

Title: The Aims of Education in the 1960s

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Thesis: An examination of educational aims and practices in the 1960s reveals the impact of the social, political, and cultural upheaval of the era on Ontario education.

Discussion and Analysis of Sources (Literature Review)

a.) Primary Sources

Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education. Kingston: 1972.

The *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education* is an evaluation of the curricula being used in Frontenac County classrooms in the school year of 1968. Curriculum topics covered include: Environment, School Board Support, Developments in the Arts, Developments in Continuing Education, and Outdoor Education. The report is brief yet comprehensive. The Director of Education demonstrates the board's desire to adhere to the needs and interests of students. The Director does so by describing the developments in learning resources and the support provided by the school board.

Daly, James. *Education or Molasses? A Critical Look at the Hall-Dennis Report.* Hamilton: Cromlech Press, McMaster University, 1969.

Released a year after the Living and Learning document, history professor James Daly assesses the implications of the Ontario government's report. He contests assumptions made in the report regarding contemporary social change and points out what he feels to be lapses in logic, lack of proof, and poor writing technique. This short essay simultaneously demonstrates opposition to the ideas promoted in Living and Learning and provides evidence of Canadian attitudes towards emerging technology and social change.

Davis, D. O. Et al. *The Learning Society: Report of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario.* Toronto: Ministry of Government Services, 1972.

The report provides a series of recommendations of reform to strengthen the integrity of the post-secondary learning experience in Ontario. The report dissects the flaws within the Ontario education system during the 1960s and explains the reasoning behind the suggested reforms. It is a comprehensive and detailed report that is useful when compared and contrasted to *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario*. The report also demonstrates the value of experiential learning which is still prevalent in Ontario today.

For the Love of Learning: Royal Commission on Learning. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, January 26, 1995.

For the Love of Learning is an extremely important document when researching the significance of the history of education. Do reforms and innovations of the past affect modern decisions? Do educational ideas of the past exist in today's schools? What are the similarities, differences, connections?

The Geography Teacher's Handbook. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1967.

This handbook was used by teachers to seek creative resources while lesson planning to enhance the learning experience of students. It is a helpful resource when studying the teaching strategies of Ontario teachers in the 1960s. It includes extensive lists of resources for Geography teachers.

Howard, Gerald., Ed. *The Sixties: The Art, Attitudes, Politics, and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade.* New York: Washington Square Press, 1982.

This is a collection of excerpts, articles, and essays from 1960-1974 dealing with the contemporary political, social, economic, and cultural climate. While centered on the American experience, it provides context and insight into many of the same tensions emerging within Canada.

Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario. Toronto: The Publications Office of the Ontario Department of Education, 1968.

The *Living and Learning* report was useful when researching the broader context of Ontario education in the 1960s, the learning experiences of students, the proposed changes to the teaching strategies of educators, and the suggested curricula reforms.

Reports of the Minister of Education: 1961-1967. Ontario Department of Education.

These reports summarize initiatives, programs and statistics about primary, secondary, and post-secondary education in Ontario on a yearly basis. The information in these reports provides evidence of the conditions of Ontario schools in the 1960s in regards to technology, educational programs, and enrollment.

b.) Secondary

“A New Slate for Ontario Schools; Report Stresses ‘New Basics’ of Language, Numeracy and Computer Skills.” *The Ottawa Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), January 27, 1995.

“A New Slate” discusses the contrast between the 1968 Living and Learning report and the 1995 Royal Commission on Learning (For the Love of Learning). The article emphasizes Ontario’s feel-good education system of the 1960s and the school system of the 1990s based on high standards and high expectations. The article highlights important educational topics covered by the Royal Commission such as Schools, Curriculum, Teaching, and Testing and Assessment. The article is useful because it answers the question of whether or not the educational aims of Ontario in the 1960s are significant for education in Ontario today.

Baskerville, Peter A. *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Sites of Power is a social history of Ontario, which differs from the traditional political histories written by Bothwell and White.

Dubinsky, Karen, Catherine Krull, et al., Eds. *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009.

This is a collection of essays dealing with 1960s in a decidedly global context. The contributors attempt to dislodge the notion of the social, political, and cultural transformation of the 1960s as being an exclusively American phenomenon. This book provides both a Canadian and global context of the era that is necessary in understanding the position of education in Ontario.

Granatstein, J.L et al. *Nation: Canada Since Confederation 1867-1990*. Third Edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990.

This textbook spans a large portion of Canadian history, touching on aspects of Canada’s political, social, economic, and cultural history. Because of its wide breadth, it fails to go into great detail about the 1960s in Canada, adhering to a narrative about the counter-culture of the decade with little critical analysis. The authors focus on the impact of technology in the 1960s and give a very broad overview of the mood of the era.

Henchey, Norman. “Revolution and Education in Quebec.” *The Canadian Forum*. October/November 1972. University of Toronto Press.

Henchey’s essay articulates the sweeping changes and reforms in education that took place in Quebec as a result of the Quiet Revolution. These shifts in Quebec prelude the *Living and Learning* document, and establish a greater context of the political, social, and cultural atmosphere of Canada.

Palmer, Bryan D. *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Critical social historian Bryan Palmer provides a series of vignettes exploring aspects of a disintegrating Canadian identity rooted in British traditions. This exposition provides a context of the challenges facing the notion of Canadian identity in the 1960s, including urbanization, social justice movements, and the economic supremacy of the United States.

White, Randall. *Ontario 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1985.

Randall's text is an academic survey of the political and economic history of Ontario. It proves useful for establishing the context of education during the 1960s in which the *Living and Learning* was written.

c.) Images and Media

The images included evoke the attitudes and atmosphere of the 1960s, both locally and globally. Many of the images used would have been circulated into the homes and workplaces of citizens. The images were found in online historical archives which attempt to reclaim historical narratives (Example: The Portuguese Historical Project). A complete citation of images used can be found in the Annotated Bibliography.

