors the celebration of individual volition in the hyperreality of postmodern institutions.</p>	<p><i>Difference</i></p> <p>Our understanding of current situations and problems is a product of taken-for-granted categories that rely on or defer to companies with other, different situations and past experiences. For example, organization only makes sense with reference to disorganization; the continuing tension between the two means that what constitutes the organization is under constant review.</p>

Policy Sample Statements	Policy Lexicon	Postmodern Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing policy formulation process generally entails broad consultation and a search for consensus through forums • If there is a concern with a decision regarding the allocation of professional development dollars, an appeal process will be put in place whereby a ... committee would hear presentations from the employee affected 	<p><i>Formulation/Amended/Category/ Appeal Process</i> - Policy documents invariably provide for amendments and appeals; provision for such are often stated within the documents themselves. The acknowledgment of the need for revision and appeal mechanisms speaks to the ongoing tensions within institutions and mimics the reflexivity so integral to quality leadership in postmodern institutions.</p>	<p><i>Confronting Dualism</i></p> <p>The tension of difference requires us to recognize the inevitable interdependence between apparently polar opposites, to challenge boundaries between supposedly discrete categories, and to acknowledge the importance of ongoing tensions and paradoxes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before voting in favor of a governing policy, the Board's responsibility is to ensure that the proposed policy statement meets the policy objectives, the process of consultation was suitable, and the criteria for policy evaluation are appropriate. • Executive Directors/Vice President/President: for approving and resourcing staff development/training ... Manager of Human Resources: for the planning, coordination of delivery, review of College-wide staff training/development ... Staff: for bringing personal training needs to the attention of their supervisor 	<p>The extent that policies reference elements of power and/or control is usually described under the heading of <i>Responsibilities</i>. Responsibility should reflect a reasonably equitable distribution of power that originates not in positions of authority rather in relationships between the institution's volitional stakeholders.</p>	<p><i>Power/knowledge</i></p> <p>Power is not a finite resource but a web of relationships in which all individuals are enmeshed. Although some are advantaged within this web, no one is in control of it. What passes for knowledge (and truth) is not neutral but emerges from these relationships.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved by Board Motion ... Replaces Policy 9.19 by motion 22-1-73/74. • Editorial changes approved by President's Council. 	<p><i>Approval</i> is the heading used to legitimize the privilege to assign/distribute power relative to discourse (e.g. decision-making). Privilege is recognized by the power ascribed to knowledge utilized in discourse.</p>	<p><i>Privileged</i></p> <p>Nothing can be naturally privileged; all privilege is the product of power/knowledge effects.</p>

Policy Sample Statements	Policy Lexicon	Postmodern Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The computing systems at ... College are intended to support its education purposes and to enhance its educational environment, while maintaining the colleges values of integrity, respect and educational justice for all, market-driven innovation, and accountability. • The Colleges Act ... gives the Minister ... the power to regulate the establishment, expansion, deletion or transfer of college programs across the post-secondary education and training systems. • As an education institution committed to lifelong learning ... College encourages all of its employees to actively pursue the development of their skills, knowledge and capabilities; and to enhance their personal effectiveness and that of the organization thus enhancing the quality of the College's services and programs. • The process of program initiation and course addition and change in a college environment should be built upon broad consultation among those persons and groups who have an interest in the proposed change. • ... College believes that adults have multiple life situations that may negatively affect their learning. 	<p><i>Introduction/Preamble/Back-ground</i> to policy statements often underline the basic assumptions which led to the creation of the policy and provides opportunity for reflecting on these fundamental assumptions.</p>	<p><i>Reflexivity</i></p> <p>Reflexivity refers to the importance of reflecting on the assumptions that we make in producing what we regard as knowledge.</p>

Putting aside the specific content of the policies reviewed for this study, as per the examples above, it is noteworthy that the structure of the policies themselves speaks to the current status of policy development in colleges. While there is evidence to suggest that the rudimentary tenets of the postmodern lexicon exist in policy structures of colleges, these are not presented in either a consistent or comprehensive manner. Moreover, this lack of consistency in policy structures (e.g. not all policies used all of the postmodern lexicon) appears to be related to a deficiency of understanding of key terminology (e.g. operational procedures for one college might constitute policy statements for another). Of perhaps equal importance is that not found in this policy analysis. No colleges have Policy on Policy Statements articulating which organizational identity (or theory) motivates policy decisions. Policy on Policy documents

should outline the relationship between the Postmodern Proxy (or some such equivalent), organizational structure, and the separation of operational policies from those forming the skeleton of institutional character. This deficiency is not all that surprising given there is an absence of fundamental consistency and shared vision in the field of college administration.

