RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE "VIABILITY" OF SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS VIS-A-VIS A PROVINCIAL POLITICAL-ECONOMIC CRISIS: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S EDUCATION REFORM MOVEMENT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

TOTAL OF 10 PAGES ONLY MAY BE XEROXED

(Without Author's Permission)

ARTHUR PAULO PASCOAL ARRUDA

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-47417-8

Canada

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE "VIABILITY" OF SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS VIS-A-VIS A PROVINCIAL POLITICAL-ECONOMIC CRISIS: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S EDUCATION REFORM MOVEMENT

By

© Arthur Paulo Pascoal Arruda, B.A. (Hon.), B. Ed. (Sec.)

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
December 1997

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

For over a decade, Newfoundland's education system has been subjected to continual pressure to enact substantive, structural, and procedural reforms. The foundation of education reform in the province is encapsulated in two seminal Royal Commission reports, which, although addressing different topics, are inseparably linked. The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986) delineates the commencement of the current movement to reform and rationalize the education system and direct it toward instrumental economic goals. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education (1992) presented a blueprint for education reform, incorporating many of the recommendations found in the Report of the previous Royal Commission. Subsequent policy statements from the Government of Newfoundland have refined the direction of reform toward a non-denominational school system that will emphasize fiscal rationalization, cost efficiency and centralization of education services, and an instrumental link to economic development.

The primary focus of this study was how these reforms have endangered the survival of small rural schools in the province. Small rural schools are being disparaged for their lack of an urban-based comprehensive school structure and for their purported low achievement levels and inefficiency. As the "viability" of these schools is called into doubt, they are being subjected to increasing levels of consolidation and closure.

This study utilized a critical theoretical framework in analyzing the situational and concurrent events in the educational, economic, and political-ideological realms in which the education reform process is located. As such, the strictly educational and pedagogical relevance of the reforms, the benefits of school consolidation, and the foundation upon which small rural schools are proposed as being "non-viable," were shown to be spurious. Instead, the changing political economy was identified as the catalyst for education reform: and post-industrial economic development the referent toward which education is being restructured. Finally, the rational-pragmatic discourse employed in the policy statements, which proclaim the benefits of a rationalized school system, was identified as serving to conceal the hegemonic intentions of the provincial government in relation to both small schools and rural communities.

To Marianne.

For your patience and understanding through many days and nights of all-consuming work coupled with much too frequent, legitimate, "writer's block;" and for your impatience and intransigence on those days marred by faineance and procrastination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my supervisors: I would like to thank Dennis Mulcahy for his encouragement and establishment of a positive and amiable working relationship throughout this study. I would also like to thank Clar Doyle for his support and insights. To both, the freedom and flexibility to pursue my own goals without the imposition of distracting constraints was greatly appreciated.

To all members of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland which I had the privilege to be associated with during my graduate courses. Especially, to Ishmael Baksh for his classes which were intellectually challenging and enjoyable, and for his support in my endeavours outside of class.

To Bruce Sheppard: for the opportunity to work with him, to take part in his research interests, and for conveying that my participation was of value and worth . Thank you for the opportunity to discuss and debate various matters - research-based or otherwise. Not only did this allow me to explore an alternate perspective on research than I normally follow, but it helped put my research into clearer focus.

Finally, a special thanks to Jean Brown. I am greatly indebted to her for her efforts as an advisor and "informal" supervisor. Her limitless support, enthusiasm, discerning advice, magnanimity, and luminous disposition were a source of inspiration, and lightened many a grey Newfoundland day!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Figures

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

For over a decade, Newfoundland's education system has been subjected to continual pressure to enact far-reaching reforms. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education released Our Children, Our Future (1992) as the blueprint for educational reform. Subsequent reports, such as the Adjusting the Course (1993, 1994) documents, have more precisely delineated the fundamental transformation of the structure, goals, and purposes of education, as well as the roles of all those involved in the education process.

Ostensibly, these reforms are necessary because Newfoundland students perform at lower standards than students in the rest of the country. The proposed reforms are meant to increase student achievement levels and to focus education on appropriate goals. There is an explicit expectation that **all** students will be able to achieve at high levels -- that educational achievement is merely a matter of student effort and perseverance, and of appropriate conditions to encourage those attitudes. Emphasis is also being placed on standardized measures of achievement and applying new accountability standards to all involved in the education system. Furthermore, the measurement of performance and accountability "is based on the cost-benefit approach demanded by business leaders, with its emphasis on productivity, competitiveness and efficiency" (McCann, 1994: p. 237).

The education reforms are directed toward producing higher levels of human capital which are essential to the future economic and social well-being of the province. The focus on the economic transformation of the province, through the implementation of technocratic

and individualistic educational reforms, is having an obvious impact on rural schools. Newfoundland's education reform documents present reform goals which are ensconced within an urban, technical-rational discourse and deterministic definitions of an urban "one-best-way" of structuring schools. Consequently, the "limitations" of small rural schools are being "predicated on the urbanized one-best-system model of education. If communities were given the opportunity to pursue some other models, the problems related to size might not be problems at all. The present rules of the game, however, place small schools at a distinct disadvantage" (Nachtigal, 1982: 11).

Small rural schools are being delegitimized as valid educational institutions and are being overshadowed by the more publicized needs of an urban-industrial based "comprehensive schooling" model. The comprehensive schooling model incorporates the essential urban-industrial principles of standardization, specialization and differentiation of roles, and the rational centralization of facilities and services in order to provide the appropriate high level of resources and selection of programs.

The conditions of the reform process are being stipulated based on the "rules of a "commercially competitive civil society." Where numbers equate with power, and power equates with privilege, rural people can only become more and more disadvantaged" (Nachtigal, 1994: 166). In a time of fiscal restraint, declining enrolments in schools and economic upheaval in rural communities, small schools will be expected to ensure that students still have access to advanced level courses, and provide the resources to ensure that students achieve the new criteria for success.

However, this can only be achieved through consolidation of small schools. The

centralization of educational services is consistent with the disempowerment of rural people to control their own educational destiny. Furthermore, small rural schools are being placed under intense scrutiny by educational reformers who equate school size with educational effectiveness. In this light, small schools are identified as not being academically, and financially, effective or efficient. The inability to measure up to the comprehensive schooling standards has meant that small schools are being deemed "non-viable" and subject to closure and consolidation. Thus, small rural schools in Newfoundland are being confronted with proposed educational reforms which implicitly suggest , and even explicitly advocate, the abolition of small schools wherever possible.

Statement of the Problem

The current education reform movement in Newfoundland received its initial impetus, and much of its ideological direction, from economic renewal documents -- such as Education for Self-Reliance (1986), Education and Labour Market Training (1990), Change and Challenge (1992), and the reports of the Economic Recovery Commission (1992-1993) -- which stressed the linkage between education and the economy and which advocated "investment" in education in order to increase the 'human capital' of the province. The most favoured policy framework for future educational reform is found in the Adjusting the Course (1993, 1994) documents which provide the substantive direction for the reform recommendations given in Our Children, Our Future. Thus, through these reports, the government has assumed responsibility for establishing the curriculum, for implementing a system to monitor achievement, and for setting the expectations and standards which are to

be met.

The starting point for the proposed reforms emanates from a centralized approach to issues. Leaders in the political, business, and professional spheres — including the Department of Education, the St. John's business community, researchers, and professional associations — will have the ultimate responsibility for shaping the reforms that will improve student achievement. The government has stated that all of society is demanding reform and has assumed responsibility for setting the reform adenda.