Broader Social, Political, and Economic Context

Ontario, Canada, and the world were experiencing a state of upheaval during the 1960s. Population shifts, social movements and civil unrest shaped the landscape of the era. A shift in consciousness challenged the political, social, and cultural structures established in the post-war period. In order to understand Ontario's attempted shift in pedagogical practice during the 1960s, one must consider the historical backdrop against which it occurred.

In Ontario, the most influential educational text emerging from this period of contested ideals was *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives*



Figure 1: Stonewall Riots 1969
Photo by Bettye Lane

of Education in the Schools of Ontario. Written in 1968, this report specifically identified the issues facing Ontario and Canada, and was acutely aware of ongoing international transformations.

a.) Ontario and Canada

What were the profound underlying changes that compelled Ontarians to reconsider how they educated the post-war generations? Political leaders both provincially and federally were forced to confront issues such as immigration, demographic shifts, changing cultural values, and heightened anxieties about matters such as Canadian identity and new technologies.

Though elsewhere the decade was marked by a political shift to the left, the Progressive Conservative party maintained their electoral dominance in Ontario.¹ Despite being a right-wing party, the PC government of John Robarts (1961-1971) held a moderate and gradual approach to social reform. Towards the end of the decade, Robarts oversaw the implementation of a series of services intended to benefit marginalized populations, such as the Ontario Housing Corporation, which built and managed affordable housing.² Robarts, a former Minister of Education, and Bill

¹ Randall White, *Ontario 1610-1985: A political and economic history* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1985), 281.

² White, 281-284.

Davis, the Minister of Education from 1962-1971, also worked to expand access and infrastructure of education during the 1960s.³

Although the outset of the decade began with the Progressive Conservative government under Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, two successive Liberal minority governments under Lester B. Pearson followed. In 1968, Trudeaumania delivered the Liberals their first majority in over a decade. In contrast, Ontario maintained a degree of electoral stability through the decade with successive majority Progressive Conservative governments. Regardless of these differences, both the federal and Ontario governments of the 1960s presided over a substantial expansion of the welfare state, a liberalization of individual and collective rights, and attempts to come to terms with the multiculturalization of the population.⁴

Immigration and the Changing Population

The rapid growth of Canada's, and in particular Ontario's, population was the result of an influx of immigrants. These immigrants were attracted to Canada in part because of the post-war economic boom. Over half of all immigrants entering Canada from 1957-1966 were settling in Ontario⁵. Table 1.1 details the increasing amount of immigration from 1960-1966.⁶

³ White, 285.

⁴ J.L. Granatstein, et al., *Nation: Canada Since Confederation 1867-1990*, Third Edition (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990), 479.

⁵ Report from the Minister of Education 1967, 81.

⁶ Minister of Education 1967, 81.

Table 1.1

Ontario	Total Immigrants Under 18	Total Immigrants All Ages
1960	13,972	54,491
1961	9,360	36,518
1962	9,684	37,210
1963	13,251	49,216
1964	17,773	61,468
1965	23,534	79,702
1966	34,217	107,621

Concern is expressed in *Living and Learning* about negotiating the tension between teaching British heritage and values and the new heritages represented by the influx of immigrants. The document poses the question: “Should [Ontario education] engage the cultural values which the students’ homes reflect, or capitalize on them by adopting and incorporating them for their program?”⁷ Simply, should Ontario’s students be encouraged to challenge the province’s British cultural heritage?

In addition to the surge in immigration, Ontario’s baby-boomers were also entering en masse into elementary and secondary schooling, creating a need for more schools.⁸

During the 1960s, half of all Canadian were under the age of 25.⁹

Unsurprisingly, the cost of education



Figure 2: Kensington Market 1965
Portuguese fruit stand in Kensington Market, Toronto, Ontario

⁷ *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario* (Toronto: The Publications Office of the Ontario Department of Education, 1968), 27.

⁸ White, 286.

⁹ Granatstein, et al., 457.

sharply increased in the decade preceding the creation of *Living and Learning* due to this shift in demographics.¹⁰

Not only was Ontario's population growing, it was also becoming urbanized. When *Living and Learning* was published, nearly 3/4 of the population was urban dwellers.¹¹ The declining importance of rural Ontario is exemplified by the drop of agricultural labour as a percentage of the workforce. In 1940, 40% of Ontario's work force worked on farms; in 1968, this percentage had dropped to 10%.¹² Because of this dramatic shift, educators became concerned about the quality of education in rural regions due to difficulties in delivering services and comprehensive education programming to students living in remote areas.¹³ By 1961, the Department of Education had implemented special "Rural Programmes" to rectify disadvantages in rural regions.¹⁴

Changing Values and the Struggle for Identity

The demographic changes brought on by immigration and the baby boom forced older generations to acknowledge changing social mores and thus the fragmentation of a parochial Canadian identity. In many ways the *Living and Learning* document reveals the anxieties about this process in Canadian society where "change, slow at first, has accelerated to a speed which is now bewildering to many adults" and how "the young may now be more at home in society than their elders, who might prefer something less unsettling than the dynamic, continually changing environment of 1968."¹⁵

¹⁰ *Living and Learning*, 171.

¹¹ *Living and Learning*, 33

¹² *Living and Learning*, 25

¹³ *Living and Learning*, 170.

¹⁴ Report of the Minister of Education 1961, 14.

¹⁵ *Living and Learning*, 169.

Ontarians were challenging previously long-held beliefs, forcing educators and policy makers to rethink the role of the province's education system. *Living and Learning* acknowledges that "Ontario is caught in the severe dislocation of values that accompanies today's social and technological changes."¹⁶ Building on this admission, the report observes: "The existence and effectiveness of God are openly and widely challenged: [including] the changing standards of sexual morality, the position of the church on birth control, [and] its involvement in issues of social justice."¹⁷ The *Living and Learning* authors connect this changing tide with the emerging youth culture, which they categorize as having a skepticism of authority, an anti-institutional attitude, and a common "search for pleasure."¹⁸ These changing values that were bound up in the post-war generation intersected with heightened anxieties about Canadian identity.

