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# Marlene Chetek's Educational Comparison: Then and Now

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1 Chetek Interview Audio Transcript- Official Interviews starts at 1:17

2

3 Lisa Saman: where I wanna go, what I wanna do yet, haha

4 Marlene Chetek: Well, now, you're still very very young, so take your time.

5 LS: That's what mom says too, haha.

6 MC: Yeah, good.

7 LS: Oh, she sends her best regards to both you and Mr. Chetek.

8 MC: Oh, you do the same too. I'll have to Facebook her one of these days.

9 LS: She was really excited that you would—were willing to help me out.

10 MC: Well, like I don't know if I'm answering anything the way you want it answered, but—oh well.

11 LS: It's so open. That's what I really like about this project. It's just a really open—question, answer, and then  
12 I'm going to have to write a paper about it comparing it to like the American history and how that changed over  
13 time and how you saw changes over time. So, it'll be interesting.

14 MC: Wow. Probably very similar, but uh— sounds like a big project.

15 LS: It is, it's worth 30% of our grade! Haha

16 MC: WOW. So are you interviewing others or just me?

17 LS: It's just you.

18 MC: Oh my gosh! Pressure!

19 LS: No, it's fine. She [Dr. Newstreet] said that whatever you get out of it, you get out of it. So, it's not—there's  
20 no right or wrong.

21 MC: Right.

22 LS: So, whatever you say will be beneficial to me.

23 MC: Well that's all good—good. So how do we do this? (1:18)

24 LS: Well I need to ask you for your oral permission for me to conduct this interview and then transcribe it and  
25 then potentially it'll be put in our University of Dallas Oral History Repository. So it will be kept forever and ever.

26 MC: Oh my gosh.

27 LS: So, I need to get your oral permission to have that on there.

28 MC: Definitely. (1:39)

29 LS: Awesome. And then, yeah, we can get started. And just, you know, thinking back to how you experienced  
30 your education yourself, do you think that there were certain things that were more or negative—like more  
31 positive or negative recollections that you have of those experiences?

32 MC: Uhu-- well, I got some notes here so I'm looking down often, if you don't mind. Okay haha. So, just want  
33 you to keep in mind that I was educated many years ago and graduated from high school in 1967. So my  
34 experiences are ancient haha. Um, all my experiences that I recall were very very positive. I attended a small

35 school in rural Alberta, which is the Prairies, and uh- I loved school. I always remember having my homework  
36 done, planning what I'd wear the next day, I really wanted to do well and I was quite shy, I was always wanting  
37 to uh—to please. So, um- every day I rode a school bus for about an hour to school and on the bus I would  
38 remember doing a lot of reading, socializing with friends on the bus, um—I was so keen on school I would  
39 always bug my older brother to hurry up so we wouldn't miss the bus every morning. Um- we had close  
40 neighbors, we lived on a farm so friends at school were very very important. Uh- I can recall something about  
41 each grade, each teacher, uh- all in a very positive way. So, just little snippets. So, living in that small farming  
42 community, uh- we, as families, knew all the teachers in the community, we knew their families, uh- we  
43 socialized—I socialized with uh— my friends often had their parents for teachers, so everyone knew everything  
44 about everybody...

45 LS: Uhu...

46 MC: ...it seemed. Uh- being positive about school meant that I was always really proud to tell my parents how  
47 well I was achieving. This is when I was quite young and it- uh was really important to have a good report card,  
48 very high priority. I remember—I don't remember getting any special bought rewards, but it was verbal approval  
49 and just making my parents feel proud. So I guess these were memorable because they were happy and  
50 exciting times while I was growing up and developing so, I guess that's why I'm remembering them. Um, getting  
51 back to ways of teaching, uh- I remember the teachers were very organized, um- they seemed strict in those  
52 days, but they were very caring. Um- they taught lecture style, I guess, mostly. I copied a lot of notes from the  
53 chalkboard uh- especially in late elementary and junior high. Uh- elementary school was structured with  
54 readers, fill in the blank, work books, uh- high priority on neatness and uh- really not remembering too much in  
55 uh- you know, planning individual— or doing individual kind of learning assignment. It was all very structured I  
56 would say.

57 LS: Teaching the class as a whole.

58 MC: What's that?

59 LS: Teaching the class as a whole compared to differentiating. (5:25)

60 MC: Exactly. So, um- because it was a small school, I was in a split grade for grades 3/4 and then 5/6 so, I had  
61 the same teachers for those years. So, I guess they got to know the students really well, we got to know the  
62 teacher very well, it all worked out really well there in that way too. Uh- so it was not any hands-on that I can  
63 remember until probably going into junior high and high school as science classes were more hands-on then.

64 LS: Right.

65 MC: So, that's basically that first question!

66 LS: Do you remember how the like desks were structured when you were in elementary school? Because I  
67 know now-a-days they really emphasize on grouping, so was that any different back then? (6:11)

68 MC: Oh, yes. It was—what I remember is rows, rows of desks. Um- yeah. Don't remember being  
69 switched around, can't remember that at all. But it was all in rows and yeah—nothing as far as you  
70 working with partners, it was, what I remember is individual— doing your own work, and finishing it on  
71 time, completing homework if there was any. Getting a little star on my printing page was very special,  
72 haha.