The reform reports are symptoms of a legitimation crisis in the economy, which has been manifested through the renewed linkage of education in providing human capital for a competitive "post-industrial" economy. Thus, education is conceptualized as the key variable in increasing human capital. It is a form of *investment* in human beings, serving to sort and identify individual abilities which will be productively utilized, and thereby yield economic benefits (Clark, 1991; Spring, 1991). The education system is transformed into a "brain power industry" (Wilkinson, 1966), which develops human beings as instruments of economic growth. Consequently, the education system is being structured to focus on areas that will have the most influence on economic development.

Within this framework, a number of educational reforms have been recommended. The curriculum that is established, and the knowledge that is legitimized (to be tested for certification), is such that it is linked to the economic improvement of the province — towards a new economy based on a technology and service industries. Knowledge is, in effect, being reified — viewed as something external, objectified, and possessable — which is a legitimate measure of successful schooling that will lead to employability. In Adjusting

the Course II, Government stated that those who do not achieve to appropriate levels are at risk of being relegated to the margins of society. Those with low achievement levels will not be adaptable to the inevitable economic change, will be more dependent on social programs, and will be reliant on the dominant class to take care of them.

Schools also have to become accountable to the public in terms of student achievement and, especially, in terms of monetary expenditure. There are demands that students attain the highest level of achievement possible, within the limits of a system with diminishing resources. Education is being reduced to a satisfactory transmission of set objectives and achievement levels.

Schooling is being defined on the basis of a "one best system," as is found in the urban comprehensive school model. The concepts of economies of scale, fiscal efficiency, and optimal size of schools are being applied to education. Thus, small rural schools are being assessed on whether they are able to achieve certain objectives necessary for comprehensive schools such as adequate resources, the requisite number of specialized teachers, and varied course selection.

Small rural schools are also a central concern of the reform movement because they are perceived as not being academically effective. The assumption is that students in large, comprehensive schools outperform their peers in small and rural schools. School size is presented as a cause of poor achievement. However, judgements about achievement levels in small rural schools do not take into consideration that there are other factors that affect achievement — most notably, socioeconomic status. As a result, reforms proposed on the assumptions that school size determines achievement levels are suspect. These concerns

about small schools have provided the justification for the government to advocate that there needs to be substantial consolidation of the schools in the province.

Furthermore, urban schools have always been the norm by which education is measured. Measured against this yardstick, which is derived from urban practices, small rural schools are defined as a "problem." The recommended solution has been that they should more closely approximate schools in urban areas, or be closed. "The possibility that urban models are not particularly appropriate in rural contexts is an idea that has been rarely entertained in official reports" (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987: 245). Historically, this has very much been the reality in Newfoundland, where various governments have tried to do away with small schools as well as, in many areas, small communities themselves (Downer and Downer, 1993).

When education reform is placed in the context of rural schooling, it is evident that the prime issue is one of conflict between urban and rural values and interests. However, the interests that have ultimately been getting served are those of urban residents who have influence in the economic and political spheres of the province. In the Newfoundland context, class division and power structure inequalities are manifestations of spatial locatedness. Thus, rural communities and rural citizens are the embodiment of the marginalized and disenfranchised class of the province. There may not be a simple dichotomy between the *rural* and the *urban* but socio-spatial, socio-cultural, and socioeconomic variables exist which help define the rural. In defining rural it is necessary to "distinguish between the rural as a distinctive type of locality and the rural as a social representation — the rural as space and the rural as representing space" (Halfacree, 1993: 25).

However "rural" is defined, the important point is that rural Newfoundland has traditionally had depressed economic structures which education has not been able to ameliorate. Recent education reform has recognized this and, therefore, merely stressed the advantages of urban, industrial life. For rural areas, this translates into the "inculcating rural children with urban values, urban aspirations, and urban skills" (Sher and Tompkins, 1977: 41). Thus, rural students are confronted with the delegitimation of their rural culture and values. There is a corresponding dilemma for these students:

> *For many students, the culture they have known is being rejected, and they are asked to accept a way of life that is best characterized as middle-class and urban. They are being asked to choose between the culture and life they have and know, but which is unable to provide them with the means of making a living; a culture and life that they don't know, that promises them jobs and security, but in some faraway town in some unfamiliar occupation* (Brown, 1996: 18-19).

In the reform process, the preservation and improvement of rural schools and communities (including rural values and lifestyle) is discouraged. Instead, urban-oriented education reformers have viewed the goal of a standardized education in rural areas as a type of "emancipation." Thus, education reform not only deals with small rural school viability, but also of rural *community* viability. Education is to engage in advanced training of local talent for occupations that exist in distant urban areas, and assumes all individuals to be in quest of urban careers, values and lifestyles (DeYoung and Theobald, 1991; Haas, 1991).

The proposed reform measures aimed at improving the quality of education for the entire province are based on rational structures, formal achievement levels, and other objective results which mirror the impersonality that is present in urban structures. However, when rural residents make judgements about the quality of local schools, they do

not do so upon the basis of objective data to do with staff size, specialist teachers, or curricular and organizational structures, but upon what they do know of the personal qualities and skills possessed by teachers (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987). The characteristics of the small rural school are devalued, while those of the urban school become will become the new measures of effectiveness.

Furthermore, the mobilization of the reform movement occurred during a period marked by a high level of parental satisfaction with the performance of schools (Martin, 1991). In Newfoundland, a study by Graesser (1988) revealed that 90% of the public was satisfied with the education system, while there was also overwhelming support for the school in the local community. Thus, the impetus for reform did not emanate from a populace that was dissatisfied with their local rural schools — but from provincial elites determined to more closely link education with economic development. Therefore, a central factor in relation to education reform and rural areas is "control." By controlling the discourse on achievement, and effectiveness, the hegemonic urban elite are attempting to subvert the perceptions of those in rural areas as to the quality of their local schools.

Thus, critics of the education process in Newfoundland have stated that it represents little more than an attempt at social, economic, and cultural (re)production, presented under the guise of positivistic-pragmatic recommendations which represent the "only" rational course of action in the context of an a priori defined reality. This ensures "that those students and individuals who have historically been disenfranchised and under-represented remain in a subordinated position and bear the burden of school reform" (Bhaerman, 1994: 180). The process of education reform, as stipulated in official economic and educational

reform documents, is but another attempt to delineate those who will take part in the new economy, and those who will not (i.e., those whom the government recognizes will necessarily be marginalized from society due to their low educational achievement).

Education reform documents function to alter the ideological framework by which schools are judged to be effective and efficient — based on the rationalized, objective mandates put forth by the urban political and economic elites of this province. Furthermore, the policies on "school reform and school improvement are hardly stories about how to best structure learning opportunities for children. Rather, these are stories about the changing political economy" (DeYoung and Howley, 1990: 66). The emphasis on rural school restructuring -- that is, consolidation wherever possible -- stems from political, economic, and ideological motives, *not* pedagogical concerns.

