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# Public servant schools in Canada: A concept for reconciliation

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# PUBLIC SERVANT SCHOOLS IN CANADA: A CONCEPT FOR RECONCILIATION

Mark Weiler

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## Abstract

*The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has called on federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments of Canada to educate public servants about the history and legacy of Indian residential schools and related topics, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This article advances this call to action by conceptualizing “public servant schools” as government organizations that provide learning opportunities to public servants. The Canadian adult education literature, however, is largely silent on this topic, even though numerous examples can be found across branches and levels of governments within Canada. Drawing on material acquired through the Access to Information Act, this article breathes life into this topic by documenting the Canada School of Public Service and elements of its curriculum related to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*

## Résumé

*La Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada a appelé aux gouvernements municipaux, provinciaux, territoriaux et fédéral au pays à fournir aux fonctionnaires une formation sur l'histoire et l'héritage douloureux des pensionnats indiens et sur des sujets connexes, dont la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones. Cet article répond à cet appel à l'action en concevant les « écoles de la fonction publique » comme organisations gouvernementales qui offrent des possibilités de formation aux fonctionnaires. Malgré le fait qu'il existe de nombreux exemples de telles organisations à divers niveaux et dans plusieurs branches du gouvernement canadien, au Canada, les recherches dans le domaine de l'éducation des adultes ont peu à dire sur le sujet. S'appuyant sur des données obtenues grâce à la Loi sur l'accès à l'information, cet article jette un regard nouveau sur ce dossier en examinant l'École de la fonction publique du Canada et les éléments de son programme en rapport avec les recommandations de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation.*

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### Introduction

On Tuesday, June 2, 2015, after a five-year inquiry into the history and legacy of church-run residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued a series of summary reports calling for ongoing reconciliation between Canada's Indigenous and settler peoples, communities, and institutions. In its *Calls to Action* report, the commission issued 94 calls for action to catalyze healing and the formation of mutually respectful relationships. Although several fall within the scope of adult education, this article draws attention to action 57:

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a, p. 7)

In this call to action, the commission addresses governments in their capacity as providers of adult education. To be clear, action 57 does not call on governments to fund or set policies enabling adult education within the general Canadian population, although that direction might be pursued in response to other action items in the summary report. Rather, action 57 calls on governments to educate the public servants in their employment. The community of adult education researchers could advance this call to action by examining how governments are currently supporting public servant learning and by stretching the imagination about how it could be otherwise. This knowledge and imagination are needed to identify strategies for integrating the recommendations in action 57 into programs of public servant education within all levels of government.

The purposes of this article are to help the adult education research community in Canada recognize that governments in Canada create formal learning opportunities for their employees and to conceptualize this learning as unavoidably needing to be reconciliatory with respect to Indigenous and settler relations. To catalyze the development of knowledge and imagination needed for these purposes, this article puts forth the concept of public servant schools, which refers to organizations within all branches of government that create learning opportunities for current public employees. Proposals for new concepts, such as public servant schools, must be grounded in evidentiary material. An initial scan of government information sources in Canada provides evidence of government organizations that currently provide learning opportunities to public servants in some capacity. These organizations include:

- Canada School of Public Service
- Canadian Police College
- Canadian Forces College<sup>1</sup>
- Canadian Army Command and Staff College

1 Canadian Forces College was established in 1943.

- Service Canada College<sup>2</sup>
- National Judicial Institute<sup>3</sup>
- BC Public Service Agency
- Ontario Public Service Commission

As a new concept, public servant schools needs to be distinguished from existing concepts that could be mistaken for it. Public servant schools should not be mistaken for public elementary, secondary, or post-secondary schools. While all are public organizations, they differ in their nature and purpose. Public servant schools are controlled by the state and provide formal learning opportunities to adults who currently work in government or public institutions. Courses in public servant schools could be about leadership, management, international relations, or Aboriginal history.

Public servant schools also need to be distinguished from schools preparing students for employment in the public sector, which can be referred to as preparatory public servant schools. At least two types of such preparatory schools exist. The first is controlled by universities and includes degree-granting schools of public administration offered at universities worldwide (Geva-May, Nasi, Turrini, & Scott, 2008). The second type has its curriculum and administration controlled by governments. Examples include:

- Canadian Coast Guard College
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police Academy
- Royal Military College of Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency College
- Correctional Services Canada Staff Colleges

A common feature of preparatory public servant schools is that they draw students from members of the general public and prepare them for potential careers in specific government organizations. Public servant schools, in contrast, restrict enrolment exclusively to current government or public employees. For example, the Canadian Forces College limits enrolment to senior Canadian military officers and select civilian employees of the Government of Canada. In some cases, such as with the Canadian Coast Guard College, a school may function as both a preparatory public servant school for people to be in government employment and an in-service public servant school for current government employees.

A second feature of public servant schools is the extent to which governments control them. In these schools, the curriculum and administration are set and filled by government officials. This control feature also makes them different than programs of study offered at universities where control is vested in boards of governors and university senates, which allows for academic freedom by keeping government control at a distance.