At its outset, *Living and Learning* identifies the worries of retaining a Canadian identity in the face of a newly emerging global society. It argues that "one of the major problems posed for Canada is how to preserve the vision of national development that the Fathers of Confederation had, and, at the same time, accommodate herself to her dependence on, or interdependence with, other countries."¹⁹ As historian Bryan Palmer notes, these concerns also surfaced as "Canada's British past was soon overshadowed by its relations with its powerful imperialist neighbour, the United States, which loomed especially large in the post-Second World War era."²⁰ Palmer concludes, "The irony of Canadian identity in the 1960s was that as the old

¹⁶ *Living and Learning*, 27.

¹⁷ *Living and Learning*, 27.

¹⁸ *Living and Learning*, 28.

¹⁹ *Living and Learning*, 23.

²⁰ Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 22.

attachment to British Canada was finally and decisively shed, it was replaced only with uncertainty.”²¹

Perhaps because of its large population and urban centres of power, Ontario had much invested in preserving a Canadian identity. In 1967, the Department of Education went to great pains to honour the 100th Anniversary of Confederation. A “Centennial

Commission” was created and teachers across the province were provided with Centennial-themed teaching aids such as *The Confederation Story*, a dramatic audio rendition of the events leading to the formation of Canada as a nation-state. Materials such as the *Fathers of Confederation Portfolio* and *Historical Flags of Canada Portfolio* were distributed to both schools and public libraries. Schools were pressed to incorporate Centennial themes into as many classrooms as possible, with students encouraged to do their own independent studies about Confederation, among other projects. To complete this exercise in nation-building, every student from kindergarten to grade 13 was awarded a Centennial medallion on May 22, Commonwealth and Citizenship Day.²²

These efforts to foster a common national narrative might have appeared in vein at the time, as troubles with Quebec threatened the foundations of Confederation. Quebec voters



Figure 3: Don Mills c.1960
Don Mills was one of Canada's first suburbs. It was designed as a model community and built between 1952 and 1965.

²¹ Palmer, 5.

²² Report of the Minister of Education 1967, 4-5.

elected Liberal Jean Lesage in 1960 to introduce a rapid transformation of Quebec's social and economic arrangements. Known as the Quiet Revolution, this period of transformation was also part of a new nationalism emerging in Quebec which challenged Canadian unity and identity.²³

For the creators of *Living and Learning*, these struggles only exacerbated the need for a protection of Canadian identity, stressing the importance of bilingualism to “preserve and strengthen our national unity.”²⁴ In Ontario, Premier Robarts and Education Minister Bill Davis developed a province-wide French immersion program available to all, not only Franco-Ontarians.²⁵ This reflected efforts by policy-makers to address the tensions between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians in the early 1960s and the escalating fear of the growing separatist movement of Quebec.

In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution instigated a period of rapid state-driven modernization. The Parent Commission of 1963-1966 overhauled the province's classical colleges, introducing CEGEPs covering both technical and liberal arts streams and developing the French-language L'Université du Québec system.²⁶ It also emphasized the need for accessibility to schooling on all levels, less regional inequality, a more intimate relationship between society and education, and a “freer and more creative spirit” as part of wider pedagogical reforms.²⁷ To a certain extent, the Parent Commission's findings and recommendations foreshadowed aspects of *Living and Learning* and the development of the Ontario college system by Minister of Education Bill Davis.

²³ Peter A. Baskerville, *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), 222.

²⁴ *Living and Learning*, 170.

²⁵ Baskerville, 222.

²⁶ Norman Henchey “Revolution and Education in Quebec,” *Canadian Forum* (October/November 1972), 66.

²⁷ Henchey, 68.

Technology and Mass Media

The 1960s experienced a great wave of technological advancements in a variety of areas. These newly minted technologies affected many aspects of everyday life. Transistors radios made the sounds of the budding youth culture accessible to far-flung corners of North America.²⁸ With almost 80% of households having at least one television by the mid-1960s, Ontarians had the world brought to their living rooms. Social turmoil, notably the Vietnam War, that took place on the other side of the globe could now be visualized in all its humanity and horror.²⁹

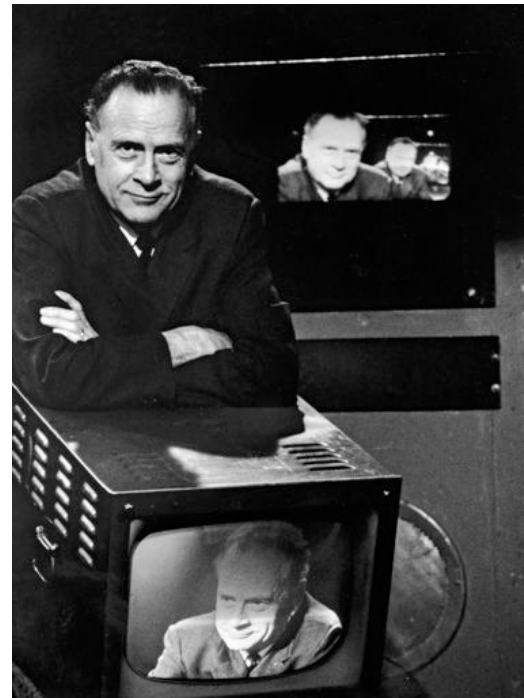


Figure 4: Marshall McLuhan c.1968
New York Times

Embraced by many, new technologies still fueled a deep-seated sense of unease about the new era. As one Canadian history textbook describes, “Some Canadians resented any changes, while other reacted against a political system that accepted nuclear weapons, pollution, and poverty. Even for the majority, there was the uncertainty of a society in which material prosperity seems linked to unpredictable disruptions.”³⁰ Rising living standards, courtesy of technology, was as Bryan Palmer notes, tied to “piecemeal purchase of the country by American business [with a] symbolic marker of this economic dominance and cultural devastation was the ‘the great god,’ the automobile.”³¹

²⁸ Granatstein, et al., 458.