Major Hypothesis

The central focus of this study was the interrelation among the changing political economy of Newfoundland, the scope and focus of educational reforms, and the "perceived" viability of small rural schools (and by default, the viability of small rural communities themselves). This study was based on the contention that Newfoundland's education reform and school reorganization processes were conceived within the context of concurrent events in the educational, socio-cultural, economic and political realms -- and must be analysed within this framework. Furthermore, the educational and pedagogical relevance of the reforms which delimited the perceived viability of rural schools is misleading and spurious. The locus of the rationale for the education reform process is to be found in the changing

political economy.

The unmitigated belief in the virtues of urban-modelled comprehensive schooling is a driving force behind the movement to consolidate rural schools. Rural school accountability is ensured in comprehensive schools since they are equated with higher student academic achievement, and with economies of scale which make education more effective and efficient — not only academically but also financially.

These views on the benefits of comprehensive schooling and consolidation are legitimized among the urban *and* rural populace which is likely to believe that it does reduce costs and increase achievement, "especially when these assertions are made by the 'experts' who fail to cite contradictory evidence" (Haller and Monk, 1988: p. 479). Yet, considerable evidence *does* exist that achievement cannot be equated with school size, and that cost savings via economies of scale are suspect. Thus, if the rational pragmatic arguments in support of the benefits of consolidation are methodologically spurious, then the polico-economic ideological foundations of the reforms (to which the reformers deny credence) are central to analysing and understanding the tenuous position of small rural schools vis-a-vis reform rhetoric.

As such, the structured framework which guided this study and the major unifying hypothesis of this study was stated as follows:

Newfoundland's educational reform and school reorganization processes were conceived and formulated, and are ultimately analysable, within the context of concurrent events in the educational, socio-cultural, economic, and political realms. However, the pedagogical relevance of reforms which affect the "perceived" viability

of small rural schools is spurious. The locus of the education reform process is to be found in the changing political economy. The proffered technical-rational superlatives bestowed on the purported benefits of comprehensive schooling and consolidation merely serve to conceal the social, political and economic agendas — the relevant factors driving the reform movement — and which are also intended to manufacture consent and will among the rural populace to accept the benefits *and inevitability* of consolidation.

Consequently, a number of theoretical issues are explored in this study which help illuminate the effect of the provinces political-economic changes on educational reforms. Specifically, the following issues were explored:

- the place of Newfoundland's economic malaise in the 1980s and into the 1990s as a catalyst for economic and educational reform.
- the congruence of economic renewal documents, which endorse education as an investment in human capital, with educational reform documents which were subsequently released. How does this structural-functionalist conception of education relate to the legitimization, production and reproduction of a "class-based" (proposed as urban-rural distinction), hierarchical economic and social system?
- the role of an urban-industrial oriented school structure and curriculum to inculcate all youth with urban-industrial values, skills, aspirations and dispositions such that rural children will also be incorporated into fulfilling the needs of an urban dominated economy and society.
- the process of manufacturing consent rather than public policy enacted on the basis

of genuine concern of the people. The "dominant" sectors of Newfoundland society (urban, industrial, educational elites) profess a consensus of direction on reform (or even on the need for reform), and attempt to instill an ideological consciousness in the rural population that is consistent with an urban-industrial society. The hegemonic position of those who mandated reforms is manifested through the legitimization of the interests and values of these dominant "classes," while the values of benefit to the disadvantaged (the "ruralites") are delegitimized and marginalized.

- the ability of reformers, via their position as legitimized "experts," to determine the discourse of achievement to standards, accountability of schools, and the "viability" of schools. Rural schools are not able to conform to the ideal of achievement based on a comprehensive schooling model.
- the effect of small rural schools to mitigate the effects of low socioeconomic status compared to larger schools. Meanwhile, large comprehensive schools are advantageous to those of a higher socioeconomic status.

Need for the Study

The current education reform movement in Newfoundland has been a consistent and on-going phenomenon over the past decade, and it is still in progress. The practical effects for the education system as a whole, and especially for small rural schools, are only beginning to be felt. However, despite the substantial repercussions of the reform process, very little research has been conducted on analysing the effects of the proposed reforms.

More specifically, a macroscopic political-economic perspective on the reforms is necessary to illuminate the ideological foundations of the reforms.

The bases of the reform movement are not localized to Newfoundland, but are an international phenomenon. An understanding of the grounding of the general reform movement provides an understanding of the ends toward which Newfoundland's particular reform process is aimed. This serves to locate the tenuous position of small rural schools in an education system that is being geared toward creating an urban-modelled industrial (or even post-industrial) economy and society. Applying this type of analysis to the reform process in Newfoundland has not yet been conducted in a major study, and it is hoped that this study will be instrumental in more adequately filling this void.

This study was conducted within a critical theory framework, which suggests its own rationale for conducting this study. The stakeholders within the rural school system need to be aware of how the dominant class can secure hegemony — attaining the unknowing consent of the dominated — by suppling the symbols, representations and practices that define social and school life such that the basis of authority and social relationships remain hidden. The dominant culture has a capacity to regenerate its institutions, values, ideals, and goals by supplying the only terms of reference against which individuals and schools are expected to embrace as their own (McLaren, 1994). The roots of rural schools' problems have often been differences in cultural capital which render much of the curriculum, examinations, and organizational structures completely pointless to the student (Summer and Warburton, 1972). The cultural capital of those in rural schools — the cultural background, knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next — is

being delegitimated in favour of that belonging to the more urban, professional, university-educated elites of the province.

Identification of the critical issues in this study was expected to provide a more emancipatory framework by which to analyse these government reform documents and the reform movement as a whole. This is relevant not just for rural education concerns, but for any concern that does not fit within the dominant political and economic interests that are driving the education reform agenda.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

In order to adequately address and analyze the issues related to the focus of this study, the following comprehensive selection of relevant literature needed to be explored. The seven major areas identified as essential to the illumination of the effect of Newfoundland's education reform movement on its small rural schools are: critical theory, political economy, human capital theory, the education reform movement, critique of the reform agenda, small rural schools, and the Newfoundland context. The literature within these seven topics is presented below.

Critical Theory

The epistemological and methodological bases of critical theory and research are founded on an overriding objective to "unmask" the inequality of competing self-interests within society in order to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices. Critical theorists are aware of the relational aspects of political, economic, and ideological power and the social practices that emerge as the result of the favoring or legitimizing of specific visions of reality in the present and for the future (Apple, 1988b; Apple, 1992a; McLaren, 1994).

In analyzing education, critical theorists explore how schools serve the interests of the dominant class — by valuing, transmitting, and reproducing the values and knowledge of the dominant culture — and (re)produce inequality in society. "Critical scholars reject the

claim that schooling constitutes an apolitical and value-neutral process," or that it even functions as a site of social and economic mobility (McLaren, 1994: 171). Critical theory explores the mismatch in educational values among various groups, and how the dominant values contribute to social problems by alienating and marginalizing those who are already most disempowered in society (Shor, 1992).