73 LS: The stickers never go away, haha.

74 MC: Exactly, yeah, yeah. Still very rewarding.

75 LS: And that was the same for high school as well, the rows? Those never changed?

76 MC: Right, right.

77 LS: And thinking back about high school and the classes you took, do you think the curriculum was any  
78 different for boys and girls? Did you go to an all girls school or a mixed school? (7:14)

79 MC: So, that's a good question. The high school, because we were in a small town, so the high school  
80 was the same building as what I went to elementary and junior high school. And in high school there  
81 were two streams, I don't know if that's common—the way they separate them now. There's the  
82 matriculation program and the general program, does that sound familiar at all? Matriculation?

83 LS: No, that does not, but I'm thinking it's like a higher—like an IB kind of, AP program.

84 MC: Well it was—it was, you took matriculation if you were planning to go to university.

85 LS: Okay.

86 MC: So, you had to take specified classes which were: English, French, math, social studies, and then two  
87 sciences. So the school that I went to there were only about thirty students in my grade- 10/11/12. So,  
88 we graduated with a very small class, and—so we were very close-knit. It was boys and girls, so maybe  
89 there were about twenty in the matriculation program and the other program was called the general  
90 program, so those students would be taking the business courses more so, the -you know, accounting,  
91 and so on—filing. So I was in the matriculation program. Um- the entrance to go to universities in those  
92 days was you had to have a minimum mark of sixty-five percent overall. So, it's more strict now, of  
93 course.

94 LS: Oh, yeah.

95 MC: Also, when I went to high school, being a small school, there weren't many options to fill in the  
96 timetable so I do remember there was home economics for the girls, industrial ed for the boys. Most  
97 boys in the matr— matriculation program took the, I guess they were smarter than us girls, the math 31,  
98 the physics, which I didn't take. Otherwise the course were mixed, there weren't many options at all.

99 LS: Right, and was there any sort of track—so there was the matriculation and then the general. Was  
100 there any track that was more focused on the vocational route? (9:33)

101 MC: Um- I guess it would have been the general program. Um- do you mean... what do you mean by the  
102 vocational?

103 LS: Vocation as in people that were—they knew they were going to be set out to do a certain job like  
104 being a mechanic or being a hairdresser or an archer—you know like a shoe smith— a very specific kind  
105 of job.

106 MC: Not in high school. They would probably take the general program but then after high school, they  
107 would, you know, the post-secondary would be where they would focus on—if it was a trade, they  
108 would go to the technical college, if it was hairdressing, it was a hairdressing school, and so on. So they  
109 would probably be taking the general program more so than the matriculation.

110 LS: Alright, perfect, awesome. I know there are a lot of people that—even you, that I look up to thinking  
111 back that influenced me to be a teacher now. So, is there anyone in particular that you remember really  
112 influencing you, you said you really enjoyed elementary school so I can imagine there are some of them  
113 that stick out that influenced you to be a teacher. (10:48)

114 MC: Well, you know, to be honest, after high school I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do.

115 LS: Really?

116 MC: At first, I thought I would like to go into dental hygiene. But, yeah- I don't know why, haha. But my  
117 marks weren't high enough for that faculty so um- during those years most of the girls, if they were  
118 going to university, they would either go into education or nursing.

119 LS: Uhu...

120 MC: Not like today where you have all this—these variant job opportunities. Uh- my older brother was  
121 already in university, he was in engineering and so I thought 'Well, you know, this is a good start for a  
122 family'. So, not knowing what I wanted to do, I went into the Arts—the Bachelor Of Arts Degree program  
123 first. So I did that for three years and during university days, quite a few of my school friends from high  
124 school were in education and new friends I met at university were in education, Mr. Chetek was in  
125 education a year ahead of me and I met him, haha. So I think that— at that time as a young adult was  
126 when I really thought 'Well, this is uh—where I—what career or what faculty I'd like to go into'. So, I  
127 applied for the education faculty and because I already had a Bachelor Of Arts Degree, I only needed to  
128 go into education for one year.

129 LS: That's nice, haha.

130 MC: Yes, it was nice. So the majority or many um- months during that year was in student teaching was  
131 where, to me, that's where I learned how to be a teacher. So, I guess, yeah, because I was in the outer  
132 degree program and into education then, the biggest influence I would say would have been my friends  
133 and the contacts. So, it was— a lot of it by- by chance but possibly because I did experience great school  
134 years when I was younger- that was subconsciously something that I thought would be good.

135 LS: Would you mind stating what year you went to university? (13:08)

136 MC: Sure. Started—I started in 1968 and graduated in 1972.

137 LS: So you did the three years bachelors and then the one year um- additional for education?

138 MC: After three program—yeah, I did stay out a year after grade 12.

139 LS: Okay.

140 MC: And was deciding what to do and just worked at odd jobs.

141 LS: Right.

142 MC: And so, yeah, I took my time, I guess.

143 LS: Awesome. You said you wanted to go into dental school, was that seen as like “a man’s job” back  
144 then because you said that nursing and education were the “usual” places—like the usual courses that  
145 girls took. So was that seen as like a—a negative thing for you to go into dental school? (13:55)

146 MC: Uh- it really was—it was dental hygiene which was females that would be doing more of the teeth  
147 cleaning and uh- so, I don’t know, I guess because I had a friend who was a dental assistant, I thought  
148 maybe university with dental hygiene would be interesting and I don’t know why! But, yeah, it was—it  
149 was females who were dental hygienists.