Is the ‘urgency’ of doing the work of a college resulting in a neglect of comprehensive, clearly articulated and documented policy statements defining institutional character? This question is by no means an attempt to devalue policy documents as they currently exist. It is clear, however, that there is no single reality (i.e. the perfect postmodern policy document) when it comes to college policies. Each institution creates its own hyperreality once its self-image has been identified through mission and vision statements, perhaps even legislation of government. Given the almost limitless potential for multiple interpretations in the absence of a single hyperreality, a necessary tempering element comes into play. Herein, the modernist versus postmodernist interplay surfaces. In the absence of broad statements creating the institutional hyperreality, there is a natural impulse toward procedures and principles exuding objective truths and utilizing deductive reasoning. Colleges then attempt to create operational policies opening themselves to multiple subjective truths. The effect is institutional schizophrenia, and an administrative chaos manifested as power struggles. The necessary foregrounding of the Postmodern Proxy hasn’t occurred.

There can be no individuals or counter-communities when it comes to policies; policies are to be developed by committees, sanctioned by boards and encompass the vision of all members of a college ‘personality.’ Individuals breathe life into these documents by proxy since policies are, after all, derivatives of mission and vision statements. Institutional jargon can surreptitiously place ‘individuals’ into symbolic realities where proxy is presupposed not openly articulated. In fact, in institutions without clear Postmodern Proxies there are inevitably subgroup proxies working against institutional identity. A lack of true proxy formation is exacerbated when subgroups within the institution produce policy documents that fail to fully align with the dominant institutional hyperreality. In either instance, policies are commonly developed through ‘consensus’, approved by vote and apply to students, staff, administration and/or the board. Yet, there doesn’t seem to be expressed understanding that power is given by individual volition aligned with mission and vision. There is no policy written on ‘power’ so as to ensure its shared understanding, let alone its equitable dispersal within such institutions.

Within policy documents there is typically a ‘policy statement.’ While there appears to be no consistency in terms of what constitutes a policy statement (again, a reflection of varying hyperrealities), the images conveyed by policies reinforce the implied existence of Policy on Policy statements (e.g. ‘This policy and its attendant regulations provide an orderly process...’). Institutions have become quite adept at developing policy statements that provide for local narratives in the organizational sense. Yet, without grounding in the institutional hyperreality there is only potential for dissent. The Policy Lexicon quite readily displays this in noting that a policy applies to a division, a campus, a department, the administration or the board. Perhaps there also needs to be a policy on the essential qualities of each institution’s Postmodern Proxy?

Definitions and glossaries are used quite extensively in the lexicon of policy documents. However, in advancing terminology that supposedly has definitive meaning, the potential for disagreement - or difference - with these meanings is also created. It would be wise to openly

acknowledge the difficulty of definition, and the almost certain temporal appropriateness of any shared understanding. Decisions are at best legitimate in time, not through it. Multiple interpretations of these stated meanings begs for a mechanism to undo the tension that is inherently created. Enter the appeal process. What better way to acknowledge tensions and create a means to challenge the boundaries created than by definitions themselves?

The modernist orientation is to solve problems; the postmodern perspective not only points to the contradictions in discourses, but makes a virtue of preserving that essential tension. It may be that opposing perspectives need to be kept alive and in tension with the dominant model. This would mean that institutions of higher education must be able to sustain and cope permanently with considerable unresolved conflict and contradiction. (Bloland, 1995, p. 551)

The term ‘power’ conjures up notions of authority, subservient relationships, elevated status, and institutional stratification. The question of: ‘Who holds the reigns of power in a postmodern organization?’, seems most relevant at this stage. To be sure, the question itself speaks of a modernist orientation. Wouldn’t postmodernists suggest that there is a directly proportional relationship between the degree to which an organization is postmodern and the degree to which power is distributed? The weight of the evidence found in the policy documents reviewed suggests, however, that ‘boards’ are referenced as the dominant power center of colleges. Is this to suggest that colleges have adopted a modernist stance relative to conceptualizations and applications of power? Perhaps; in some cases, yes. However, in other cases the references to ‘boards’ actually speak more to an acknowledgement of privilege. The assignment of this privilege enables institutional leaders to defer, overtly or otherwise, to an appointed authority and an implied power center. The need for deferment signals to the multiple difficulties with assigning accountability within postmodern institutions. There can only be task accountability where the Postmodern Proxy is applied, not the position accountability commonly assigned via position descriptions in modern institutions. Postmodern accountability is best noted in those institutions deploying evidence-based decision-making linking accountability to projected deliverables.