A third characteristic of public servant schools is the formal nature of their support for adult learning. Public servants no doubt learn unspoken values and norms through their daily work, and while these unspoken lessons constitute a form of hidden curriculum

2 According to its website, “The Service Canada College is Service Canada’s national corporate learning institution. Our College is modelled on the ‘corporate university’ concept found in an increasing number of corporations and public agencies in Canada and around the world” (Service Canada College, 2009).

3 The National Judicial Institute is a non-profit organization funded through federal and provincial governments with a mandate to provide education to members of the judiciary across Canada. Its board of governors includes federal and provincial judges as well as law professors.

operative within the socio-material practices of institutions, public servant schools and their curricula are intentional in design, transparent in operation, and explicit in their learning objectives.

As proposed here, the size of a public servant school is less relevant than the existence of an organizational structure with a function to help public employees learn. At the national level, the size of the federal government lends itself to centralizing support of adult learning into a few large organizations, such as the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS). However, in smaller provincial, territorial, or municipal governments, public servant schools may exist as a functional capacity of human resource departments. For example, in British Columbia, the *Public Service Act* establishes the Public Service Agency, which is the human resource management division of the provincial government. The agency's responsibilities include "developing, providing, assisting in or coordinating staff training, educational and career development programs" (Public Service Act, 1996). In 2014–2015, the service agency provided workshops to almost 1,700 public servants and was in the process of conducting a new learning needs assessment (BC Public Service Agency, 2015, p. 13). Although not branded a school or college, like the CSPS or Canadian Police College, the BC Public Service Agency still carries out the function of supporting employee learning.

This initial definition may not accommodate all forms of public servant schools that exist presently. For example, the public servant school for continuing judicial education in Canada appears to have a unique control characteristic. Through the *Judges Act*, the Parliament of Canada established the Canadian Judicial Council with a mandate including "the continuing education of judges" (Judges Act, 1985). That responsibility, however, appears to have been delegated to the National Judicial Institute. While a non-profit organization, the institute is funded by federal and provincial governments, is overseen by a board comprising judges and legal academics, and is chaired by the Chief Justice of Canada (National Judicial Institute, 2013). This unique control mechanism notwithstanding, I consider the National Judicial Institute a public servant school within the judicial branch of government. As more is learned about public servant schools, the conceptual boundaries can be clarified and adjusted.

Given the significance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work, I also propose that the concept of public servant schools within the Canadian context is unavoidably interwoven with the recommendations of call to action 57. Practically, this means public servant schools in the Canadian context are more fully understood when interpreted not only in terms of their existing composition but also with respect to how they integrate or might more fully integrate the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Proposed in this manner, the concept of public servant schools within a Canadian context functions as a reconciliatory concept.

What does it mean to function as a reconciliatory concept? Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reconciliation is "about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b, p. 6). From this reconciliatory perspective, researching and discussing public servant schools in Canada would heighten our historical consciousness of colonialism, recognize the pain it inflicts, amend for its

wrongs, and catalyze positive transformation. From a practical perspective, it would entail trying to integrate these themes into the discourse about public servant schools.

Reconciliation also requires settler and settler governments to take on new responsibilities, which can be unexpected and difficult. Examining a major 2006 disagreement between settlers and the Haudenosaunee in the Haldimand Tract of southern Ontario, Siegel (2016) concluded that “an enormous amount of work lies ahead for the Canadian government, as well as for non-Native Canadians, if Canada is to achieve true reconciliation with First Nations” (p. 14). A difficulty in forming respectful relationships with Aboriginal peoples, according to Epp (2003), is that settlers have been caught up in powerful but misleading assumptions that hold sway over attitudes and actions. Examples of assumptions that have been identified include that settlers arrived to unclaimed land (Epp, 2003), that cultural progress is toward Western norms (Siegel, 2016), that Canada is a peacekeeping country (Regan, 2010), and that settlers are morally innocent (Siegel, 2016). Questioning these assumptions can be difficult, as they are jarring and unsettling experiences (Regan, 2010, p. 11).

Since I am proposing public servant schools as a reconciliatory concept, it is pertinent to try to locate my proposal within reconciliatory discourses. In a series of focus groups with non-Indigenous Canadians, de Costa and Clark (2016) found two ways in which participants discursively constructed responsibility for reconciliation with Indigenous people. The first mode, referred to as delegation, involves “summoning up others to do the work” (p. 197), whereas the second mode, embodiment, “is characterized by the clearing and articulating of a path for the self to take responsibility through culture and land” (p. 197). By encouraging the Canadian adult education research community to discuss how governments are taking up call to action 57, this article might seem to participate in a delegation discourse, as it ultimately calls on a scholarly community to focus their attention on the reconciliatory actions of settler governments. While this is an example of delegation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s call to action 57 clearly assigns a responsibility to federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. To contribute to a public discourse that holds governments accountable for taking up this responsibility, it is important that the adult education research community engage in broad and meaningful discussions that intentionally acknowledge the responsibility governments have to this call to action. Thus, my article might be characterized as locating itself at the intersection of delegated and embodied discourses, where the adult education research community embodies a responsibility to make sure settler governments embody the responsibility delegated to them by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s call to action 57.