²⁹ Baskerville, 222.

³⁰ Granatstein, et al., 459.

³¹ Palmer, 17.

Living and Learning addresses this onslaught of technology upon the post-war generation: “Children born since 1945 have already experienced several major revolutions, created by discoveries concerning the atom, space, the computer, the biological-genetic breakthrough, the surgical transplant of human organs and the new theology.”³² By the late 1960s, the use of other technology such as radio, film, and television had already become an important aspect of education in Ontario. The number of film and radio titles increased steadily during the decade. The 1962 Report of the Minister of Education introduces the concept of “Educational Television” and states that “experimentation in providing television programmes in the Metro Toronto area” had begun.³³ In keeping with the report’s desire to embrace rather than reject change, it expresses a need to adapt newly developed technologies for the Ontario classroom and calls for a “special study” of the educational uses of computers throughout the province in a co-ordinated and systematic manner.³⁴

Though positive in its outlook on the educational uses of technology, the committee once again displays an anxiety over the preservation of Canadian identity and “dissemination of indigenous knowledge” in an international market of new educational technologies.³⁵ There is a tension between keeping pace on the international stage and still retaining economic and cultural autonomy.

Not all were as enthusiastic about the use of technology in the classroom. In his scathing critique of the *Living and Learning* document, *Education or Molasses? A Critical Look at the Hall-Dennis Report* historian James Daly expresses concern about the use of television in the

³² *Living and Learning*, 173.

³³ *Living and Learning*, 14.

³⁴ *Living and Learning*, 169.

³⁵ *Living and Learning*, 169.

classroom. Daly worries that through television “millions of people are subjected to the interpretations of a relatively few communicators” whose opinions are “served up ready-made and inviting to those who have no chance of weighing their veracity.”³⁶ For Daly, television has little value for the purposes of education because “It works against depth, deliberation, gestation, and breadth of mind.”³⁷



Figure 5: Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike c. 1968
Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis on 4 April 1968 while working to support the Memphis Sanitation Workers as part of his economic justice program, the Poor People's Campaign.

Daly was certainly not alone in his mistrust of mass media. Prominent media theorist and University of Toronto professor Marshall McLuhan was also pessimistic about the ability of television to be used for education and its impact on a literate society.

He summed up his strong skepticism

towards television's social value by saying

“TV makes for myopia.”³⁸ It should come as

no surprise that McLuhan's concept of

modern mass media creating a global village emerged from a Canada grappling with changing

³⁶ James Daly, *Education or Molasses? A Critical Look at the Hall-Dennis Report* (Hamilton: Cromlech Press, McMaster University, 1969), 61.

³⁷ Daly, 61.

³⁸ Marshall McLuhan, “Television: The Timid Giant,” *The Sixties: The Art, Attitudes, Politics, and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade*, Gerald Howard, ed. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1982), 410.

values and uncertain identities amidst a world in upheaval.

b.) World

The changes and struggles within Ontario and Canada cannot be pulled from their place in a larger global historical context. Events taking place around the world clearly were impacting

the psyche of Ontarians and inspiring discussion about the direction of their educational system: “Among somewhat older pupils such contemporary events and developments as riots, wars, rebellion, drugs, violence, and changing values should be openly discussed in school, so that young people can learn how to apply objective methods in approaching everyday problems that confront them.”³⁹

The upheavals of the 1960s were global in nature, spanning the “democratic” West, the “Communist” East, and the Third World. The upheavals took many different forms, taking on oppressive regimes and archaic social and political systems.⁴⁰ The beginning of the decade witnessed revolutions and decolonization struggles in Algeria and Cuba, a rising African-American civil rights movement in the United States and anti-Apartheid resistance in South Africa. By the end of the decade, Vietnam’s struggle for independence had culminated in a bloody war with the United States, and Western nations witnessed the birth of second wave Feminism and beginnings of the gay rights movement. In 1968, both Paris and Prague witnessed



Figure 6: The End of the “Prague Spring” 1968
Photo by Josef Foudelka

³⁹ *Living and Learning*, p.173.

⁴⁰ Karen Dubinsky, et al. *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), p. 1-5.

enormous social uprisings by workers and students against governments on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Political economist John S. Saul views the 1960s as “a crucial moment in the birth of a distinctive and novel kind of radical and global consciousness.”⁴¹

Context of Education in Ontario

The Learning Experience

Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario provides informative analyses and proposals for the Ontario education system of the 1960s. One major area of focus is the Learning Experience, the capacity of students to learn as they progress through the elementary and secondary school education system. The report outlines the psychological, biological and educational knowledge found in children ages two and up. One of the most important arguments found in the report is the need to acknowledge that individual students learn in their own idiosyncratic way. As a result of this realization, there was a major shift in the 1960s from conclusive learning to experiential learning.

The *Living and Learning* report’s emphasis on differentiated learning drew heavily upon research by psychologists. Vocabulary, social skills and curiosity were recognized as critical skills required for a child to have a positive learning experience.⁴² Socio-economic status and parenting techniques were believed to be highly influential upon the development of language skills, adaptability to different social situations, and instilling a love for learning among children. For example, research demonstrated that children from lower socio-economic classes experienced less progression in vocabulary, social skills, and curiosity of learning compared to children from higher socio-economic classes.⁴³ Should the basic, but necessary, fundamentals be

⁴¹ Dubinsky, et al. *New World Coming*, 3.

⁴² *Living and Learning*, 51.