Critical theory is extremely conscious of "class" as determined by the economic, political, and social relationships that govern life in a given social order, as well as "culture" as signified by the particular ways in which a social group makes sense of its given circumstances and conditions of life (McLaren, 1994). Furthermore, the cultural capital of various sectors of society and how it is reflected in the education system are analyzed. For instance, McLaren (1994: 198) noted how

> *Schools systematically* devolve *the cultural capital of students who occupy subordinate class positions. . .Academic performance represents, therefore, not individual competence or the lack of ability on the part of disadvantaged students but* ***the school's depreciation of their cultural capital.***

Critical theory seeks to make visible and deconstruct the functionalist foundation in which society and schooling exist. It notes that schools are important agencies for legitimation - not only of societal structures, but of schools' position within these structures. Within the functionalist conception, schools use achievement levels to differentiate students, and act as an allocating agency in which *performance* is used as a basis of selection for future status in society (Parsons, 1961). Schools provide appropriate socialization in order for students to determine their future status and role in society. "A critical function of schools is to help children to make the transition from the value orientation of family life to

the affectively neutral, universalistic, and achievement-oriented values of the world of work" (Hale, 1990: 382). Students are prepared for the world of work by the emphasis on competition and continual ranking and evaluation and other reproductions of the reality of class relations found in the world of work (Gaskell, 1987).

Functionalism suggests that schools do provide equal opportunities for all children to succeed, that society is based on a meritocracy, and that all children, based on their academic potential, have social mobility. There is a

> *recognition that it is fair to give differential levels of achievement, so long as there has been fair access to opportunity, and fair that these rewards [from achievement] lead to higher-order opportunities for the successful.* (Parsons, 1961: 445).

Value is placed on viewing all students as having equal opportunity for success, and, therefore, differential achievement is an individual consequence of individual effort to meet their full potential, independent of the student's prior socio-economic status. Thus, schools function to produce society, and individual status in that society, through the process of differentiation, while legitimating inequalities in material rewards based on the principle of merit.

The functionalist perspective is also based on the essential belief that this common value placed on achievement, the nature of the curriculum, and corresponding punishments or rewards based on performance, is shared by all sectors of society. All knowledge and skills stressed in schools are rationally derived and value-neutral, thereby allowing all children equal opportunity to succeed. This belief in common values, and consensus on the reality of a meritocracy is what functions to "mitigate the strains generated by rewarding achievement differently" (Parsons, 1961: 447).

However, critical theorists note that the production and reproduction of knowledge and society is *not* value-neutral, that there is not a consensus of values, but a domination of ideology, and that meritocracy is thereby a tool by which to perpetuate an unequal society. Functionalism, in essence, provides a means by which not to see the underlying realities of class, power and exploitation in a given society (Hale, 1990: 321).

In opposition to this view, a major goal of critical theory is to unmask dominant discourses and ideologies which claim neutrality, while, in reality, limiting human freedom and justice by maintaining the status quo (Giroux, 1981). Critical theory is an ideology critique, concerned with the raising of consciousness and awareness of the "oppressed" to make them aware of the material conditions that restrict them (Usher, 1996). For example, in analyzing policy statements related to education reform, people should be aware of the implicit 'unity of purpose' found therein. Apple notes that researchers "should notice the use of "we", "our", and "the people" here. Notice as well the assumed consensus on "basics" and "fundamentals" and the romanticization of the past both in school and the larger society" (1993: 59).

For critical theorists, the production of knowledge and power relations are inscribed in the process of discourse formation. Discourses are about what can be said and thought, and who can speak with what authority.

> *Discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak . . . Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention* (Foucault, 1974: 49).

Thus, the social production of meanings takes place through discourse in relation to the power systems operative in a given context (Ball, 1990; Kenway, 1990).

The dominant discourses in a society function as "regimes of truth," determining what counts as true knowledge, and what is not. Those dominant interests and assumptions that inform this production of knowledge (McLaren, 1994), and which concurrently delegitimizes other knowledge, are the focus of a critical perspective on discourse. Of particular interest to critical theory is how the "Right" has

> *constructed a regime of truth and together with key organic intellectuals in the media, developed an apparatus of power - knowledge that sought to establish the boundaries within which 'normal,' moral, and socially responsible education is defined and outside of which all else may be regarded as deviant* (Kenway, 1990: 197).

Through this process, the "Right" has distorted common sense to such an extent that economic rationality has become both the referent and the ideal for educational reform. Specific forms of knowledge deemed important for schools to meet the needs of economic development are reconstituted as being for the "common good" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Kenway, 1990).

The process of "common sense" production is significant in its relation to ideological conflict. Ideology itself refers to a complex of ideas that form sense and meaning and, thereby, represent that which we tend to accept as natural or "common sense" (McLaren, 1994). Education itself is an arena for ideological conflict as different groups attempt to determine and define the "socially legitimate means and ends of a society" (Apple, 1988c; 168). When ideology is subject to domination, it can be utilized for negative ends. It may serve as a way to legitimize the dominant system by its own apparatus; lead to dissimulation whereby the relations of dominance are concealed, denied or obscured; cause *fragmentation* of dominated groups such that they are placed in opposition to one another;

or reify social affairs by presenting them as permanent, natural and commonsensical (McLaren, 1994: 185).

The dominance of ideology by one group leads to ideological hegemony. Hegemony is the process whereby the dominant culture is able to win the consent of those who are oppressed, with the oppressed unwittingly participating in their own oppression. The dominant culture is able to perpetuate its own values and desired mode of operation of society "by supplying the symbols, representations, and practices of social life in such a way that the basis of social life, social authority and unequal relations of power remain hidden" (McLaren, 1994: 182).

The dominant culture perpetuates the myths of meritocracy and individual achievement through various media so that the subordinated groups view their failure to become part of the elite of society as a result of their own personal inadequacy. The subordinated blame themselves for failure in school, but other factors such as the structuring effects of the economy on school and the curriculum and socio-economic bias are important factors relevant to the lack of student success (Spring, 1993; McLaren, 1994).

Hegemony is not forcefully imposed. Yet, the power of the dominant culture to manufacture the dreams and desires of all sectors of society, through supplying the terms of reference against which all individuals are expected to conduct their daily lives, is so strong that subordinate groups are not able to conceive of an alternative "common sense" view of the world (Fisher and Gilgoff, 1987, Hale, 1990). Thus, power relations in the construction of discourses, and dominance in ideology leads to hegemony. McLaren (1994: 183) astutely pointed out that:

> *the dominant culture tries to "fix" the meaning of signs, symbols and representations to provide a "common" world view, disguising relations of power and privilege through the organs of mass media and state apparatus such as schools, government institutions and state bureaucracies.*

Political Economy

In stating that the locus for understanding the education reform process is to be found in the changing political economy is to acknowledge that historical, economic, cultural, social, ideological and political factors are all interrelated and form the context in which schooling is situated (Wotherspoon, 1987; MacGregor, 1989). Without a clear understanding of these relations, the study of education reform will remain limited to descriptions and effects rather than causes.

Critically, political-economic crises result in increased demands from affected groups that the state intervene to protect their interests. Almost always, the interests of dominant groups in society prevail in being addressed over those of the rest of society. Patterns of conflict and struggle in society also permeate the education system. Therefore, schooling is also viewed as grounds for those with political-economic and ideological hegemony to impose solutions to problems or crises they face, irrespective of the economic or social costs that befall the rest of society (Wotherspoon, 1987). Furthermore, understanding the way the education system is situated in the larger configurations of political-economic and cultural power, in turn, highlights the different functions schools perform in maintaining an unequal society (Apple and Weis, 1983).