This paper is organized into two major sections. In the first section, I demonstrate that the Canadian adult education literature has largely left public servant learning an undocumented area of study. This gap justifies the proposal of new concepts such as public servant schools. In the second part, I document the history of a major government school in Canada as evidence that justifies the concept of public servant schools and shows that they are sites for the Truth and Reconciliation’s 57th call to action.

### **Public Servant Schools in Canada: An Area in Need of More Study**

In the preceding section, this article proposed public servant schools as a reconciliatory concept that advances action 57 of the Truth and Reconciliation’s *Calls to Action* report.

In this section, I attempt to develop this concept of public servant schools by turning to academic literature. As will be shown, however, the literature provides inconsistent insights about how governments support the learning and education of their own employees.

***Public Servant Schools: Overlooked in the Canadian Adult Education Literature***

Adult education in Canada has been characterized as emerging from social movements in the early 20th century that were determined to improve the lives of groups of Canadians (e.g., Selman, 1995). Following this was a period when professional associations and university programs for preparing adult educators enhanced the status of adult education (Selman & Selman, 2009). From such a perspective, federal and provincial governments are cast as institutional agents that either improve Canadian society by sponsoring adult education initiatives or fail to do so (Elfert & Rubenson, 2013). Even a more expansive historical account of adult learning in Canadian history overlooked how governments established organizations to support public servants' learning (Welton, 2013).

Overviews of the topics studied by Canadian adult education researchers give little indication that governments, as sites of adult learning, are a topic of interest. Groen and Kawalilak (2013) traced major trends in the history of Canadian education research. In the early phase, adult education research focused on developing knowledge to establish the academic status of the emerging profession. In the 1980s, researchers were concerned with adult education as a means for social justice and community development. A decade later, investigations of the pragmatic aspects of teaching dominated adult education research and pressed topics such as improving the lives of social groups to the margins. However, by the early 21st century, social critique increased among adult education researchers. In the opening decade of this century, an edited volume provided a broad array of perspectives on adult education in Canada (Fenwick, Nesbit, & Spencer, 2006), including environmental education, health literacy, political economy, and distance education, yet a perspective that clearly acknowledged government workplaces in Canada as sites of learning for public employees was missing. These accounts of research on adult education and learning in Canada, as with others (Nesbit, Brigham, Taber, & Gibb, 2013), demonstrated a large gap in knowledge about how governments structure and institutionalize formal learning for their employees.

Another potential source for research into government employee learning in Canada is in literature on workplace learning, organizational learning, or human resource management. Reviewing Canadian adult education literature on workplace learning, Fenwick (2013) identified four themes: learning within transforming working conditions, the formation of vulnerable subjectivities in workplace learning, emergent informal workplace learning, and equitable access to workplace learning opportunities. Outside of Canada, some recent research has found governments as sites of workplace learning. Lancaster and Di Milia (2015) studied leadership development programs in a large Australian government organization, while Harris, Cheng, and Gorley (2015) studied mentoring relationships in government. However, in these studies, government institutions are the organizational backdrops for the studies; the significance of governments as sites of adult learning is not taken up as a major theme. It is difficult to find adult education research systematically documenting the activities of public servant schools. The most recent one seems to be a



more than 60-year-old account of the Graduate School of the United States Department of Agriculture (Jensen, 1955).

Why might public servant learning not be a well-studied topic in adult education? One possible reason is that the topic could be a “forbidden research terrain” (Fuller, 1988). According to Fuller, a forbidden research terrain is an area “of possible investigation, which may be geographically, intellectually or institutionally defined, where social scientists are strongly discouraged from pursuing research” (p. 99). Writing from the perspective of a researcher in the United States, Fuller (1988) gave Cuba as an example of a forbidden research terrain. State control of funding opportunities, restrictions on travel to Cuba, and limitations on communication between social researchers and participants in Cuba cumulatively created the boundaries of state-induced ignorance. To the extent that the adult education research community has faced restrictions, whether overt or subtle, that impede the use of standard social research methods, the cumulative effect would result in the formation of a forbidden research terrain. The Canadian federal government inherited secrecy from Britain as a mechanism for centralizing power in the prime minister and cabinet (Rees, 2016, p. 285). As government-controlled entities, public servant schools are prone to state-created barriers that minimize public scrutiny. Lines of inquiry directed at how governments teach their own employees may be too difficult to sustain. As will be documented in this article, however, there is an advanced but underused method for accessing information in government-controlled forbidden research terrains (Larsen, 2013).