⁴³ *Living and Learning*, 52.



Figure 7: Students engaging in different tasks.

neglected at an early age, children would tend to exhibit certain socially-unacceptable behaviours such as attention-seeking, defiance of authority, and disrespect towards classmates. Given the uneven development of children entering school, *Living and Learning: The*

Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and

Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario argues that the existing form of education, prior to publication of the report, neglected these differences. Children were expected to learn by rote in the manner dictated by educators, and, when children failed to do so, were made to feel that the fault lay with them. The report stated that teaching must be delivered in such a way that it is conducive to each individual child's needs.⁴⁴

Following the *Living and Learning* report, the *The Learning Society: Report of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario* was published outlining proposals for educational reform in Ontario. Although this report was published in 1972, it focuses very closely on the educational goals of the 1960s in regards to student success and development. The report offers a concrete comparison to the *Living and Learning* report, especially because many of the educators involved in the 1968 report, such as Reva Gerstein, a Canadian psychologist and educator, were members of the committee and assisted in the publishing of the 1972 report.

⁴⁴ *Living and Learning*, 59.

The Learning Society concluded that “[d]uring the educational boom of the 1960’s, the primary goal of post-secondary education was to multiply the opportunities for high-school graduates to pursue set programs of continuous study in colleges and universities.”⁴⁵ A large section of the report is dedicated to the alternatives to content-based learning, as it was predicted that education would have to evolve based on the different learning techniques of those seeking further education and to those who were not.

Ultimately, the report suggests that five main areas of the Ontario education system be reformed in order to heighten the success rate of Ontario students and their learning experiences.⁴⁶ First, alternatives to formal post-secondary education must be made available to students. The report explains that much of the reasoning behind post-secondary student distaste of school stems from social pressures and the push by teachers towards formal education. Schooling has become a screening process for specific types of individuals creating an overwhelming pressure to continue with academia. Society should acknowledge the fact that learning experiences occur in different places and at different times. The report clarifies that life experiences should be regarded as valuable learning, should be taken into account, and should be legitimized as alternative assets for future employers.

Second, colleges, universities and other formal learning institutions must broaden their programs and fields of research without jeopardizing their current integrity. For example, night programs should be offered and correspondence based learning should be provided. New initiatives would need to be set in place for success; governments would have to be involved, universities, learning centres, and businesses would have to support the programs, legislation

⁴⁵ Davis, D.O. Et al. *The Learning Society: Report of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Government Services. 1969-1972), 39.

⁴⁶ Davis, 39.

would have to be amended to provide and protect equitable opportunities for such learners. These are the steps that would need to be taken to promote lifelong learning.

Third, new enterprises for learning must be established, and the value of current museums, art galleries, and libraries be emphasized as institutions of educational wealth. Ultimately, an Open Academy of Ontario should be established that would be responsible for three primary duties. It would offer a broad variety of educational resources (courses, workshops, education centres, etc.) to the public, it would “provide an evaluation service available on request to the people of Ontario”⁴⁷ so that learners may be better equipped to inject themselves into a constantly moving and changing workforce, and it would award diplomas and degrees formally earned and recognized by the government and any other institution requiring certified documents.

Fourth, all options offered in post-secondary education be made available across the province. This suggests that “Ontario should develop a provincial manpower policy” that is held in the same manner as the federal government.⁴⁸ Ultimately, other provinces should seek out the same establishment to help foster alternative education. By making this a province-wide initiative, education would strengthen its integrity and give equal opportunity to all.

Fifth, advisory committees should be established to govern and oversee the process and ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all matters pertaining to alternative training programs. Specifically, that merit and credit be granted to those who complete an alternative education outside of the traditional classroom, and that that credential be held in the same regard as a

⁴⁷ Davis, 40.

⁴⁸ Davis, 42.

college or university degree. The governing body would have to oversee the consistency and legitimacy of each educational establishment.⁴⁹

Teaching Strategies

The process of learning is reliant on teachers and what teachers do for their students. In Ontario, in 1950, the Hope Commission stated that, “The teacher is the keystone of the educational arch: in the final analysis the fulfillment of educational aims rests with him.”⁵⁰ These claims were similar across Canada, the Cameron Commission in Alberta reported in 1959 that “The Commissioners have recommended that certain modification be undertaken within the present curriculum and the administrative structure that supports it. But these changes alone will not overcome any educational deficiency. The keystone is the teacher.”⁵¹ With teachers being recognized for their utmost importance, the emphasis of professional development played a large role in the 1960s. Within Ontario, the Frontenac County Board of Education stated in the 1968 *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, “Professional development is said to be a top priority throughout the county.”⁵² Record was taken for the professional development during the school year stating, “Funds for professional development were assigned to each administrative area with favourable results. The board subsidized 614 teachers to attend professional activities including 397 to conferences, 195 to workshops, and 122 to visit other schools.”⁵³ The report listed numerous workshops, conferences, and teacher programs that supported the professional development of teachers in areas such as curriculum design, integrating Math and Science, and introduction to the Human Growth and Development

⁴⁹ Davis, 45.

⁵⁰ *Living and Learning*, 121.

⁵¹ *Living and Learning*, 121.

⁵² *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education* (Kingston: 1972), 16.

⁵³ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 16.

Program. Professional development was not something that the Director of Education was taking lightly as the report goes on to say, “extensive plans are being made to utilize fully the twelve days for professional development which the Ministry of Education has granted for the next school year.”⁵⁴ The planning undertaken by the Ministry of Education to provide professional development opportunities to teachers demonstrated the importance of teacher education in working towards the improvement of the education system in Ontario.



Figure 8: Experiential learning.