Human Capital Theory

The concept of human capital theory was fully conceived in the 1960s within a framework of technical functionalism wherein efficiency and the classical Liberal notion of equality of opportunity were operationalized (Karabel and Halsey, 1977). Although, by the late 1960s, and throughout the 1970s, significant doubts were raised as to the validity of the theory's claims (Salamon, 1991); the changing economic structure and economic pressures of the 1980s — due to expanded international competition, technological advances, and "globalization" — raised this theory, linking education and the economy, onto the political agenda (Lawton, 1993). Human capital theory posits that policy makers can ensure that investments in education yield a high return to society (Machlup, 1970) by controlling the quality and quantity of training of the labour force such that perceived shortages or surpluses of skilled people are mediated, thereby ensuring "the desired occupational mix" (Wilkinson, 1966: 37).

Human capital refers to the acquired skills, knowledge, and capabilities of people, and that by increasing such skills and knowledge, human productivity will increase (Salamon, 1991). Human capital is conceived as being similar to physical capital and, therefore, a form of investment — in which their are returns to the individual and / or the nation. However, attempts to quantify the rate of return on this investment have traditionally been inconclusive (Schultz, 1961; Wilkinson, 1966). On the national level, investment in human capital increases the nation's productivity by training the workforce to be technologically adroit, competitive, flexible, and adaptable, with diversified skills, and, especially, mobile enough to ensure that there is a qualified pool of individuals to be

efficiently allocated to fulfill the demands of a changing global, technological economy. Furthermore, the appropriately learned work habits, discipline and reliability of well-trained workers have a cumulative effect of improving the productivity of co-workers, and also have a trickle-down effect of raising real living standards by producing higher earnings and higher taxes for the benefit of all (Weisbrod, 1975; Thurow, 1977).

Education is conceptualized as the key variable in increasing human capital. It is a form of investment in human beings, serving to sort and identify individual abilities which will be productively utilized and yielding economic benefits (Clark, 1991; Spring, 1991). Wilkinson (1966: 34) has noted that the education system is viewed as a "brain power industry" which develops human beings as instruments of economic strength. Meanwhile, the education system must be structured to focus on the areas of math, science, technology and economic competitiveness to prepare students for the emerging economy.

As for the individual, who is assumed to have as equal an educational opportunity to succeed as any other individual, he or she will determine the level of investment in education that they desire — carried out in a "rational" manner to decide the point where further returns on the "investment" in education (i.e., a higher standard of living) is offset by the time or effort of acquiring more education (Machlup, 1970). Thus, the low earnings and living standards of particular people are merely a consequence of their failure to have invested in their education to a higher level (Schultz, 1961).

Notwithstanding the renewed emphasis on human capital formation by policy makers since the 1980s, there has not been any substantial empirical evidence to indicate the clear contribution of education to economic development as espoused in theory (Collins, 1977;

Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Salamon, 1991). The criticisms of human capital theory focus on the unrealistic assumption that there is perfect competition in labour and wage markets such that increasing one's store of human capital will result in more employment and higher wages. The reality, as is plainly evident since the 1980s, is that there are limits to what education can accomplish since there already is a surplus of highly educated labour (Antonio, 1981). By focusing only on increasing the supply of investment in education, at some point, "all that is accomplished is increasing the education level of the unemployed" (Spring, 1980: 61).

Human capital makes a direct appeal to pro-capitalist ideological sentiment by framing education as a "capital investment" made by every potential worker (Karabel and Halsey, 1977). It is based on a false meritocracy, and distorts the view that investment in education is a process of "certification' and credentialism by which to exclude others from occupations which they have the ability to perform. Humans are treated as objects which must be trained to meet the needs of a technological society, while education is transformed from being something to be consumed for inherent reason, to being an investment directed at economic gain (Spring, 1980).

Human capital ignores the effect of other socio-economic and cultural variables which impinge on individuals, obstructing them from meeting the economic success to which their investment in education would point. Furthermore, the problems of the economy are blamed on the level of education of the work force, while ignoring the political and economic structural conditions that may be implicated in poor economic performance (Apple, 1985). Accordingly, Falk and Lyson (1991: 15) claimed:

> *Human capital is dear to the hearts of policy makers and politicians who put the burden for economic success on the back of the worker . . . such an attitude is akin to "blaming the victim," which emphasizes the individual over structural factors, a perspective especially popular among political conservatives.*

The Education Reform Movement

The purpose of education reform is to enable schools to accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programs and/or practices with *better* ones. Fullan would classify the current reform process as consisting of second-order changes. These reforms are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of current educational practices by transforming "the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, including new goals, structures and roles"(1991: 29). *All* educational decisions made as part of the reform process are proffered on political, economic, ideological and pragmatic grounds (Levin and Young, 1994), and their ultimate directions are highly interrelated with concurrent events in the educational, socio-cultural, economic and political realms.

Koppich and Guthrie proposed that educational policy reform is propelled by two main conditions in the external environment: demography and economics. Furthermore, reforms are more likely to be implemented when "either (1) the value stream with which a prospective reform is most closely aligned must be dominant or ascending, or (2) a society must be in a period of substantial uncertainty regarding its value preferences" (1993: 20).

The current wave of education reform has been an international phenomenon focusing on efficiency and school restructuring, framed within a plethora of politically conservative education reports. These reports are symptoms of a legitimation crisis in education which has been manifested through the renewed linkage of education in providing

human capital for a competitive economy. Angus (1991: 250) asserted that this utilitarian view of education is "most crassly illustrated in the notorious United States report, *A Nation at Risk*." Indeed, this report, released in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, is not only the initial spark to the current cycle of education reform, but is also considered to be the "bible of the reform movement" (Beare and Boyd, 1993: 4; Kirst, 1988).

Beare and Boyd (1993) analyzed the process of education reform since the 1980s in several western, industrialized countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain; and observed several general trends to education reform. First, educational restructuring has been conceptualized and mandated by political forces — the reforms do not originate from educators, schools, or the school system (Beare and Boyd, 1993; Goodlad, 1992).

Second, the dominant motives determining the pattern and nature of education reform are instrumental economic needs and economic rationalism. Another trend is that schools are being restructured on a basis of "corporate managerialism" wherein accountability, performance measures, and other free market analogies are applied to schools with an orientation to a post-industrial society. The focus is on results rather than processes (Apelt and Lingard, 1993).

These trends are reinforced by the fact that the reforms have aimed to remove "the policy-making about education from the grip of educators, largely because other actors want to use education for instrumental purposes" (Beare and Boyd, 1993: 10). Although many task forces set up to address educational reform have been composed of a *variety* of "non-specialists," the underlying support for these task forces have come from the business

community. The Nation Responds: Recent Efforts to Improve Education, by the United States Department of Education (1984: 11), stated that 1983 was the year in which business and corporate leaders "enlisted" in the struggle to improve education. Doyle (1987) asserted that the reform movement has, in essence, been *led* by the business community. This has resulted in reforms being mandated to not only restructure schools to meet the needs of economic improvement — through the curriculum, standardized evaluations, and accountability — but also to reconceptualize and organize schools like factories with an attendant industrial discourse (Thomas, 1993; Doyle, 1987).

A fifth trend is that national governments are trying to impose their views on reform to improve the economy — even though they may not have any constitutional authority to intervene in education. Furthermore, it is evident that countries and provinces/states are learning from each other and adopting models and trends from other jurisdictions.

The last trend that Beare and Boyd (1993: 11) report is that educational reform is an ongoing phenomenon because the forces which produced the initial movement — "economic competitiveness, an interdependent international economy, the realigning of political forces and values disequilibrium" — are still present. And, in order to understand the current reforms being implemented, it is imperative to understand the most influential progenitor of the reform movement: the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

In the report, A Nation at Risk, the pervading tone is one of crisis and desperation. It is stated that there is a "widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our education system . . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people"

(A Nation at Risk, 1983: 1,5).