Postmodern college leaders need to take great efforts to foreground their epistemological as well as administrative practices in theoretical terms that others can understand. Accepting this responsibility encourages the reflexive, critical self-assessment necessary for institutional success. To presume others have offered their proxies or even understood the function of proxy in a postmodern organization, or that others understand that decisions are encased in contradictory fluidity not bureaucratic amber, invariably provides for conflict. Assumptions that engagement and discourse are more important than ‘Robert’s Rules of Order’ always need balancing against the modernist need for evidence of scientific rationalism and relentless movements toward closure. For example, opening an issue to further debate after others have decided its approximate closure can undermine trust. We must instill an apprehension that all decisions are temporary. The end results of such strategies might very well be incessant calls for reconsideration, incipient attempts at unauthorized renewal and revision, and ultimately, a purging of any potential to resolve issues.

Of paramount importance is the postmodern leader's recognition of the numerous and diverse routes by which a college can arrive at defining its organizational self. A definite challenge for the postmodern college administrator is to avoid trying to control what that identity is, what it needs to be, and what it might become. Instead, the institutional leader needs to concentrate on perpetuating a hyperreality, derived from vision and mission, that cannot be destroyed by misguided interpretations of discourse, diminished by local narratives or dissolved by inept use of power. For the administrator and the leader within a postmodern institution, nothing is inherently stable -- not even the institutional hyperreality itself. The challenge then, is to: retain an unwavering commitment to reflexivity, champion an awareness that administrative autonomy is fundamentally imaginative, and to acknowledge that privilege is a product of respect earned from nurturing positive and beneficial relationships.

Notes

¹ Some public colleges are arm's length government agencies, others are line departments of government, and few take autonomy from appointed boards. Public colleges are community-based organizations responding to local and global employability prospects.

² Consultants and publishers, authors and self-help gurus are but a few of the supporting personnel in this industry (cf. Gephard, 1996, p. 5). In 1994, for example, the ". . . Harvard Business School estimated that corporate expenditures for employee education and training [grew] from \$10 billion to \$45 billion" in a decade (Fulmer & Vicere, 1995, p. 4).

³ "Taylorism . . . has been reincarnated in the form of Deming's (1982) total quality management (TQM) TQM has been vigorously promoted by such organizations as the American Association of School Administrators . . . even as business has abandoned it as a fad" (English, 1997, p. 14).

⁴ Cf. Weinstein & Weinstein, 1998, p. 2.

⁵ Cf. Hardy and Palmer, 1999, p. 383.

⁶ Failure of hierarchal systems is also tied to the evolution of capitalism and the advancement of consumptive practices in capitalist society: "commodification, the definition of persons and activities solely in terms of their market value, has become dominant" (Bloland, 1995, p. 525). "Post-modernism is society where commodification is extended to all spheres of society, even to the process of commodification itself" (Gephard, 1996, p. 3). The seminal thinker in this area is Fredric Jameson (1984) who links postmodernism to the 'cultural logic of late capitalism.'

⁷ Cf. Bloland, 1995, p. 523. At face-value, postmodernism appears to be antithetical to linear logic, eschews big picture synopses, values contra-mindedness, thrives on juxtaposition of competing visions, and valorizes the ironic tensions created in exploring division. Cultural voyeurism, for instance, isn't possible in postmodern culture as engagement precipitates existence. To be other is to be postmodern; to be postmodern is to be other. Postmodernism isn't a theory or isn't captured in a philosophical dialectic. Postmodernism is the diaspora of the intellect and knowledge once defining authority. In a culture of otherness there can be no authority as postmodernism presupposes the absence of conformity, or absolute truth. Herein, however, lies postmodernism's own reduction to foundation, its own absolute truth. Postmodernism's theory of relative truth is offered as an absolute truth, and this rhetorical offering is rational in its logical construction. Postmodernism isn't a cultural period, one we are capable of growing through or getting beyond. It is an unregulated will to become, an unpredictable process initiated without omniscient planning. Postmodernism is polyphonic and dialogic; it undermines any authority that might attempt to contain it yet can not exist without the authority of dissent.