150 LS: Okay. So did it...

151 MC: Um—of course, I didn’t have—my grades weren’t high enough, they had higher uh- grade—or  
152 higher um— course—um- grades that you needed to—to apply and get accepted.

153 LS: Right, so that still hasn’t changed because medical school seems so hard to get into. Your grades  
154 have to be extremely high to get into those medical programs.

155 MC: Absolutely. Uhu—uhu.

156 LS: I’m beginning to see these correlations between how it’s basically not changed over the years.

157 MC: Oh, very much so. In many ways. Absolutely, yeah.

158 LS: Alright. Well, the requirements now-a-days to become a teacher seem very extreme, all the testings  
159 we have to go through, the certifications, the additional certifications for ESL and gifted and talented  
160 and just the control that we are under and we have to prove all our diplomas. Was that the same back  
161 then, how you had to prove that you were a teacher with some kind of certification? (15:22)

162 MC: Uh- no. I—I think it was—it was a lot easier. Um- the requirements now are definitely more strict.  
163 Um- now one needs uh- four years of uh-to get a bachelor of education, four years in university, I  
164 believe that’s—that’s still the case.

165 LS: Uhu.

166 MC: Or with an existing degree, it’s two more years in—in the faculty of education. So that’s changed.  
167 Um- teachers here can get a permanent teaching certificate when they’re in their second year of  
168 teaching. Um- there’s permanent continuous school contracts aren’t so easy to attain. Um- new  
169 teachers now have a probationary contract for several years, uh- it’s not very secure. There’s—I think  
170 there’s a lot of competition. A new hire, for instance, maybe that is replacing someone on a leave,  
171 maternity leave or some sort of leave, could be in that position for way over a year, but then uh- they,  
172 you know, aren’t promised a continuous job after that returning teacher returns.

173 LS: Right.

174 MC: So it think it’s quite stressful as far as security. When I started teaching, uh- we had to take certain  
175 jobs in certain communities. But, it seemed like after your, for sure, second year, you were guaranteed  
176 of a permanent contract. Which—which was—and then you were really secure in your job and if you  
177 wanted to change like, for instance, your saying to go into maybe uh- special ed.

178 LS: Uhu

179 MC: or enrichment, quite often we were mentored in the school or it—you—it would just be by chance  
180 that you would be able to do some sort of specialized teaching. Um- so I think...

181 LS: So it wasn't that...

182 MC: Hmm...

183 LS: additional schooling that you had to follow to then specify in those subjects? (17:32)

184 MC: Yeah, now it's—you know, people are—are, I feel, more trained directly in—the – in what they  
185 want to do. In those days too, that was true, because if you were uh- if you specialized in music or  
186 whatever, you would definitely be hired because you—they would hire the music teacher or there were  
187 special ed. uh- degrees I guess at that time, but you could also fall into it with your experience in the  
188 school as a regular generalist so, yes.

189 LS: Hmm. It was more flexible, it seems.

190 MC: Yeah, exactly. I know teachers are, as probably now-a-days, teachers are observed by the admis--  
191 administration regularly. Um- when I taught, I taught in a Catholic school and in those days, you didn't  
192 have to be Catholic to be hired in a Catholic school, I was, but there were many teachers who because of  
193 their, you know, teaching qualifications, they were hired. Now-a-days, you have to be Catholic, is my  
194 understanding.

195 LS: Right.

196 MC: The salaries and contract terms, here, are negotiated by uh- teacher negotiating committees for  
197 each school for each school division that one works for, so uh- it's not province wide where you would  
198 have it state wide and the states where all the teachers are paid the side—the same. Here, you're paid  
199 according to what school division has negotiated with their teachers so it's different for different areas  
200 in the same province. Um- what else can I say? Teachers receive, this is the same as years ago, teachers  
201 now receive an experience salary increment for every year they teach until they teach ten years and  
202 then it's kind of at their maximum.

203 LS: Uhu.

204 MC: Know if that—how that compares. Uh- also here we have the public and the catholic schools that  
205 are funded equally by the—by the province.

206 LS: Oh, interesting.

207 MC: So people have their choice without paying any extra fess of which schools they want to go to.

208 LS: That's nice, they give them that choice of actually—where to send their kids to without spending  
209 millions of dollars in just the elementary school level. (20:00)

210 MC: Yeah, uh, one thing I may add here now, which is—uh- before, when I was teaching, uh- you would  
211 have to kind of go to your community school, you'd be bused if you were in the city or, you know, within

212 walking distance. But now there are so many parents driving their children to school because they can  
213 do school shopping.

214 LS: Right.

215 MC: So they're choosing more that—that fit their- what they think would be best for their child. We  
216 have uh- schools who—that are, you know, the morning may be all academics and the afternoon, in  
217 elementary school, would be a sports program. Another school in the same city might be fine arts where  
218 they would have the, you know, drama, music, and so on- specializing in that. So, parents have a lot of  
219 options. Some schools are very noted for their special ed. programs, early intervention programs. So, so  
220 there's a lot of choices for parents.