Various measures of achievement highlight that the average graduate of the day is not as well educated as he/she should be. It is boldly stated that "for the first time in the history of our country, the education skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach those of their parents" (1983: 11). This decline in educational performance is attributed to the problems of a diluted curriculum, lack of high standards and expectations, inadequate effort or time on task by students, and a poorly prepared teaching force.

The implications of this educational deterioration are that the United States' taken-for-granted position of commercial, industrial, technological and competitive pre-eminence in the world is being challenged and/or displaced by other better educated and motivated "competitor" countries. This has led to complaints, and pressure from business and military leaders to improve education in order to restore this pre-eminence. Therefore, great emphasis is placed on "investing" in education and increasing the level of human capital in order to improve the society's material well-being. The Commission proclaimed

> *that knowledge, learning, information and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce . . . If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still maintain in the world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our education system for the benefit of all - old and young alike, affluent and poor, majority and minority. Learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the "information age" we are entering. (1993: 7)*

The Commission believed that, fortunately, improving educational achievement is fully within the *control* of government. All that is required is proper leadership, a set purpose, and a clear vision — as provided in the report.

Thus, the new *ideal* in education is to achieve excellence through higher standards

and expectations, which will ultimately produce the highly skilled, flexible and adaptable people required in the changing economy. In the past, emphasis on equity has lead to mediocrity, but now the emphasis will be on quality. Excellence will be attained through the *individual* responsibility of all children to manage their own lives and achieve to high standards through "intellectual and moral integrity coupled with hard work and commitment" (1983: 35). While all children are expected to learn, it is forewarned that those who do not produce the individual effort required for achievement and attainment of relevant skills "essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life" (1983: 6).

Based on this belief that everyone can learn, the Commission recommended that the way to achieve excellence is to increase graduation requirements; focus on more rigorous and measurable standards and increase expectations of performance; focus on the "new basics" of the curriculum (math, science, technology, language), and intensify the length of pupil time on task; improve teacher preparation and pay, and; impose a system of accountability on all those involved in the education system to ensure that these recommendations are carried out. And as a final rallying call, the Commission stated that there is little doubt about how to improve the system, and that the public is already demanding that educational and political leaders act to institute these reforms. Therefore, in light of the crisis awaiting the country if educational reforms are not enacted, the Commission issued a "plea" to all "educators, parents and public officials at all levels to assist in bringing about the education reform proposed in these reports" (1983: 35).

This plea for action was well-heeded by government agencies and other educational foundations. A Nation at Risk was accepted as a guide for excellence in education and the nation, especially since the alternative — that of "doing nothing, invites disaster" (National Education Association, 1983: i). Reports such as A Nation Responds: Recent Efforts to Improve Education (1984), A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, (1986), and Time for Results: The Governors 1991 Report on Education, (1991), are just a few of the hundreds of state commissions and reports, affecting every state in the United States, that studied the deficiencies of the education system and made similar findings and recommendations as found in A Nation at Risk (O'Brien 1994; Timer and Kirp, 1988).

By the 1990s, an evaluation of the results of restructuring and the reform movement provided mixed results. Conservative writers still maintain that their nations' economic future is still at risk because mediocrity of results are still rampant, and because the intellectual standards, expectations, and accountability structures have not been as rigidly implemented as they should have been (Brown & Camola, 1991; Hunt, 1991; Finn, 1992; Murphy, 1992).

The emphasis on improving human capital did have a significant impact on changing the operant goal of education (Kirst, 1987; Murphy, 1992). The human capital imperative is still driving widespread educational reform: "Everywhere the objective is the same: expand the supply of human capital such that a nation is capable of technological innovation and modern work force implementation" (Koppich and Guthrie, 1993: 18). However, government and business leaders continue to assert that current educational practices are not sufficient to produce the required human capital (Koppich and Guthrie, 1993; Burbules and

Kantor, 1988). This emphasis on achieving an adequate return on investment in education has been heightened in the 1990s due to the fiscal restraint and austerity that has been self-imposed by government and taxpayers (Finn and Rebarber, 1992; Peterson, 1992).

A lasting impact of the education reforms of the 1980s has been the shift of leadership and influence from the education "profession" to the "laity," — "consisting of politicians and legislators, the business community, and other education *consumers*" (Finn, 1991). Conservative reform-minded writers have contentedly noted that "for the first time in our history, the business of schooling is being redefined in relation to its customers. Restructuring is facilitating unprecedented inroads of market forces into the governance and organization of schools" (Murphy, 1992: 7).

The goal of achieving excellence in education, though, is far from being realized. However, the focus of schooling has been transformed from focusing on equity to aiming for excellence (Boyd, 1988; O'Brien, 1994). While past educational policies were concerned with "the protection of *individuals* at risk, the new educational agenda focused on a *nation* at risk" (Timar and Kirp, 1988: 4). Students are expected to take individual responsibility for their low or high achievement levels, and accept the corresponding punishments or rewards of each. Many education reform policies are based on a belief that "good things should happen to those who meet society's expectations, support its standards, fulfill its hopes. Bad things ought to befall those who don't do as they should" (Finn, 1991: 309).

Finally, the politically conservative rhetoric of education reform policies have become so pervasive and entrenched that educational discourse is fully ensconced in its framework. As a result, reform is accepted as a non-partisan and neutral enterprise for the

benefit of all (Honig, 1988: Crosby, 1993).

Critique of the Reform Agenda

The articulation of the reform movement's central characteristics identifies that this is the direction of education restructuring taking place in a number of industrialized countries, and throughout many provinces in Canada — including Alberta, Ontario, and, of course, Newfoundland. Similar economic structural problems are evident; and the nature of the crisis, as well as the management techniques and procedures which were found in the United States have been imported into other contexts. The similarity of education reforms in Newfoundland to those of the general education "reform movement" are clearly evident. Therefore, a critique of the "reform movement" is relevant in its transferability to the Newfoundland context.

First, it should be noted that reforms proposed are historically located in particular economic, political and ideological contexts — and that the reports are very much a product of these contexts (Apple, 1985, Goodlad, 1984). The reports are a consequence of perceived "crises" in society, not only economic, but also of a crisis in authority relations and ideology (Apple, 1987). As encapsulated in the reform documents, the ascendant political ideology of the "Right" through the 1980s was utilized to identify education as the blame (and possible solution) for the crises in the economy, the breakdown of "traditional" values and other cultural and social upheavals. The crises that were identified were those that fit the interests of dominant groups, while others like inequality were ignored. Meanwhile, this shift in blame to educational institutions allowed the dominant groups to "export" the blame away

from their past policies and away from the socio-economic and political structures, which are the ultimate causes of the crisis (Apple 1987, 1988a, 1990, 1992a).

The contention that improved education will lead to greater human capital and cause economic growth is specious. Education is not the prime motive force for economic growth, but economic development directs school change, while economic status and mobility determine school achievement and opportunity.

> *School functions have been largely subordinated to economic trends and at most play a supportive role, not a decisive role in the economy. And if schools have not shaped the economy in the past, they are even less likely to do so now given current economic trends.* (Bastion et al. 1986: 50).