### ***Public Servant Schools: A Public Administration Perspective***

Another source for insights into public servant schools in Canada is public administration literature. Here one can more easily find discussions about preparatory schools of public administration (Geva-May et al., 2008). In terms of public servant schools, into the early 1990s, some researchers had noted that the literature was largely silent on the topic. After reviewing how governments in the United States meet the learning needs of their employees, Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook (1993) observed: “Approximately one out of every seven workers, or nineteen million people [in the United States of America], are employed by federal, state, and local governments; yet, *until now, no major publication has focused on these employee’s [sic] training and development* [emphasis added]” (p. xi). Since then, more literature in public administration has documented government employee learning. For example, the *International Journal of Public Administration* published a special issue on the topic of civil service training (Stephen, 2004). The articles, described below, documented public service training in Nigeria (Dibie, 2004), Ghana (Haruna, 2004), Turkey (Acar & Özgür, 2004), China (Shan, 2004), India (Bragg, 2004), and Canada (Wilson, Stanford, & Dwivedi, 2004).

Based on interviews with academic administrators of the public administration and political science departments in 32 Nigerian universities, Dibie (2004) reported that globalization created pressure to change public servant learning programs. Economic trends in the 1980s prompted a shift from a British model of public administration teaching to an American one. The shift “made it possible for the Nigerian government to compromise western scientific knowledge and skill with those of indigenous scholars to some extent” (p. 153). Dibie’s analysis, however, primarily focused on certificate- and

degree-granting departments in universities as sites for public service learning, although passing acknowledgment was given to a public servant school, the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, established by the Nigerian government in the 1980s.

Haruna's (2004) contribution to the special issue focused more closely on public servant schools in Ghana. Established in the 1940s, the Public Service Commission was based on a British tradition of cultivating neutral and loyal public servants. Haruna recognized universities as important sites for disseminating knowledge for the public service, but also acknowledged public servant schools: the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, the Management, Development, and Productivity Institute, and the Civil Service Training Centre. Haruna argued that the content of public servant curricula needs to include knowledge and ethics for governing in the cultural, historic context of Ghana rather than responding to pressures of globalization.

Surveying the condition of public servant training in Turkey, Acar and Özgür's (2004) contribution to the special issue noted that requirements for in-service training appeared as early as the 1930s. At the time of their research, policy and planning for training were set by multiple government organizations, including the State Personnel Authority. The most significant problem for employee development was that merit-based promotion was undermined by patronage. Acar and Özgür also observed an ineffective State Personnel Authority, a lack of coherency in public servant training and development policies, and a major need for public employees to learn about ethics, accountability, and transparency.

Shan's (2004) review of public servant learning in China found that major public personnel reform resulted in greater standardization of public servant training. A major player was the China State School of Administration, overseen by the State Council and attended by senior and middle managers. Local administrative schools were also established to provide learning opportunities to provincial and municipal government employees. According to Shan, these schools aimed to develop the knowledge that government employees needed to achieve workplace goals. The curricula comprised compulsory and optional courses covering topics such as political and economic theory and management skills needed for exercising public power. The Ministry of Personnel and State Council approved course syllabi and textbooks. One problem Shan observed was that rigid public management practices limited opportunities for formal learning. Shan also saw a need for public servant curricula to respond to economic globalization by teaching public servants competencies in international communication.

Writing within the context of India, Bragg's (2004) contribution to the special issue of the *International Journal of Public Administration* examined three dominant gender training frameworks. These frameworks were taught at the Department of Personnel and Training and the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, the country's premier public servant school providing formal learning opportunities for new and current officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The purpose of the examination was to determine which framework incubated gender equity policy innovation. Bragg concluded that none of the training frameworks equipped IAS officials to participate in creating, designing, and implementing policy innovations for gender equity.

The special issue also documented public servant learning in Canada. Reviewing the history of public servant training in Canada, Wilson et al. (2004) argued that public servant learning is an element of human resource management that evolved to improve democratic governance. Since its inception in the federal government, public servant curricula have

included objectives on ethical conduct, bilingualism, and broadening equity within government bureaucracy. While Wilson et al. (2004) provided a developmental overview of a public servant function in Canada, analyses about curriculum development, teaching, or learning within Canadian federal institutions are still needed.

Perhaps the most detailed account of a Canadian public servant school in the public administration literature is Prescott's (2014) master's project report at the University of Victoria's School of Public Administration. The master's project report was commissioned by the Innovations and Best Practices Division, a research group with the CSPS (Prescott, 2014, p. 10), and it documented research and curriculum development at national-level public servant schools. As part of his research methodology, Prescott interviewed eight public servants from the CSPS and five from other national-level public servant schools.<sup>4</sup> The interview questions "were agreed upon through consultation with [the CSPS's] Innovations and Best Practices [Division] and the researcher's academic supervisor" (Prescott, 2014, p. 41). Prescott's findings give insight into the relationship between research conducted by the CSPS's Innovations and Best Practices group and curriculum development conducted by its Programs and Operation Branch. Among other things, Prescott found that senior management, regional branches, and the Programs and Operation Branch were sources of ideas for new courses (2014, p. 45). Prescott also found that the adult learning literature was identified among a limited body of research consulted: "To a more limited extent, research produced in areas external to the Programs and Operations Branch was also identified. This included market research, evaluation activities, and *research on learning methodology conducted by adult learning specialists* [emphasis added]" (2014, p. 46).