⁸ One of the underpinnings of postmodernism is the irony upon which deconstruction is predicated. Deconstruction is a process wherein conventional authority or patterns of traditional behavior are inverted or mimicked, often for comic effect, so as to reveal power imbalances or

inappropriate assumptions of authority. Deconstruction invariably enables the definition of a victim or provides for the articulation of victim status. Clearly, when referencing power imbalances there is an underlying assumption that those disenfranchised are lesser because they lack the ability to exercise identified powers. These powers normally reflect one's control over others or the ability to manipulate for desired effect. Consequently, what deconstruction often does is reveal the processes whereby one minority group has been historically benefiting from the victim status of another. One irony of deconstruction is that by playing with the processes of disempowerment the valorization of former victor/victim predicates is undermined and the victims are liberated by the ability to name the attributes of their own debilitation. The unstated thrust of the deconstruction is to make wrongs right. The weakness of deconstruction is that it must propagate the negative processes, maintain vestiges of what should not be, so as to show what is wrong. The trap that deconstruction, as opposed to invention, provides is the inability to escape the very patterns of behavior it subverts. This stylized trap is mimicked in our later deconstruction of the submitted proposal that authorizes this work.

⁹ Cf. English, 1998, p. 427. There is a growing awareness that constructivist (cf. Sherman, 1995) and transactional learning theories are wholly indebted to the schism between modernist assumptions of objective and scientific methods and the incipient relativism of postmodern experiential knowledge and learning.

¹⁰ 'Existentialism' is a neologism derived from the German *Existenz* philosophers Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers. The term was first coined near the end of World War II by Gabriel Marcel for categorizing philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. David E. Cooper (1990) states that until Sartre's lecture "L'Existentialisme est un humanisme" (1945) no one had ever attempted to define what existentialism meant (pp. 1-2). Some critics claim that American poet-theorist Charles Olson (1974) coined and defined the term 'postmodern' in the early 1950s. In Olson's (1974) short piece of self-definition entitled "The Present Is Prologue" (c. 1950-1951) he writes of the "post-modern, the post-humanist, the post-historic, the going live present, the 'Beautiful Thing'" (p. 40). There is some critical disagreement as to whether Olson was influenced by or used phenomenology or existential phenomenology in this theories. The role and function of existential phenomenology in the evolution of postmodern culture has been explored in the works of Fredric Jameson (1984), Douglas Kellner (1989), Ihab Hassan (1987), Malcolm Bradbury (1983), Andreas Huyssen (1990), and William M. Johnson (1991).

¹¹ "For us [existentialists], man is defined first of all as a being 'in situation.' That means that he forms a synthetic whole with his situation--biological, economic, political, cultural, etc. He cannot be distinguished from his situation, for it forms him and decides his possibilities; but, inversely, it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it" (Sartre *L'Être et le néant* 1943, trans. and qtd. in Natanson, 1951, p. 57).

¹² In the modernist epoch, personal interest of the general workforce was assigned to generation of income, not to the compatibility of work assigned with personal values or lifestyles. Working backwards in time to the pre-modernist era, vested interest was determined by fealty as the serf's obligation was predetermined by class, and class determined the parameters of personal interests: "the ruler or patriarch commanded obedience by right of inheritance and social position . . . With the rise and secularization of the Protestant ethic, the rational quest for profit became

institutionalized . . . [and gave rise to] . . . a rule based hierarchy of authority with rigidly specified positions and duties . . . and composed of agents selected freely on the basis of technical qualifications” (Gephart, 1996, p. 91).

¹³ There is an imaginative disjunction or break created between the drive for ‘profit,’ individual and corporate gain, and the daily activity of the individuals themselves and organization itself. The projected image of work and the actual reality of work are integrated by the hyperreality created around commitment to mission and vision idealism. “Hyperreality is the phenomenon wherein the artifact is even better than the real thing. Examples include the fantasy world of theme parks . . . virtual reality (role playing MUDs, MOOs and GMUKS . . . soap operas . . . films . . . and computer games” (Berthon & Katsikeas, 1998, p. 151). As Berthon and Katsikeas claim, the WEB is the ultimate in hyperreality performance.