221 LS: They can pick and choose. Talking about mobility, do you think that the whole, contracts not being  
222 extended to a permanent contract could also be due to our mobility now-a-days to move around and  
223 that people don't necessarily want to stay in the same place? (21:22)

224 MC: Oh, that's a good point, that could be— definitely one factor. Uh- on the other hand, if there's, you  
225 know, a young teacher what—really wants to start out a career. I know, for example, one young gal  
226 who—who is teaching in one town, but she moved away and then she did get a replacement job in  
227 another city and uh- she wanted to stay and get a full time contract. But, because there wasn't enough  
228 positions available, she kept getting a different grade, a different position- so she had varied—you  
229 know, she was an elementary teacher. It was a smaller town. She ended up teaching high school and so  
230 every year was like being a first year teacher again, you know. So, now, I've just been talking to her, she  
231 has applied of overseas teaching and she's going to Columbia, but she's had like ten years of no  
232 permanent contract. So it's stressful!

233 LS: Yeah, I can see how that's very stressful.

234 MC: Yeah, for sure!

235 LS: When you got your permanent contract, was it also like a specific grade or just the school that was  
236 permanent? (22:42)

237 MC: It was the school—the school division like I could have been transferred to another school or asked  
238 to go to another school, but it was—it was for the school division.

239 LS: Okay, so it was in the same area.

240 MC: So that was—that was— gave us a lot of security.

241 LS: That alone, yeah, you have different schools within that area, so even if one school were to have to  
242 get rid of a teacher, you would have other options to go to.

243 MC: Exactly. And most of us, well we all had student loans to pay off so we really wanted a job.

244 LS: Yup, I feel you.

245 MC: Oh, boy, I know! Haha



246 LS: So going all the way back um- through your career, thinking about your first job that you had going  
247 into that permanent contract, could you just walk me through all the way from there to your retirement  
248 and what you're doing now.

249 MC: I sure can! Okay, so—so, in 1972 was when I graduated with a teaching uh- degree I guess. That was  
250 the year I married Mr. Chetek and he had graduated a year ahead of me, so he did get a job a year  
251 before I graduated in a small community which was an air force town in Alberta, where we're living now.  
252 So, uh- because he was already there, I think the principle was happy to keep Mr. Chetek, so they  
253 offered me a job. So I taught elementary school there after we got married. It was about a four hour  
254 drive from the main city, Edmonton, where a lot of our family lived. So after the first year, we decided—  
255 we thought rather than driving every weekend to go see our family, relatives, and friends, we would  
256 apply for jobs that would be closer. And in those days, I guess, it was kind of booming with, you know,  
257 new schools and so on—we applied to several places—several schools near the city. And we were both  
258 very lucky to get positions in a small city, which is a suburb just out of the capital city, it's uh- called Saint  
259 Albert. So, Mr. Chetek was teaching junior high school, he later got—was in two high school and then I  
260 was teaching elementary in that school. So from, I guess, 1973 to 2001, I was teaching in that Catholic  
261 elementary school, mostly teaching grade two and uh- then when we had our children. I went on  
262 maternity leave and when they went—were, I guess they were quite young, and I returned to teach, but  
263 I asked for half time teaching.

264 LS: Uhu.

265 MC: And fortunately, I had a half time teaching position until our children went to school. Along with  
266 that time I was able to keep my permanent full time contract, so it was my choice whether I wanted to  
267 come back full time.

268 LS: Wow, that's nice.

269 MC: It was in contract that I was—would still have that. So, I don't think they do that anymore is—, you  
270 know, half time, full time, full time, half time. So, it was perfect. So, when I did work part time, I wasn't  
271 in a regular classroom because I was half days, so I taught some remedial reading—resource room we  
272 called it.

273 LS: Uhu.

274 MC: So, little bit of special ed. Um- so I did that until 1998 to 2001, I went back to full time teaching and  
275 during that—those years, the school I was at, they—uh- tried a new approach to teaching called  
276 combined classrooms.

277 LS: Okay. (26:48)

278 MC: Uh- where you would have—I had a combined grade 1/2 classroom, so I had followed the grade  
279 ones, kept them till- when they went into grade 2, so I had that grade for two years.

280 LS: Okay.

281 MC: And so I did that for—till 2001.

282 LS: Hmm.

283 MC: It was really interesting. It was very difficult. Because you, I had—I remember having a class of  
284 twenty-eight. I had fourteen grade ones and fourteen grade twos and it was just very very busy. You  
285 know, teaching the two grades at one time. But—survived.

286 LS: Would they be lower level—or higher level first graders and lower level second graders so they kind  
287 of match up? Or completely...

288 MC: You know, because the entire school went on that type of uh- approach, every teacher had a  
289 combined classroom. So, it was all heterogeneous. There were— at the time there were, two grade 1/2  
290 classrooms, or maybe there was three. So it was all heterogeneous and so, we, as teachers, we really  
291 worked together to do planning and sharing of our materials and so on. So, no, you just had a mixture of  
292 who you got. I'm sure they probably did plan, you know, to separate kids with behaviors, but as far as  
293 abilities- it was a mix, ha.

294 LS: Wow, that sounds very hard.

295 MC: So that was interesting. So then in 2001, we um- we learned about overseas and international  
296 teaching. So we went to a presentation at the university and uh- thought 'Well, this would be something  
297 we'd like to try to do', so we got all our resumes and materials ready and went to a job fair in Ontario  
298 and I had several different opportunities to go to several countries. Um- we chose Abu Dhabi, as you  
299 know.