Furthermore, the recommendations proposed within the reform documents present an unproblematic conception of schooling. The complex nature of education is reduced to specific problems that are amenable to direct solutions *within* the school. Characteristic of the conservative education debate, schools are defined as neutral institutions with a narrow focus on the delivery of quality outputs. This serves to divert attention from the problematic and conflict-prone nature of education in its social context (Angus, 1991: 251). Education is a major arena in which ideological conflicts in the socio-political and economic spheres are worked out, and where different groups with different visions attempt to define and impose what the legitimate forms of knowledge and understanding should be (Apple, 1988c, 1992b). However, in the current reform process, powerful groups within the government and economy have been able to redefine the terms of debate in education. The *purpose* of education has been ideologically transformed such that the dominant discourse stresses commodification, privatization, technology, productivity and competition (Apple, 1987;

1988d).

The reports attempt to build a new ideological consensus over education by disarticulating and eliminating themes of democracy and equality in education, while rearticulating new themes around New Right principles. The new discourse ignores and obscures how power, ideology, and politics affect schooling. It proposes goals such as "excellence," while omitting to mention how these may be undermined by the realities of social class, privilege and other socio-economic forces that hinder or privilege certain groups (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993). Thus, not only the concepts proposed in these reports need to be analyzed, but the rhetorical language that is used (or not used) also needs to be analyzed to determine the real intentions of the reports. Apple (1987: 200) noted that "these documents are not only useful indicators of ideological shifts. *They are themselves part of the cultural production of altered discourse* and as such need to be seen as constitutive elements of a particular hegemonic project."

It is evident that the reform documents are propagated on a corporate, capitalist mode of social organization and utilize the *language* of the market — such as rationalization, efficiency, standards and competition (Lingard, O'Brien and Knight, 1993; Robertson and Woock, 1991). Corporate concerns have infused the educational debate, and have established rationalization and efficiency as the accepted "common sense" views about how reforms should proceed. For Apelt and Lingard (1993: 64), this reform focusing on rationalization and efficiency only addresses trying "to do more with less, thus aiming to make schools cheaper but not necessarily better."

This neo-conservative hegemony on school reform debate is consonant with their

general ascendance in the political sphere. In terms of education reform, critics assert that we have to focus on and expose the paradox of how groups that so blatantly favor the rich, the upper class, and the logic of unbridled individualism, can so effectively mobilize the needs and desires of subordinate and oppressed groups (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985: 210).

The philosophical basis of the reform movement is a "radical-functionalist paradigm" (Clarke, 1993; Slaughter, 1985). The value of schooling has been reduced to economic utility, reflecting an economic rationalism whereby education is instrumentally linked to human capital theory, despite the fact that it has been considerably disputed (Apelt and Lingard, 1993). Schools are defined as institutions that instill the forms of knowledge, skills and social practices required to produce the labour force necessary for the new economy. Students are not being prepared to be thinking participants in a democratic society, but are being trained to be "servants of power" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993; Spring, 1985).

Much of the criticism directed toward the reform movement stems from the fact it has been driven (and financed) by the political and economic elites. Meanwhile, the reports are developed by chosen "expert" committees of policy makers, not educators. Of course, given that reform is being driven by elite sectors of society, it is not difficult to extrapolate that education is being restructured to meet their most pressing requirements by stressing excellence, competition and meritocracy. Meanwhile qualitative issues such as equity and the schools relation to the community are ignored (Bastion et. al., 1986). It is obvious that the political and economic elites represent a neo-conservative or New Right ideology that is not committed to egalitarianism. The reports reflect these ideals with its emphasis on "excellence." "It is not enough to only understand what the reports state; one must also be

aware of those who promulgated the reports, their involvements, and their educational, political and ideological perspectives" (Altbach, 1985: 19).

Reform must be analyzed as a process of social regulation where the central issues are control and power. For instance, the rhetoric about decentralization and returning control to consumers or "taxpayers" barely conceals that centralized state or provincial control is being extended at the expense of those in schools (Dawkins, 1991; Elliot and MacLennon, 1994; Maxwell, 1996; Thomas, 1992). Control by the state is maintained through the neo-conservative ideals of standardization, evaluation, rationalization, efficiency, and accountability (Blackmore, 1991). The dominant groups who espouse technical rationality are structuring education to serve their interests, while enhancing the path to upward mobility for those who are like them (Apple, 1987; 1988a; 1990).

The emphasis on standardized examinations and accountability as a means to reform has been criticized on a variety of issues. Corbett and Wilson have noted that the demand for rigorous testing emanates almost exclusively from legislators, business leaders and local taxpayers. Yet these programs have "engendered little additional benefit for students and greater disruption for teachers, without improving practice" (1991: 90). Since education is not improved by such policies, "the issue really is one of control," and reflects corporate/bureaucratic efforts to alter curriculum and instruction along more rationalistic lines (1991: 143).

While reform statements create an illusion that test performance is synonymous with the quality of education, others view testing as primarily negative: an inappropriate means by which to regulate student progress and which provides a basis for punitive actions (Bastion

et. al., 1986). They also reinforce and reward certain values and beliefs while ignoring others. Reform proponents hold that "such tests measure truly worthwhile knowledge" (Popham, 1991: 229), yet never question whether there may be *other* worthwhile knowledge not being tested. There is a simplistic belief that there is a certain immutable content that must be mastered while alternate knowledge can be ignored (Corbett and Wilson, 1990; 1991). This reduction of a whole range of human potentialities to a particular set of knowledge/skills reveals the hegemonic nature of the curriculum by narrowly selecting and incorporating a small base of knowledge from a wide possible area of past and present knowledge - while all else is neglected or excluded (Angus, 1991: 253).

The emphasis on school indicators also distracts attention from the underlying purposes of education. Performance on the tests themselves become the sole purpose of education. Also, the shifting of accountability in schools from being inherent in the process, to one of outputs, is changing schooling into a technical enterprise that can be assessed with technical tools (Salganik, 1985).

These standardized testing policies also prove undesirable since they are unable to accommodate local contextual differences, standardize pedagogy for use with a diverse student population, offer negative incentives for innovation and creativity, and ignore socio-economic variables which may impinge upon the results (Corbett and Wilson, 1990; 1991; Sykes and Elmore, 1989).

The tension between equity and excellence in these reports reflect a basic ideological tension. Reports from the 1960s and 1970s often made the claim that variations in school structure affected student achievement considerably less then did the students socio-

economic status (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks, 1972; Rodriguez, 1990). Therefore, achieving equity in schooling meant trying to overcome socio-economic constraints in an attempt to provide *all* children with success, and prepare them intellectually and socially for economic and social survival. However, the reform view has been that the "decline" in educational standards has been a direct result of permissive schooling and a dilution of quality, engendered by the misguided egalitarian reforms of the '60s and '70s" (Bastion, et al., 1986: 33).

The focus on excellence has displaced equity as a major educational policy. Bacharach (1988: 486-7) noted that the concept of "excellence" is based on a rationalistic-functionalist model of ensuring that there is an adequate pool of well-trained individuals to control society's vital functions, and implies on over-arching concern with making sure that the "best" students reach their full potential. "Excellence" holds the basic functionalist (and capitalist) values of competition, choice and meritocracy; and is held up as the saviour to economic problems by producing the core elite-trained individuals to direct society. Furthermore, the concept of 'equity' has been redefined along functionalist lines to mean universal opportunity and "fair competition," rather than equal participation and equalization of opportunity (Angus, 1991).