Other insights into public servant schools beyond Canada can be gained from government officials who made contributions to a more professional literature. Anderson, Hardy, and Leeson (2008) explained how they transformed United States Department of Defense training facilities into a corporate university for civilian and military personnel. More recently, Frank Sherwood (2010), a former director of the Federal Executive Institute, a major public servant school in the United States, provided a historical account of the first eight years of the organization. Deans and faculty of the Federal Executive Institute also contributed essays on leadership development (Newell, Reeher, & Ronayne, 2011).

### **The Canada School of Public Service: From the 19th Century to Call to Action 57**

This article has proposed a definition of public servant schools and referenced several examples. Turning to the Canadian adult education literature returned few insights into employee learning within government institutions. The Canadian public administration literature was slightly better, with a notable exception by Prescott (2014). To breathe life into the concept of public servant schools, this section documents the CSPS and its curriculum that relates to action 57 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* report. Numerous other public servant schools in Canada could be considered, such as the Canadian Police College, the Canadian Forces College, the judicial branch's National Judicial Institute, or perhaps formalized adult learning within Parliament. The CSPS is

4 The schools were the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, the Civil Service College (Singapore), the National School of Government (the United Kingdom), the Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur (the Netherlands), and the Bureau Algemene Bestuursdiensten (the Netherlands).

particularly relevant because, as an organization of the executive branch of government, it is implicated in democratic debate and public policy formation. Additionally, since it supports the learning of employees in federal ministries and agencies, the CSPS can have significant effects on other major federal institutions. This is not to say that the formal learning in the judicial or legislative branches is not important. For example, in 1991, the House of Commons debated whether to make it mandatory for judges to receive education on such topics as sexism and violence against women.<sup>5</sup> A major reason to focus on the CSPS is also methodological. As an organization within the executive branch of government, the school is subject to Canada's freedom of information legislation, the *Access to Information Act*. Using freedom of information legislation is increasingly recognized as a helpful tool for conducting research across academic disciplines (Larsen, 2013; Savage & Hyde, 2014). As a result, one can often acquire a remarkably vivid view of the operations of public servant learning.

The CSPS has its roots in public servant training in Canada, which has been characterized as having made a "remarkable odyssey" (Wilson et al., 2004, p. 280).<sup>6</sup> The odyssey began in the 19th century with Parliament's efforts to stamp out corruption within the recently established Government of Canada. This corruption was a result of ministers hiring public servants based on their patronage to the political party occupying the seat of power (Hodgetts, Whitaker, Wilson, & McCloskey, 1972; Wilson et al., 2004). Early 20th-century reforms to the Canadian public administration attempted to end political patronage by establishing hiring practices based on the principles of scientific management and merit-based appointments (Hodgetts et al., 1972; Savoie, 1999). Under this system of rigorous rationality, it was considered a failure of human resource management hiring if employees were taught the skills or knowledge needed to do their work. As late as the 1950s, formal support for government employee learning was tantamount to "practicing witchcraft" (Wilson et al., 2004, p. 262).

But the odyssey of federal public servant schools includes a transformation from something regarded with suspicion to something welcomed. In 1969, the *Official Languages Act* required federal employees to speak in both French and English, and so the government renewed support in Language Training Canada, established a few years earlier. As the *Official Languages Act* was being adopted, the Canadian International Development Agency formed the Centre for Intercultural Learning, and in the 1970s, government commitment to public servant learning could be found in the Public Service Commission's Bureau of Staff Development and Training (Public Service Commission of Canada, 1971).

In the 1970s, discussions about a national school of public administration were occurring within the chambers of the highest levels of government. In the early 1970s, Al Johnson, the secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, proposed a joint provincial-federal funded

5 Justice Minister Kim Campbell explained the government's position: "I am not interested in judicial education to try and determine the substantive outcome of what judges decide. What I want is to make sure that judges have the tools they need to do justice" (as cited in Bindman [1991]). To that point, the National Judicial Institute, as a provider of judicial education, had developed its own anti-sexism curriculum. The National Judicial Institute's teaching method included "a video on sexism, which it estimates has been seen by 1,000 of the 1,800 judges across Canada" (Bindman, 1991).

6 This paragraph and the following one are drawn from the author's doctoral dissertation (Weiler, 2010).

governmental school for senior public servants, military officers, and foreign services personnel. The proposed school would be overseen by a board of governors and taught by university professors, experienced public servants, and politicians. Johnson presented the proposal to the prime minister's cabinet and then met with Prime Minister Trudeau, who had been briefed in great detail on the matter and on three alternative models of a national public servant school.<sup>7</sup> However, the unlikely prospect of a provincial partnership meant it was not approved (Hunter, 1994).

The discussions about a national school of public administration in the Treasury Board were occurring at a time of increasing acceptance that training and learning were part of government operations. The Public Service Commission, for example, had been offering language training and professional development programs to federal employees since the 1960s. Meanwhile, large departments like the Department of Defence and the Department of Transport developed extensive in-house training facilities. And across the Government of Canada, departments were adopting educational leave and executive development policies (Hunter, 1994, p. 8). Public servant training was no longer regarded with suspicion as it had been in the 1950s.