Upon close examination of the 1960s, there was a radical change in improving education in regards to teaching philosophies and teaching strategies. Teachers were no longer concerned with teaching content but teaching students to become informed, and to think critically and creatively.⁵⁵ Based on the *Living and Learning* document published in 1968, “Today’s teacher must be concerned with the development of the child than with the conveying of information; he must be more concerned with how a pupil learns, thinks, and acts than with the particular facts he has mastered.”⁵⁶ This was done by implementing new resources in the classroom and considering the individual students being taught.

To support the change in education, teachers were encouraged to implement resources other than the chalkboard and textbook. New literature was being published in the 1960s to aid

⁵⁴ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 15.

⁵⁵ *Living and Learning*, 121.

⁵⁶ *Living and Learning*, 126.

teachers in finding new and exciting resources to engage their learners. The *Geography Teacher's Sourcebook*, published in 1967, offered resources for teachers to find atlases, maps, globes, movies, photographs, rock samples, and meteorological equipment. The *Geography Teacher's Sourcebook* explained how education was advancing, and that it was the role of the teacher to practice creative lesson planning: "Like many other facets of human experience, the teaching of geography has made much progress in recent years. This growth and development can be explained by many factors, not the least of which is an increasing number of teachers who are imaginative, resourceful, capable, well-qualified, and dedicated."⁵⁷

As the educational philosophy evolved throughout the 1960s, the goal was for teachers "to meet the intrinsic and differing needs of [the] young people."⁵⁸ Teachers were encouraged to focus on creating experiences for learning:

[The teacher] creates the situation that most effectively involves the pupils. He recognizes the need to capture or arouse interest, to provide opportunities for inquiry, discussion, discovery, organization, review, and evaluation, to ask a searching question or make a useful suggestion at the right time, and to guide pupils in the selection and use a variety of resources.⁵⁹

With access to an abundance of new resources, teachers were encouraged to use them to the advantage of the students. "Teachers are now able to capitalize on this principle to a greater extent than at any time in history, for never before has there been such a variety of teaching materials, designed to involve the sense, particularly the visual, tactile, and auditory senses of the learner."⁶⁰ By involving the students in the lessons, students are engaged, and they can take

⁵⁷ *The Geography Teacher's Handbook*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1967), Preface.

⁵⁸ *Living and Learning*, 124.

⁵⁹ *Living and Learning*, 126.

⁶⁰ *Living and Learning*, 124.

control of their own learning experience. In order to involve each student, teachers started to request “that tools for learning be designed so that individual pupils may use them when their special interests demand.”⁶¹ The inclusion of resources in the classroom guarantees that students are engaged and can access resources for their own individual learning whenever they need to.

With the educational shift in the 1960s, “The focus was more on how to learn and think, and less on what to know and remember. Education was becoming a process, rather than a thing.”⁶² It was the job of each teacher to use resources accurately and consider the students as individual learners to make this process of learning happen.

The Curriculum

“Every child benefits from compassion, good teaching, adequate facilities, and understanding.”⁶³ This was the prevalent theme of Ontario education in the 1960s. The innovations in education during this decade allowed for an active curriculum concentrated on the interests, needs, and abilities of individuals.⁶⁴ School was viewed as a primary educational resource in the community, unique because of its people, teachers, and pupils.⁶⁵ Primarily, no



Figure 9: An example of creative lesson planning and active student engagement.

⁶¹ *Living and Learning*, 126.

⁶² *Living and Learning*, 123.

⁶³ *Living and Learning*, 119.

⁶⁴ *Living and Learning*, 121.

⁶⁵ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 13.

child should be denied access to educational support regardless of geographic location, race, class, religion, or any other personal circumstance. Furthermore, the member of the educational force who understands and provides for learners' needs is the most important agent in the educational curricular process. Principals, teachers, and pupils should cooperate in identifying needs, supplying ideas, and developing guidelines for shared equipment and materials.⁶⁶ An inspiring, informed, friendly teacher who is able to establish a social and permissive curriculum in a cheerful learning climate is a student's best guarantee of a good education.

Concept of the Curriculum

During the 1960s in Ontario, there was a major shift towards a dynamic curriculum; a living instrument affecting relationships among teachers, administrators, parents, and the community.⁶⁷ The new curriculum would be focused not only on what students learn, but how they learn it and how teachers help them to learn. The traditional school was concerned with the performance of the teacher and the content of the material taught. The revision of the curriculum in the 1960s focused on the learning experience of the pupil, the personalities of the teacher and pupil, as well as their interests, skills, and abilities.⁶⁸ If a curriculum is described as, "All those activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school," then it was believed that the students, under guidance of a teacher, should make their own choices of curriculum content.⁶⁹ Ultimately, the new curriculum would have to be flexible; providing different options for pupils with different interests and by providing learning experiences to meet the needs of individuals.

⁶⁶ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 13.

⁶⁷ *Living and Learning*, 75.

⁶⁸ *Living and Learning*, 75.

⁶⁹ *Living and Learning*, 75.

Two major innovations were coveted in Ontario during the 1960s: a complete abolition of the graded system and the use of individual timetables.⁷⁰ During the 19th century, the graded system in Ontario's urban schools demonstrated its efficiency for instructing students in the fixed and limited schedule of facts and skills prescribed at the time.⁷¹ However, throughout the following 50 years, the graded system became an anomaly as it became "increasingly difficult to retard or eliminate pupils at an early age by failure."⁷² The Ontario curriculum in the 1960s did not focus on concepts of promotion or failure, formal examinations and other arbitrary measures of achievement, but was concerned with the mental, physical, and emotional differences of students, as well as their intellectual, social, cultural, and economic diversity. Fundamentally, this was believed to improve the quality of learning, not reduce the standards. Encouragement and discouragement would still be a part of the curriculum, but the evaluation of a student's progress would be a continuous cooperative endeavour by teacher and pupil.⁷³

Designing the Curriculum

A list of fundamental conditions as the basis for the general design of the Ontario curriculum of the 1960s intended to support the evolution of the best possible schools:

1. The curriculum should advocate for a learning continuum designed for a unified school period of 13 years including Kindergarten. No segregation or division of school into categories (Vocational vs. Academic). No traditional levels of education.