¹⁴ Schultz, however, sees the “intentional” will of the corporation as supplanting those of its individual constituents. Similarly, Gephart sees a sophisticated elitism and manipulation at work in postmodern institutions. These views are opposite to our present argument. Certainly, there are parallels to the use of hyperreality given Schultz’s (1996) argument that the corporation creates an alternative reality through deindividuation and distanciation: “. . . distanciation is the strategy corporations employ to create and maintain symbolic constructions of reality. These symbolic constructions in turn inform the reality corporations impose on their members” (p. 166). We postulate that the reality isn’t imposed on the corporation’s members but created by mutual consent and projected outwards by the individuals in the grouping. We also recognize the importance of commodification theory in interpretations of image versus reality in postmodernism.

¹⁵ Cf. Barthes, 1997; Bloland, 1995; Beck, 1993. Even those who enthusiastically champion the decentralized world-view of postmodern decision-making, where no one group or team supposedly holds power, ignore the fact that *to decide* is to presume a hierarchal structure with centralized authority, embodied as a team and disembodied as a singular person, and transgression of unsupportive will:

Decisions generally imply a command structure in which the superior in the hierarchy orders subordinates to perform certain tasks in certain ways, supposedly within prescribed rules that limit sphere of power. Viewing organizations as archipelagoes of discourse is blind to the necessity of organizations continually to close down discussions with decision: this will be done, not that; you will do this and not that. (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1998, p. 360)

Jeffrey Glanz (2000), for example, describes “Supervision for the Millennium” as a style of “[supervisory leadership” (p. 11) that values “flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, collaboration, and an ethical mindset” (p. 10). Glanz is seemingly oblivious to the contradictions of linking supervision with contemporary leadership, and ignores the power imbalances inherent to any organizational structure engaged in decision-making processes: “All social organization . . .

deprives individuals of some of their discretion over their self-expression and is, therefore, oppressive to one extent or another” (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1998, p. 360). A postmodern organization can only gloss negative fundamentals of human social interaction with a patina of moral righteousness: “Much of the literature on the postmodern organization argues that organizational structures and the use of power are different in a postmodern organization. . . . Everyone seeks mutual benefit rather than personal gain, and individual jobs are linked to mission” (Sackney, et al., 1999, p.46). In endeavoring to reveal ritualized power imbalances, postmodernists tend to elevate a tendency for self-denial at the expense of acknowledging the essential selfishness of all cooperative actions. This self-denial is made possible by assuming that hyperreality is actually reality, that the image is more real than the actual item or experience itself. No organizational structure can erase all loss and denial as no human experience exists without both.

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre's (1948) negation theory, as it is presented in The Psychology of Imagination, posits that to "grasp" (take as consciousness) an object as an image, either in its presence, absence, or non-existence, is to "grasp nothing, that is, [to] posit nothingness" (p. 263). The human consciousness cannot reduce itself (for it is a becoming) to the context of being both its own subject and its own object: “Being for-itself is necessarily haunted by a being itself which wishes to be, if you like, in much more simple terms, a certain mode of existing absolutely [*en soi*] and within the indistinctiveness of being, as we exist, as consciousness exists itself for-itself” (Satre, 1967, p. 128).

¹⁷ Sartre (1973) argues that negation is the “unconditioned principle of all imagination” because “[t]hat which is denied [*en soi*] must [necessarily] be imagined. In fact, the object of a negation cannot be real because that would be affirming what is being denied--but neither can it be a complete nothing, since it is something that is being denied” (p. 67).

¹⁸The column on the left entitled ‘Postmodern Terminology’ was adapted from Hardy and Palmer (1999).

¹⁹ As part of the research process for this paper, Gerry Brown, President of ACCC, and Terry Anne Boyles, Vice-President of ACCC, were interviewed on March 16th, 2001.

²⁰The authors of this paper requested copies of policy documents from ACCC member colleges in the domains of: professional development, student discipline, program development, electronic information and policy development. Several policy documents were secured from the websites of various ACCC member colleges. Policy documents from ACCC and the following colleges were used in the research for this paper:

Bow Valley College
 Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology
 Camosun College
 College of the North Atlantic
 Cumberland Regional College
 Douglas College

Durham College
 George Brown College
 Grant Macewan Community College
 Holland College
 Keyano College
 New Brunswick Community College
 Nova Scotia Community College
 Red River Community College
 University College of the Fraser Valley
 Vancouver Community College
 Vanier College
 Yukon College

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