In 1977, the idea of a national school was put forward in the legislature. Member of Parliament Jean-Robert Gauthier tabled a private member's bill in the House of Commons calling for

a National Administration School for...public servants which would be a first step towards the creation of an agency responsible for everything in the field of training and development of public servants...The establishment of a government school would allow us to centralize the existing systems. It would allow the government, in this period of austerity, to make economies of scale, while providing better planification to maximize the potential of the available pedagogical resources. (Gauthier, 1977, pp. 5386–5388)

The bill did not pass, but discussions about a national public servant school continued into the mid-1980s. The discussions involved the Treasury Board of Canada, the Public Service Commission, the Privy Council Office, and committees of deputy ministers. From these discussions, a government school proposal was accepted by the prime minister and his cabinet. On April 14, 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced the creation of a new government school:

The Canadian Centre for Management Studies will bring together leading practitioners and scholars to help further develop the art of management in a public sector context. Its doors will be open to senior managers and to those middle managers who show a strong potential for more senior positions. This Centre will not compete with existing university programs in public administration; rather it is intended to complement and to cooperate with them. (cited in Hunter, 1994, p. 17)

By 1997, the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) was the flagship government school in Canada. Plans were in place to have the Public Service Commission's

7 Acquired from the Privy Council Office through the *Access to Information Act* (A-2012-00044).

Centre for Executive Development at Touraine, Quebec, the predecessor to the CCMD, move in to CCMD headquarters on Sussex Drive. By 2000, the CCMD was offering curricula in government context, leadership development, career and community development, and corporate priorities.

As the millennium approached, the Government of Canada set a new national agenda in which the federal government was to be a place of “continuous learning of a skilled workforce” (Clarkson, 1999). Shortly after, in 2003, “the federal Parliament passed the Public Service Modernization Act merging the Canadian Centre for Management Development, Training and Development Canada, and Language Training Canada into the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS), which had its main headquarters in Ottawa and regional centres in fourteen cities around the country” (Weiler, 2010). On April 1, 2004, the CSPS officially opened. As part of a soft marketing event to launch the school, the CSPS sent over 800 federal employees throughout the country a lunch bag with promotional school supplies. The first president of the school, Janice Cochrane, also sent a letter to all staff in the CSPS national headquarters and the more than 275 employees in regional offices:

Today, the Canada School of Public Service becomes a reality. This marks the beginning of an exciting time for learning in the Public Service. With the creation of the School, federal public servants across the country and around the world will have one stop access to the common learning they need to effectively service Canada and Canadians.<sup>8</sup>

The CSPS also distributed 169 announcements of the school’s opening. Recipients included chairs of Federal Regional Councils of the Government of Canada, the clerk of the House of Commons, heads of numerous government departments, and the school’s board of governors, which included the president of the Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges and the dean of business from the University of Western Ontario, among others.

The CSPS showed ambition in its early years. In December 2005, the board of governors met at the school’s headquarters and was given a report entitled *Transforming the Public Service through Learning*. The first line acknowledged the relationship between public sector administration and the lives of Canadians: “Sound public management is critical to the well-being of Canadians and their communities.”<sup>9</sup> It continued to state that this “requires a *highly skilled, professional workforce that employs the best management and leadership practices and stays at the leading edge in public management*” (emphasis in original). The report also indicated that the school’s strategy included shifting from a position of selling courses and competing with other suppliers in a fragmented way, to supporting individual learning, developing organizational leadership, and facilitating innovation in public management.

On January 1, 2006, the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada’s Policy on Learning, Training, and Development came into force. The policy applies to public servants within approximately 75 departments and agencies within the core administration of the executive branch of the federal government. The policy makes the head of each department responsible

8 Memo from CSPS president and CEO Janice Cochrane to all staff sent April 1, 2004. Acquired through the the Access to Information Act (file number unavailable). CSPS provided the files to the author circa March 2011.

9 Acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act*. See Weiler (2010) electronic appendix 2, p. 117.

for implementing the *Directive on the Administration of Required Training*, which requires that “employees newly appointed to the core public administration successfully complete an orientation program that meets the Standards on Knowledge for Required Training” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, n.d.-a). The policy also makes the president of the CSPS responsible for “developing and regularly updating, in collaboration with the relevant policy authorities, courses and programs that meet the Standards on Knowledge for Required Training, and for delivering these courses and programs and assessing whether participants successfully complete them” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, n.d.-b).

Although a public institution, the CSPS has sought to avoid certain forms of public attention. In 2007, the school introduced a new model of language training, which drew the scrutiny of the House of Commons’ Official Languages Committee and the media. As the CSPS was preparing to release documents about the new model through the *Access to Information Act*, school officials were writing “media lines.” Media lines are a briefing that report communication specialists prepare for departmental spokespeople about what should be said if contacted by the media (Larsen, 2013, p. 17). The media lines explained, “Given that the issue of official languages is highly sensitive and divisive, a proactive approach to provide information concerning the new model is not recommended.”<sup>10</sup> This concern in providing information about a sensitive topic suggests the school might also be unlikely to proactively offer information about its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s reports.