300 LS: Yes. (28:57)

301 MC: And that was a wonderful experience- just wonderful. So, I did teach grade three for two years and  
302 then I was in the ESL program, I don't know if you remember that, but um- there was an opening for  
303 English as a Second Language and there again, I just fell into that. I didn't have any of the TESOL courses  
304 or anything like that, but with working with, you know, good teacher mentors, it all worked out really  
305 really well. So we did that until 2006 and decided to come back home. And came back to our city where  
306 we raised our kids and taught school. And still wanting to stay in the education field, I put my name into  
307 substitute teaching- supply teaching

308 LS: Hmm...

309 MC: and did a bit of that and through the school division that I had been working for previously for all  
310 those years, I was offered a part-time job teaching some reading and math improvement to grades three  
311 and four. So I did that for hmmm I guess till 2009, so three years. That's really good opportunity. So I was,  
312 at that point, receiving my teacher's pension plus receiving a little bit of extra teacher's pay. Then in  
313 2009, uh- Mr. Chetek and I decided—so that part-time contract ended—we decided to start a little  
314 company called Educational Success Strategies.

315 LS: Hmm

316 MC: And that gave us an opportunity to um- have a job at the technical college in Edmonton. So we had  
317 a contract there from 2009 to 2013. And what we did- we were academic strategist, is what our position  
318 was called. So we worked with struggling, they were already struggling adult students, who were in the  
319 college. Most of them had—were apprentices in the trades and so they were coming to college for their  
320 six weeks every year of- I guess, not the hands on that they would be doing as apprentices, but the  
321 schooling. And so, many of them were apprentices because they were so successful with uh- you know,

322 becoming a mechanic or a plumber or so on. But, they were not prepared for the college aspect of  
323 exams and going to classes.

324 LS: Right. (31:42)

325 MC: So, what we did is- they were booked for one hour scheduling to see one of us. And we would work  
326 with them, talking about just time management, exam taking strategies, study skill strategies,  
327 organizational skills, anxiety issues, and so on. So, that in itself was really rewarding because as adults,  
328 they had their careers planned and if they weren't in an apprentice, many of them were upgrading their  
329 high school and they could do it at the college. So, they wanted to be able to enter that college program.

330 LS: Wow.

331 MC: This was government funded that they were able to get these services through the student services  
332 at the college, so. We did that and 2010, we um- decided to move out to our lake walk, out of the city.  
333 And the contract ended with—at—in 2013 with the college. So we decided now to uh- substitute teach  
334 here in the nearby schools in our area. We also invigilate exams for the apprenticeship board, which is  
335 again for apprentices that are going to school. Or we will read to an apprentices who has difficulty  
336 reading their exam, so that's really a neat thing to do. So that's one-on-one, so that's what we're doing  
337 now.

338 LS: I love that! That sounds so interesting to do. (33:26)

339 MC: It is! It really is interesting to see adults in their learning. You know, and they are having difficulties  
340 so it—it is gratifying to see that they really want to improve themselves and have a career, so...

341 LS: Right and I think maybe that's a big difference between teaching elementary and then teaching the  
342 adolescence or adults. Is that the motivation is kind of different—adults are more motivated because  
343 they need it while students—elementary students might not realize that it's going to be useful for them.  
344 (34:04).

345 MC: Yes. Yeah, they are not at the—at least the ones I'm seeing now in the elementary schools when I'm  
346 teaching they're—yeah, but again, there are those that are focused and are able to maybe see how, you  
347 know, working hard and so on is gratifying to them. But, it has changed- which I'll probably talk about in  
348 another question haha.

349 LS: Right.

350 MC: There- I think that's our next one!

351 LS: Yeah, so yup- thinking about performance and behavior of students, do you think that that's changed  
352 over time? I know parents seem to be a lot less involved now maybe or just not as strict as they used to  
353 be, at least stereotypically. The whole— parent—getting good grades and, you know, proving to your  
354 parents and making them proud doesn't necessarily be—doesn't necessarily seem a common concept  
355 anymore. So how do you think that's changed over time? (35:05)

356 MC: It's really hard to—well, we can compare. What I would say is- the good, studious kids from before,  
357 we still see so many of them now-you know, like yourself.

358 LS: \*Chuckles\*

359 MC: You have ambitions and- and we do see a lot of that. But, right now, I think the performance or the  
360 academic performance has changed or the curriculum has changed because over the years, the topics  
361 have filtered downwards. So what maybe I was taught, for instance, in biology in high school is now  
362 taught in grade seven. Math concepts, a lot—everything is expected at a younger grade and younger  
363 age. So, I don't think all students are ready. Many of them are not ready for those concepts taught at  
364 these earlier grades, so we still have the same developmental issues, cognitive differences as before,  
365 um- students now are included in regular classrooms- there's the inclusion

366 LS: Uhu.

367 MC: Which we didn't have in our day. So, it's- it's very time consuming for teachers, you're doing a lot of  
368 individual planning and so on. Um- so, it- I think for a teacher there is a lot more expected and um- what  
369 should I say? Anyway, I lost my train of thought.

