

MASTER OF EDUCATION THESIS DEFENSE

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**Resurrecting the Shop:
Examining the Theory and Practice of
Career and Technical Education**

Thursday, January 21, 12:00pm

Location: AVC 287N

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of career and technical education (CTE) in the PEI Public School System through a critical ethnography. The research methodology involves 3 key components: (1) a critical textual analysis of 27 documents using a 3-point coding process, (open, axial & selective), to identify key themes, (2) a critical textual analysis of the 2013/14 PEI Program of Studies and Handbooks from the 10 English high schools, (3) a reflective auto-ethnography to provide a vantage point for the analysis and to locate myself as the sole investigator. Using this process I clarify where the discourses on public education marginalize CTE and perpetuate the false dichotomy between thinking and doing. Five themes emerge and are elaborated on: (1) the separation of thinking and doing, (2) the image of CTE, (3) the classification of CTE courses, (4) CTE teacher certification and (5) the need for a CTE philosophy for PEI. The research indicates the separation of thinking and doing is prevalent throughout the documents analysed, often resulting in CTE being presented in a deficit light and intended for students systemically identified as general or practical students. The research also reveals an attempt to define CTE as exploratory without further elaborating on the nature of the programs or the impact on student learning. The thesis concludes by recommending the PEI Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture adopt the sixteen strands of CTE (defined by the Association for Career and Technical Education) which would provide a coherent structure to frame CTE programming in the province and to engage CTE teachers in the development of a provincial philosophy for CTE. The University of Prince Edward Island is also encouraged to promote and encourage further research initiatives connected to CTE through the Faculty of Education.