Since the CSPS opened in April 2004, it has provided some learning opportunities related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s action 57.<sup>11</sup> On Aboriginal-Crown relations and treaty and Aboriginal rights, the CSPS offered the course, now retired, called Aboriginal Issues and Self-Government. According to the course catalogue:

This course is intended for public servants who want to help shape Canada’s relationship with Aboriginal peoples. This intensive, interactive course will give you an opportunity to interact with Aboriginal elders, political and community leaders, and senior government officials, and to obtain a first-hand perspective on the challenges, priorities and opportunities facing Aboriginal peoples and the federal government. You will expand your knowledge of Aboriginal self-government and community development issues and gain knowledge and insight that will help your organization shape its relationship with Aboriginal peoples. (Canada School of Public Service, 2007, p. 54)

On the topic of Indigenous law, the CSPS offered a workshop in 2013 and signed a development memorandum of understanding with Health Canada; on the topic of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it offered one workshop, Canada’s Support for the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in 2011; on the history and legacy of residential schools, it offered two expert presentations (one in 2005 and the other

10 Based on documents acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act* (A-2008-0014).

11 Based on documents acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act* (A-2015-00018).

in 2008);<sup>12</sup> and on the topic of Aboriginal people, it offered a workshop in 2007 and 12 armchair discussions between April 2004 and May 2015.<sup>13</sup> It also offered two courses about Aboriginal people, both of which have been retired. Mikawiwin: Leadership and Aboriginal Affairs was a four-day course for functional specialists, managers, and senior managers. Its entry in the course catalogue read:

Through a policy planning and decision-making framework, this course helps managers make policy that works in a public service context focused on Aboriginal affairs. This comprehensive course combines a holistic cross-cultural and principle-centred approach with traditional teachings and wisdom of the Elders, engaging the mental, spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions of growth in the learning experience. (Canada School of Public Service, 2007, p. 67)

The CSPS has also provided a course on Aboriginal considerations in the federal procurement process and town hall meetings on the government's plans for land and economic development.<sup>14</sup>

To what extent have public servants pursued courses offered through the CSPS? One organization to consider is the Privy Council Office. Headquartered in the Langevin Block directly across from the Parliament buildings, the Privy Council Office is considered the Prime Minister's Office's connection to the machinery of the entire federal government. The Privy Council Office functions as "the nerve centre of the federal public service" (Savoie, 1999, p. 109), and as such, its role in the governance of the country is expansive:

[The Privy Council Office] briefs the prime minister on any issue it wishes, controls the flow of papers to Cabinet, reports back to departments on the decisions taken, or not taken, by Cabinet, advises the prime minister of the selection of deputy ministers and briefs chairs of Cabinet committees (with the exception of the Treasury Board), supports the operation of Cabinet and Cabinet committees, advises the prime minister on federal-provincial relations and on all issues of government organizations and ministerial mandates, and prepares summaries of strategic memoranda. (Savoie, 1999, p. 109)

12 In November 2005, it offered Encouraging and Supporting Aboriginal People: The Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Impacts of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada, and in April 2008 it offered From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools.

13 Based on documents acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act* (A-2015-00018). The armchair discussions included From Wasauksing to Ottawa: Storytelling with Waubeshig Rice; The Transformative BC First National Health Initiative—Why Governance Matters; Aboriginal Awareness 101; Aboriginal People in Canada; Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis: A First Nation Perspective; Reconciling Indigenous Policy; Aboriginal Participation in the Public Service; First Nation Involvement in the Public Sector; Aboriginal Awareness Week; Prelude to Aboriginal Awareness Week: Native Identity and the Indian Act; Aboriginal Communities and Government: The Principal Governance Challenges; and A Prelude to Aboriginal Awareness Week: Sharing Our Stories.

14 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Regional Town Hall: Introducing the Lands and Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2011–2014.



By January 25, 2010, employees of the Privy Council Office had taken 2,115 learning opportunities provided through 365 blended courses, face-to-face courses, and armchair discussions. The most popular one, watched by 238 public servants in the Privy Council Office, was a recording of an armchair discussion entitled *Refocusing the Media's Lens on the Government*. To that point, no public servant from the Privy Council Office had taken *Aboriginal Issues and Self-Government* or *Mikawiwin: Leadership and Aboriginal Affairs*.<sup>15</sup>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report appears to have been noticed by the CSPS. Two days after the commission released its report, at 6:37 p.m. on Thursday, June 4, 2015, a vice president of the CSPS emailed other senior officials in the school with the subject "Common Curriculum." The body of the email read, "We may need to accelerate discussions on curriculum related to aboriginal people/issues. One of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was more education for public servants."<sup>16</sup>

What comes in the months and years ahead as a result of these accelerated discussions with one of Canada's public servant schools is of national significance, because it directly pertains to the quality of relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples of Canada.

### Conclusion

This article introduced the concept of "public servant school" within the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* report, specifically action 57. Due to the history of Canada, the article proposes the meaning of "public servant schools" in the Canadian context be interwoven with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for governments to have public servant education contribute to healing and building mutually respectful relationships among Indigenous and settler peoples of Canada. In this regard, public servant schools, as a discursive construct, function in a reconciliatory manner.