370 LS: You're fine. (36:46)

371 MC: Right now, so for behaviors, I think there are more students that we are noticing that are more  
372 aggressive, more distracted, attention seeking, maybe more issues coming from family dynamics that  
373 aren't the same as when I taught years ago. Um- there—I think there's a more sense of entitlement, less  
374 self-control, like you say, some of the poor work ethics are noticed more. But, then again, the good,  
375 hardworking, polite students are the same.

376 LS: Uhu.

377 MC: But difficult cases seem to stand out to a greater degree. More students are identified now with  
378 conditions that we've never heard of before. A lot of children are um-, you know, they might be  
379 premature and in my day they might not—their life expectancy was short, they never made it to schools.  
380 There were special schools for those who had severe problems. Now, there's —there's a lot of inclusions  
381 and it's very demanding.

382 LS: Right.

383 MC: Counseling services, to me, aren't the same as when I first taught. We used to have a full time  
384 counselor in the school and in elementary school. Now, one counselor shared maybe among the  
385 division.

386 LS: Wow. (38:15)

387 MC: So, it's uh- you know, with cut backs and funding.

388 LS: Right.

389 MC: You know, there's not as many supports.

390 LS: Yeah. Do you think it's because there are so many different programs that they focus on now-a-days  
391 like special ed. and inclusion and all these different kind of programs that they had to cut on the  
392 counseling?

393 MC: Exactly. And they're hiring so many more educational assistants.

394 LS: Uhu.

395 MC: That maybe we would have two in an entire school and now there's one or two for every  
396 classroom, haha.

397 LS: Yeah, which you think would make a teacher's job a bit easier, but haha

398 MC: Not always, right?

399 LS: Not always haha. Perfect. And what about the parental involvement- do you think that's changed at  
400 all throughout the years?

401 MC: Uh- you know what, I was always so really fortunate to have parent volunteers in my classroom.  
402 Uh-really lucky to have supportive parents and developed good reports with them. So- always had an  
403 open door policy. Um- now many parents, I think, continue to really be involved with volunteering and  
404 supporting their children with their academics. I see a lot of that in the schools, elementary schools, now  
405 when I'm substitute teaching. So I think that parents are still generally, if they're going to be supportive,  
406 they make themselves available.

407 LS: Okay.

408 MC: Currently, something we didn't have is parents have access to the classroom teacher's website,  
409 they receive all the notices, the current topics taught, homework assignments, just general news. So the  
410 communication is open through emailing, I know in the high school they report attendance, they report  
411 assignments completed or not completed through, you know, their website. So there's a lot that parents  
412 know now that uh- it's easily accessed as to—as far as how their child is doing

413 LS: Right.

414 MC: and so yeah, many parents are very willing to volunteer. On the other hand, I've seen some cases  
415 of—I don't know if you've heard of the term helicopter moms?

416 LS: No! (40:43)

417 MC: They're hanging around the child's classroom door to kind of check what their child is doing in the  
418 classroom and compare and so on, haha

419 LS: Hahaha. Oh, that is silly.

420 MC: They're not working moms, but they're almost overly involved.

421 LS: Right.

422 MC: So that can be a negative, can be a positive, I don't know, haha.

423 LS: Do you think also the parental involvement has changed because just now both pa—it's a common  
424 thing that both parents are working. Compared to probably back when you were in elementary, your  
425 mom was at home—it was common for the mom to stay at home mom, but now it's kind of— both  
426 parents are out and working. Do you think that's changed the parental involvement towards the kids?  
427 (41:27)

428 MC: Uh- as far as their performance?

429 LS: Uhu- yeah, because like the motivation that they receive from having their parents involved.

430 MC: Right, uh- that's a tough one. I think, you know, working parents definitely - there are those who  
431 will be on top of what—how their children are doing even if they themselves go in to volunteer in the  
432 classroom, but they are checking their kid's backpack and so on. I still think you still have the ones who  
433 are very on top of it and then those who..., as in our day, the backpack wouldn't be emptied in weeks or  
434 checked and so on.

435 LS: Yeah.

436 MC: So for me it's really hard to compare. I do think though now-a-days, it's such a throwaway society as  
437 far as parents sending lunches in a different way compared to when, you know, I taught school that um-  
438 so much is consumed, thrown away, or wasted and parents are working maybe they can afford all those,  
439 you know, extras. Children now-a-days have a lot of extras.

440 LS: Yeah, it's seen that third graders now have phones and that's... even for me, that's a crazy concept! I  
441 had my first phone when I was in seventh grade and they have smart phones now-a-days in like first and  
442 second. (43:02)

443 MC: And they feel entitled. For example, in one of the schools I was at substitute teaching, I guess a  
444 teacher on supervision was telling a student outside at recess 'You—You can't have your phone out  
445 here' and the child just blatantly said 'It's private property, you can't take it away. You're stealing'.  
446 Just—yeah—so it's... there are some

447 LS: Oh my goodness.

448 MC: you know, ideas that—that children have that they're—it's entitlement. It's their right.

449 LS: Yeah. And then you wonder where they've heard that before, how they know these things.

450 MC: That's right, exactly. Yeah.

451 LS: Uh- was there any- because you taught both in Canada and the United Arab Emirates- was there a  
452 difference in parental involvement there? Because I know the culture in the United Arab Emirates is  
453 more 'Let the nannies take care of the kids'. So, did you see any parental involvement- like a difference  
454 there? (44:02)

455 MC: Uh- there—there was a difference. You know, all the parents were very supportive in coming to  
456 parent-teacher interviews and discussing their child's report cards. But, I'm thinking because it was so  
457 international and most of the students' parents were, you know, from the Emirates, that the parents  
458 didn't feel, possibly, like they didn't have to come in and maybe assist or volunteer in the classroom,  
459 their nannies could. Or because English wasn't their first language. We really didn't expect it from the  
460 parents. So...