⁷⁰ *Living and Learning*, 76.

⁷¹ *Living and Learning*, 76.

⁷² *Living and Learning*, 76.

⁷³ *Living and Learning*, 76.

2. The curriculum design should have its roots in what is to be learned at school. Schooling that views learners as “integrating organisms” studying subjects pertinent to their interests realizes that learners cannot be taught by the patterns, or logical sequences, of others.
3. The curriculum should consider the cognitive processes by which students learn. Curricula should be devised so that the inquisitive, goal-seeking, self-reconstructing minds of learners can be in touch with subjects relevant to their own interests.

The Bases

Curricula in Ontario during the 1960s was intended to free teachers and students from the confines of structured isolated subjects. By basing curricula on three disciplines, Communications, Environment, and Ideas and Values, teachers would be motivated to examine knowledge relative to each theme. Furthermore, this was believed to emphasize the embracing nature of learning.⁷⁴ Ultimately, subjects should be aids in the students’ search for skills and understanding, rather than as bodies of content to be mastered.

1. Communications: All aspects of learning that relate to humans’ interchange of thought.
2. Environment: Sciences, Geography, Social Studies, Math, Agriculture, Manual Arts, Home and Consumer Economics, Vocational Training, and Environmental Studies.
3. Ideas and Values: Fine Arts, Physical and Health Education, Philosophy, World Religions, Humanities. Abstract yet powerful concepts which shape lives yet have no tangible form. The probing of the unknown, the seeking of the truth, and the effort towards unity are all humanizing values that lift students towards thought and purpose.

⁷⁴ *Living and Learning*, 77.

An interesting educational growth in Ontario during the 1960s was the expansion and advancement of Outdoor Education. As expressed in the Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education, out of classroom education grew immensely in 1967 and 1968 with a total of 3143 pupils and 97 expeditions by Osprey Ridge School to the Gould Lake Conservation Area.⁷⁵ Outdoor Education programs were mainly teacher-directed field trips relating to some aspect of course content. However, the potential of the natural environment, both urban and rural, as a vehicle for meaningful learning experiences became increasingly widespread. Ultimately, the inclusion of Outdoor Education in Ontario education demonstrated the innovative understanding that the education of the “total child” demanded that teachers and school boards utilize fully the resources found in the natural environment.⁷⁶

Curriculum Options

English

Geography

Chemistry

Mathematics

French

History

Physics

Biology

Latin

Physical and Health Education

⁷⁵ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 19.

⁷⁶ *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education*, 19.

Psychology

Sociology

Relation or Significance for Education in Ontario today

The Ontario educational innovations discussed in the 1960s are significant for education in Ontario today in a variety of ways, both positive and negative. For example, in 1995 the Royal Commission on Learning chaired by former NDP national director Gerry Caplan and former federal Liberal cabinet minister Monique Begin was realized. The Royal Commission is a 550-page report with 167 recommendations for a tougher school system “based on high standards and high expectations.”⁷⁷ It recommends that students meet stringent, consistent standards at each grade level and pass a literacy test before graduating from secondary school. This is a direct contrast to the feel-good education system of the 1960s. The 1968 *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario* emphasizes a free-wheeling approach based on developing a child’s sense of worth.⁷⁸ This is at the opposite end of the curricula spectrum from the Royal Commission which suggests that the 90s curriculum would focus on “new basics” including literacy, numeracy, and computer skills.⁷⁹ Ultimately, the educational ideas of the 1960s were innovative but were not completely realized. Today, students are required to meet literacy standards and are evaluated by common comprehensive reports designed for everyone. This is still a far cry from the desire to remove all

⁷⁷ “A New Slate for Ontario Schools; Report Stresses ‘New Basics’ of Language, Numeracy and Computer Skills,” *The Ottawa Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), January 27, 1995.

⁷⁸ “A New Slate.”

⁷⁹ *For the Love of Learning: Royal Commission on Learning* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, January 26, 1995).

graded systems and other “arbitrary measures of achievement” from schools suggested in *Living and Learning*.⁸⁰

Conclusions

The 1960s was a turbulent decade in many respects. Sweeping changes affected a wide variety of aspects of life; political, social, economic, and cultural changes across the world fueled a new global consciousness. For Ontarians, these changes could not be ignored. As expressed in *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario*, it was believed that education had to respond appropriately to the new realities of the era. Educators felt the need to reform teaching strategies and curricula in order to enhance the learning experiences of students. Ultimately, there was a shift from content memorization to experiential learning. By creating active learning environments, students were able to participate in their own learning. There was a sincere belief that student success in primary and secondary education would result in knowledgeable and critical-thinking global citizens.

Annotated Bibliography

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Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education. Kingston: 1972.

The *Annual Report to the Frontenac County Board of Education* is an evaluation of the curricula being used in Frontenac County classrooms in the school year of 1968. Curriculum topics covered include: Environment, School Board Support, Developments in the Arts, Developments in Continuing Education, and Outdoor Education. The report is brief yet comprehensive. The Director of Education demonstrates the board’s desire to adhere to the needs and interests of students. The Director does so by describing the developments in learning resources and the support provided by the school board.

⁸⁰ *Living and Learning*, 76.

Daly, James. *Education or Molasses? A Critical Look at the Hall-Dennis Report*. Hamilton: Cromlech Press, McMaster University, 1969.

Released a year after the Living and Learning document, history professor James Daly assesses the implications of the Ontario government's report. He contests assumptions made in the report regarding contemporary social change and points out what he feels to be lapses in logic, lack of proof, and poor writing technique. This short essay simultaneously demonstrates opposition to the ideas promoted in Living and Learning and provides evidence of Canadian attitudes towards emerging technology and social change.