To provide evidence that public servant schools are real entities operative in Canadian society, this article documented the formation of one such school, the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS). To be consistent with my proposal, I have tried to interweave the learning opportunities it has provided, at least at some point, related to the Truth and Reconciliation's call to action 57. Further examination of these learning opportunities is still needed to determine the extent to which they embody the spirit of action 57 or how they could be made to do so.

The study of public servant schools would also benefit from a comprehensive scan of the Canadian, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. It is important to remember that the CSPS is only one public servant school in Canada. Some other public servant schools, mentioned earlier in this article, include the Canadian Police College, the National Judicial Institute, and the BC Public Service Agency. Questions such as "What is the nature of their curricula?" and "How do they develop their curricula to include Indigenous knowledge and perspectives?" are open. The benefits of a more comprehensive survey notwithstanding, the concept of public servant schools as presented in this article is warranted and should be accounted for in the historiography of adult education in Canada. By recognizing public servant schools, future researchers will be better equipped to advance knowledge about them.

15 Acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act* in 2010 (file number unknown; file name: ATIP-PCO\_0046.xls).

16 Acquired from the CSPS through the *Access to Information Act* (A-2015-00011).

The task of identifying and researching public servant schools can present challenges at times. Governments seem to increasingly use their websites as tools for strategic political communication rather than a means to distribute a broad range of information about their activities (Rees, 2016). Relying on informal mechanisms, such as emails, letters, or phone calls, or on inside contacts as methods of gathering information may be unproductive, as public officials may feel pressure to withhold information about these public organizations, despite their public nature. These informal access routes can also delay research considerably as information gets tangled up in the thickets of bureaucratic red tape or delay tactics. Because of this, federal and provincial freedom of information laws may prove to be tremendously helpful research tools for in-depth exploration of adult learning within governments. These laws establish parameters of an information retrieval system that provide perhaps the greatest possible assurance of access. While learning to use access laws can be a matter of trial and error, helpful resources do exist (e.g., Larsen, 2013).

Access laws, however, will not be sufficient for doing a comprehensive review of public servant schools. In Canada, the legislative and judicial branches of government are not presently subject to access laws and therefore can be far less transparent and far more difficult to investigate. Examining public servant schools in these branches of government will likely require researchers to scour already published information, leverage the social capital of their position as members of communities or universities, or broker access through people with more social privilege, such as members of Parliament.

The need for a more comprehensive scan of public servant schools in Canada, and the practical challenges of accomplishing this, does not take away from the significance of the concept of public servant schools as proposed in this article. As demonstrated in the section on the CSPS, public servant schools have existed in Canada for some time in some form. Public servant schools are not abstractions, but rather real phenomena that, as of yet, have not been reflected in the Canadian adult education or public administration literature to a great extent.<sup>17</sup> The literature, however, is clearly endowed with a richness of language and thought that could immediately be used to make sense of the topic of public servant learning.

Some critiques of adult learning in workplace settings might be invoked to cast doubts on the nature of learning that human resource departments can actually support (Spencer, 2008). Watkins and Marsick (2014, p. 51) also described a critique that questions whether corporate profit motivation narrows what adults can learn in the workplace. However, drawing attention to public servant schools helps reveal how these critiques lose force when made of organizations in the public sector, which are ultimately subject to normative debates. In public organizations, the means and ends of government employee learning are matters of public opinion rather than profit maximization. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report demonstrates the public nature of public servant schools. The commission is mobilizing public opinion to make public servant schools be part of a broad-based effort to correct a national injustice that has been inflicted upon Indigenous peoples and hampers the formation of respectful relationships with settler peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, therefore, calls on government curriculum makers to develop programs of public servant education that pursue objectives within the broader

17 It is possible that the francophone literature in adult education could contain a more thorough examination of public servant schools than the anglophone literature.

scope of humanistic traditions of adult education. While in Ghana public servant schools are called on to be responsive to local needs rather than economic globalization (Haruna, 2004), in Turkey they are called on to make public administration more transparent (Acar & Özgür, 2004), in China they are called on to respond to economic globalization (Shan, 2004), and in India they are looked to for gender equity (Bragg, 2004), in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on public servant schools to participate in healing the wounds of colonialism on Indigenous populations.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission observed, “It will take many heads, hands, and hearts, working together, at all levels of society to maintain momentum in the years ahead” (2015b, p. 8). Moving toward healing and the formation of mutually respectful relationships, it behooves Canada’s researchers of adult education and those that support them, such as community partners, librarians, publishers, and funding agencies, to recognize and discuss how public servant education has occurred, is occurring, and can occur in all branches and at all levels of government in Canada. But while developing knowledge about Canada’s public servant schools is a necessary step for broadening meaningful discussion about action 57 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s *Calls to Action* report, it is not sufficient. It also requires a discussion about how topics of the history and legacy of Indian residential schools and related Indigenous topics identified by the commission can be integrated into public servant school curricula.

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