461 LS: Right.

462 MC: Maybe that's changed now, with—over the years. But, we didn't expect it. We know that many of  
463 the students would go home and they'd be tutored for two or three hours by a tutor to help them, so. It  
464 would just be that we would be teaching, we'd have our assistants, if they were in the classroom, and it  
465 all worked out really well. We had a lot of preparation time as teachers.

466 LS: Yeah, haha. I'm sure.

467 MC: Yeah.

468 LS: And so, you mentioned that you taught adult learners just recently. Do you think that there's a big  
469 difference, just other than the age gap, but is there a really big difference between teaching kids and  
470 adults? (45:30)

471 MC: Well our example with—with the adults was because they were at the college and they were, you  
472 know, this was—many of them were quite a bit older, they had a greater vested interest in what they  
473 were trying to achieved in their careers. So, they were highly motivated, so they would seek this  
474 assistance if they could get it.

475 LS: Right.

476 MC: So, whether they— they would have similar learning difficulties because they may have missed  
477 some of their prerequisites for their foundation skills like they had reading difficulties, weak  
478 comprehension quite often, maybe their math skills were lower. The um- possibly a lot of them were  
479 very anxious, stressed, had attention issues. So, they were adults and many students have the issues as  
480 younger children, but you could see that they were—these adults that we worked with, and it was one-  
481 on-one again, so that's kind of a different situation

482 LS: Right.

483 MC: they were very willing to do their best. However on the other hand, if some—they would come to a  
484 session with us and, you know, if they were very uh—they had attention deficit issues, organizational  
485 skills, uh- they would agree- yes I need to do this, I need to do that, but they just couldn't follow  
486 through.

487 LS: Wow.

488 MC: We did see students who would finally be on medication because they had gone through testing  
489 and would see a specialist and they would try a medication for attention deficit. For many it— they  
490 found the right one, it made big world of difference. It really did.

491 LS: That's interesting to know.

492 MC: Hmm.

493 LS: Do you think it's easier being a teacher, even though it was one-on-one,- do you think it was easier  
494 to work with adult learners just because you don't have to deal with, you know, parents being over  
495 protective of their children or wanting to know exactly how their child is doing, like the helicopter moms  
496 you were saying...

497 MC: Exactly, haha.

498 LS: Do you think it's easier to work with adult learners? (47:54)

499 MC: It was in our case. Uh- again, they have to achieve to go further in their career, so they did have  
500 these obstacles, like I said of exam writing or whatever, but they had the government's support as far as  
501 funding that—them for that extra help. So, there wasn't any parent involvement.

502 LS: Yeah.

503 MC: because they were adults already themselves. Many of them had families that they—you know,  
504 they had a lot of stress because they were married with families and had these issues that made it  
505 difficult for them. But we did see a lot of success stories too.

506 LS: That's awesome. So I guess, yeah, that could be another issue that can then pop up, they have their  
507 own families to think about rather than having someone watch them, they are the ones that are  
508 watching.

509 MC: That's right and they come in adults with—they could have relationship issues, financial issues,

510 LS: Right

511 MC: So a lot of them had many obstacles. But, at least they were trying to move forward. A lot of them  
512 were not successful, they had to repeat that year, whatever, but if we did find out that someone did  
513 really well, it was really gratifying.

514 LS: Yeah, I can only imagine. I mean, even teaching elementary, and just seeing the progress that  
515 students make is very gratifying.

516 MC: Oh, isn't it? Have you done your student teaching?

517 LS: I have, yes, I did last semester! And it was just amazing to see just—I could—the twelve weeks of  
518 student teaching, so just over that course of twelve weeks to see the immense progress that kids make,  
519 it's incredible. (49:37)

520 MC: Yeah, it is. You've chosen a good career.

521 LS: Hmm, I hope so, I know so. Alright and then, how have educational issues or concerns evolved  
522 throughout the years. So, there was, earlier in the days, a very big focus on the different tracking  
523 methods and having kids either, like you said there was the general and... it slips my mind... m--

524 MC: Matriculation

525 LS: Matriculation, those two routes. Do you think there are still, you know, those kind of issues and  
526 concerns of maybe tracking and pushing them into one kind of educational track. Do you think those are  
527 still prominent today? (50:22)

528 MC: What I would say is, now, I think, we're seeing students progress through the system despite not  
529 having achieved the skills that they need for the next level. So, I think the issues are compounded. You  
530 know, do we see if—in our day it was, you either got this mark and you moved on to the next level or  
531 you didn't. Well, now it's, you know, it's you give them these supports and you still move them on and  
532 try to work them at their individual level. But, I don't know, as—when they're coming out of high school  
533 as young adults if they're achieving at a grade seven level or lower, that's a big concern too.