Davis, D. O. Et al. *The Learning Society: Report of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Government Services, 1972.

The report provides a series of recommendations of reform to strengthen the integrity of the post-secondary learning experience in Ontario. The report dissects the flaws within the Ontario education system during the 1960s and explains the reasoning behind the suggested reforms. It is a comprehensive and detailed report that is useful when compared and contrasted to *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario*. The report also demonstrates the value of experiential learning which is still prevalent in Ontario today.

For the Love of Learning: Royal Commission on Learning. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, January 26, 1995.

For the Love of Learning is an extremely important document when researching the significance of the history of education. Do reforms and innovations of the past affect modern decisions? Do educational ideas of the past exist in today's schools? What are the similarities, differences, connections?

The Geography Teacher's Handbook. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of Canada, 1967.

This handbook was used by teachers to seek creative resources while lesson planning to enhance the learning experience of students. It is a helpful resource when studying the teaching strategies of Ontario teachers in the 1960s. It includes extensive lists of resources for Geography teachers.

Howard, Gerald., Ed. *The Sixties: The Art, Attitudes, Politics, and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1982.

This is a collection of excerpts, articles, and essays from 1960-1974 dealing with the contemporary political, social, economic, and cultural climate. While centered on the American experience, it provides context and insight into many of the same tensions emerging within Canada.

Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario. Toronto: The Publications Office of the Ontario Department of Education, 1968.

The *Living and Learning* report was useful when researching the broader context of Ontario education in the 1960s, the learning experiences of students, the proposed changes to the teaching strategies of educators, and the suggested curricula reforms.

Reports of the Minister of Education: 1961-1967. Ontario Department of Education.

These reports summarize initiatives, programs and statistics about primary, secondary, and post-secondary education in Ontario on a yearly basis. The information in these reports provides evidence of the conditions of Ontario schools in the 1960s in regards to technology, educational programs, and enrollment.

Secondary Sources

“A New Slate for Ontario Schools; Report Stresses ‘New Basics’ of Language, Numeracy and Computer Skills.” *The Ottawa Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), January 27, 1995.

“A New Slate” discusses the contrast between the 1968 *Living and Learning* report and the 1995 Royal Commission on Learning (*For the Love of Learning*). The article emphasizes Ontario’s feel-good education system of the 1960s and the school system of the 1990s based on high standards and high expectations. The article highlights important educational topics covered by the Royal Commission such as Schools, Curriculum, Teaching, and Testing and Assessment. The article is useful because it answers the question of whether or not the educational aims of Ontario in the 1960s are significant for education in Ontario today.

Baskerville, Peter A. *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Sites of Power is a social history of Ontario, which differs from the traditional political histories written by Bothwell and White.

Dubinsky, Karen, Catherine Krull, et al., Eds. *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009.

This is a collection of essays dealing with 1960s in a decidedly global context. The contributors attempt to dislodge the notion of the social, political, and cultural transformation of the 1960s as being an exclusively American phenomenon. This book provides both a Canadian and global context of the era that is necessary in understanding the position of education in Ontario.

Granatstein, J.L et al. *Nation: Canada Since Confederation 1867-1990*. Third Edition
Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990.

This textbook spans a large portion of Canadian history, touching on aspects of Canada's political, social, economic, and cultural history. Because of its wide breadth, it fails to go into great detail about the 1960s in Canada, adhering to a narrative about the counter-culture of the decade with little critical analysis. The authors focus on the impact of technology in the 1960s and give a very broad overview of the mood of the era.

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Henchey's essay articulates the sweeping changes and reforms in education that took place in Quebec as a result of the Quiet Revolution. These shifts in Quebec prelude the *Living and Learning* document, and establish a greater context of the political, social, and cultural atmosphere of Canada.

Palmer, Bryan D. *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*. Toronto:
University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Critical social historian Bryan Palmer provides a series of vignettes exploring aspects of a disintegrating Canadian identity rooted in British traditions. This exposition provides a context of the challenges facing the notion of Canadian identity in the 1960s, including urbanization, social justice movements, and the economic supremacy of the United States.

White, Randall. *Ontario 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History*. Toronto:
Dundurn Press, 1985.

Randall's text is an academic survey of the political and economic history of Ontario. It proves useful for establishing the context of education during the 1960s in which the *Living and Learning* was written.

Image Sources

Figure 1: Stonewall Riots June 1969

Photo by Bettye Lane

<http://nycexplorer.com/the-first-gay-pride-march/a-scene-during-the-1969-stonewall-riots-as-seen-in-kate-davis-a/>

Accessed November 3 2012

Figure 2: Kensington Market 1965

Portuguese fruit stand in Kensington Market, Toronto, Ontario

Portuguese Canadian History Project

<http://archives.library.yorku.ca/pchp/>

Accessed November 3 2012

Figure 3: Don Mills c.1960

Don Mills was one of Canada's first suburbs. It was designed as a model community and built between 1952 and 1965

Don Mills: Life in Toronto's First Mid-Century Modern Neighbourhood

<http://donmills.wordpress.com/>

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Figure 4: Marshall McLuhan

Undated image c.1968 from New York Times

<http://mcluhangalaxy.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/marshall-mcluhan-circa-1968/>

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Figure 5: Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike c. 1968

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis on April 4 1968 while working to support the Memphis Sanitation Workers as part of his economic justice program, the Poor People's Campaign

Photo by Ernest C. Withers

Figure 6: The End of the "Prague Spring" 1968

Photo by Josef Foudelka

http://www.kingsacademy.com/mhodes/03_The-World-since-1900/11_The-Bewildering-60s/11h_The-New-Europe.htm

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Figure 7: *Living and Learning*, 125.

Photo by Toronto Star

Figure 8: *Living and Learning*, 58.

Photo by Robert Ragsdale

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Figure 9: *Living and Learning*, 122.

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