534 LS: Right.

535 MC: So, they're often not ready to handle that level so, everything is magnified. I would say the  
536 frustrations are magnified, their feeling of confidence, um- there's so much pressure to achieve. So, I  
537 don't know if that can ever be rectified.

538 LS: Right.



539 MC: Sometimes they don't accept the fact that they don't have those skills and so they blame—it's  
540 someone else's fault but their own- that they're encountering difficulties.

541 LS: Haha.

542 MC: Now, that might have been the same years ago, but in my day, when I was young, then I think if  
543 there were difficulties, quite often those—those students knew that their career path would take them  
544 more—like there was, you know, they would stay on the farm or they would go into, you know, some  
545 other sort of job where they successful. Now, I don't know, are we pushing out so many people and they  
546 have this “high school diploma”, but they really haven't finished high school.

547 LS: Don't have the knowledge of—yes, exactly.

548 MC: So, hahaha.

549 LS: That's definitely something that I've noticed as well, that students are just passed on to the next  
550 grade even though they don't necessarily know all the material that they were said to have known. And  
551 they just keep pushing them through instead of keeping them or making them repeat the year. (52:42)

552 MC: Right, exactly. And we've always—we now are so worried about self-esteem and confidence that,  
553 again, a lot of it causes this entitlement—feeling of entitlement.

554 LS: Yeah.

555 MC: It's their right... And, so...

556 LS: Yeah.

557 MC: No answers to how to fix that.

558 LS: Yeah those are—yeah, some very mind blowing concerns.

559 MC: Uhu.

560 LS: And it's probably not going to get any better over the years coming.

561 MC: Yeah, it's hard to say. You're going to have to let me know how things are going, haha.

562 LS: Haha, I will. Alright, and what are your predictions for the future of education and how technology is  
563 going to impact education and how that's going to change it all. (53:28)

564 MC: Hmm, well, I know technology definitely has many advantages and we're all benefitting.

565 LS: Haha, as we see right now!

566 MC: We all know the different areas—like right now! Right?

567 LS: Exactly.

568 MC: But, on the other hand, has it made a decrease in original thinking for people? You can find  
569 anything on the internet or online.

570 LS: Right.

571 MC: Um- there's a lot of spare time that students are using for video games, etcetera. So, are we  
572 addicted to technology?

573 LS: Yes.

574 MC: In some ways, yes. So, is this causing problem solving to decrease? Socializing to decrease? I don't  
575 know, so, there's so many positive things about technology I don't know how that will change- for it to  
576 be more beneficial or, you know— I don't know.

577 LS: Yeah. It can come crashing down. Yeah, that's interesting to think about just because back then, I  
578 believe, like when you first started teaching, lesson plans were made by the teachers, all ideas were just  
579 put together, you came up with the most original things to teach and now, if you don't know what to  
580 teach, you just put it in Google, and there you have it- your lesson plan.

581 MC: And there's lots—that's an advantage in many many ways, you know. So, as long as it's not um- I  
582 don't know, if there a balance, if we can have just our students, you know- people we socialize with-  
583 have the balance, I guess then that would be the best that we could hope for.

584 LS: The best that technology can offer us. (55:22)

585 MC: Exactly.

586 LS: Alright. And is there anything other you would want to add to this interview?

587 MC: No, I can't think of anything. I'm just so pleased that you contacted me, I feel very very blessed to  
588 be in contact with you again, Lisa. It's just...

589 LS: Thank you.

590 MC: It's just a pleasure.

591 LS: Thank you for agreeing to help me out because this is just so- so much information that is just great  
592 to have this different perspective on. Great.

593 MC: Is there anything else that you're feeling that maybe I didn't answer? That you're thinking

594 LS: No.

595 MC: That would—you can always get back to me.

596 LS: Okay, will do. But this is definitely what I'm looking for and I definitely will be able to use every part  
597 of what you told me.

598 MC: Aww that's really sweet.

599 LS: I want to thank you so much for helping me out.

600 MC: You're very welcome and do keep in touch.

601 LS: Yes, of course. I'll actually- I'll send you the essay and I'll have to transcribe this. So, I'll send you a  
602 copy of the transcription just so you can approve it- that's part of the process next, so.

603 MC: Oh wow, well good luck, it sounds like a major major project. That's another difference, Lisa, when I  
604 went to university, I don't think I even learned how to write a term paper.

605 LS: Wow.

606 MC: So- there's—good luck to you.

607 LS: Thank you.

608 MC: You're doing an amazing job.

609 LS: Perfect. Another quick question- can I use your full name or would you like me to use a  
610 psuedoname?

611 MC: No, no, you can use my name.

612 LS: Alright, perfect. Well thank you so much and...

613 MC: You're welcome. And take a break and enjoy the rest of your day.

614 LS: I will, I'm going to eat my donut now, haha.

615 MC: Good for you, haha. You're still as tiny as ever.

616 LS: Yeah, I got my mom's genes, haha.

617 MC: Lucky you, okay, well we'll be in touch, for sure.

618 LS: Definitely, thanks again so much, Mrs. Chetek.

619 MC: Bye, Lisa. Take care.

620 LS: Bye, thank you.

621 MC: Bye-bye

622 LS: Bye-bye.