The practical result of this focus on excellence and competition will be to lower expectations and limit the chances of the majority of children who are not meeting the highest of performance levels and enlarge the ranks of those who are marginalized. The New Right's economic and social welfare policies have shaped education reform, which has mirrored the Right's ideal of reduced government responsibility for social needs, reinforced

competition and choice, and a general social Darwinist attitude of "survival of the fittest." Furthermore,

> *Aspirations and merit are assumed to bridge the gap between unequal resources and high achievement where students do not display merit, where they do not meet the standards applied evenly to all, it may be concluded that failure is a matter of individual choice or deficiency. What we have arrived at is another incentive-and-punishment system, guided by the "invisible hand" of competition . . . [The] new standards of merit will become, in practice, new mechanisms of stratification and, ultimately, another means of pushing unwanted students out of the system* (Bastion et al.,1986: 22).

This view of education as the cultivation of "individuals" obscures the education system's social functions, as well as ignoring the socio-economic factors which impinge on students. It makes the false assumptions that society is composed of free, equal individuals who are the sole proprietors of their own capabilities, and that their success and acquisition of benefits (or lack thereof) are the direct products of their own initiatives. This focus on 'individualism' distorts the reality of education by not acknowledging

> *that the selection and organization of school knowledge contains dispositions and values that handicap certain groups while they benefit others. To suggest that the challenge of reform is to stimulate the 'innate' capability of every citizen is to ignore the relationship of individuality to socialization and pedagogy to broader structural relations* (Popkewitz, 1991: 151).

Small Rural Schools

The issues affecting small rural schools in Newfoundland are reflective of the plight of small rural schools across Canada and in other western industrialized nations. A substantial *opinion* has been propagated in education reform documents by politicians and senior level administrators that small rural schools, by virtue of their size, are inherently disadvantaged — educationally, economically, and socially — and should, wherever

feasible, be closed and their students educated in larger schools (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987).

The inherent disadvantages of small rural schools are related to their lack of curricular quality, breadth and diversity (Randhawa, 1992; Satterfield and Barker, 1991); low achievement levels (Royal Commision, 1992); low rural student aspirations (MacBrayne, 1987); and a lack of fiscal efficiency and responsibility (Lucas, 1982). Therefore, the reforms that have been proposed as beneficial to rural areas by emphasize consolidation as a means to greater quality, greater efficiency and effectiveness, and equity in resource distribution (Stephens, 1994).

This focus on the benefits of closing small rural schools and consolidation is consistent with Townsend's (1982) account on how to achieve the greatest political expediency in terms of closing a small school. The reform movement has taken advantage of ideological shifts to focus on, and demonstrate, the harm of small schools; advocated revitalization and positive possible opportunities of consolidation, while avoiding negative connotations of closings, and; enlarging the constituency of those who favour small school closings by emphasizing the lost opportunities to society as a whole if they are not closed (Townsend, 1982; see also Behn, 1978).

The view propagated in reform documents is that all the "objective" and "rational" data support the notion that small rural schools are deficient (Lucas, 1982). Any special qualities which are imputed to small rural schools are not substantiated by empirically based facts (Capper, 1993). The contention has been that small rural schools are "frequently supported by some variant of the rural mystique . . . and represent futile reactions, attempts to cling to power privileges when the kind of life in which these [schools] were appropriate

has passed, or is passing" (Lucas, 1982: 261; see also Biddle and Biddle, 1965).

Furthermore, in light of the economic and/or demographic decline of many rural communities, and the inexorable process of centralization and urbanization, it is suggested that rural communities are "essentially insignificant and destined for eventual disappearance" (Lucas, 1982: 257). The notion of rural "resettlement" is rationalized as inevitable. One implication of this view is that policy makers may decide to withhold resources, and services — such as a local school — from communities which are identified as in decline, redistribute resources to communities which are expected to survive and, hence, hasten the demise of less *viable* communities (Randhawa, 1992).

However, many rural education reform critics disavow the conclusions reached in education reform documents. Rosenfeld noted two decades ago how reform proposals themselves were "notably devoid of objective evidence in their own right," and that their general intent " was to 'pyramid' past recommendations, selective research findings, and professional opinions to create an aura of inevitability deemed necessary to establish policy" (1977: 219-220). Current policy statements continue to make "strong assertions about how 'research,' 'the literature,'and 'professional opinion' all point to the overall advantage (educational and economic) of big consolidated schools — without citing any actual references (let alone case-specific evidence) to support their claims" (Sher, 1995; 145).

Proponents of consolidation have continually manipulated the rituals, symbols, and discourse of education in order to delegitimize small rural schooling. Their rationalistic, bureaucratic language controls educational discourse, favouring certain ideas while crowding out others. As such, small schools, and rurality, are construed as problems to be solved

through technical-rational means (Howley and Howley, 1995).

It has long been asserted that "consolidation has not lived up to the claims made by its supporters. By and large, the benefits have been exaggerated, and the liabilities simply ignored" (Sher, 1977b: 58). Even though there is an overwhelming amount of evidence against the establishment of larger schools, this is often ignored in policy statements dealing with consolidation. Randhawa (1992) noted that there has been no systematic research which has unequivocally demonstrated the systematic costs of schools closures or consolidation as a function of size. Yet, policy statements have continued to define effective education in terms of such input criteria as size and comprehensiveness, while advocating increased amounts of student busing, more school closures, and an accelerated rate of consolidation (Randhawa, 1992; Sher, 1995). Whenever the feasibility of specific mergers are contemplated, policy makers have invariably favoured the proposed consolidation: the assumption is that "bigger is better" (Sher, 1986).

The contemporary theoretical underpinnings of the ideology "bigger is better" in education are encapsulated in the seminal study, The American High School Today, released in 1959 by the American education reformer James Conant. In *that* era, educational reform was also deemed imperative in order to increase the economic and technological competitiveness of America. Conant advocated that sufficient size was a prerequisite to improved schooling. As such, "comprehensive" schools were advocated which incorporated the driving principles of urban industrialization — such as standardization, specialization and differentiation of 'roles', and centralization of services in order to provide the necessary selection of programs. Comprehensive schools also entailed a cost-effective and

functionalist view of ideal social arrangements wherein "certain kinds of tasks had to be carried out and that these tasks had to bear a particular relationship to one another . . . the effective and efficient performance and coordination of these tasks required a minimum number of individuals" (Slater, 1989: 211).

For Conant, effective high school education could *only* occur in comprehensive schools which had a minimum of one hundred students per grade. This was later increased to include only "the high school that enrols 750 students" (Conant, 1967). Comprehensive schools also provided a functionalist perspective of equal opportunity. The comprehensive school

> *is responsible for educating the boy who will be an atomic scientist and the girl who will marry at eighteen; the prospective captain of a ship and the future captain of industry. It is responsible for educating the bright and not so bright children with different vocational and professional ambitions and with various motivations. It is responsible, in sum, for providing an appropriate education, both academic and vocational to all young people (Conant, 1967: 3)*

It should be noted that school size is relevant *only* within the context of the ideology of attaining comprehensiveness through social differentiation and standardization. Size, in and of itself, was not the determinant of quality — it was comprehensiveness that was linked to quality. However, school size became linked to quality *through* comprehensiveness. Unfortunately, it is apparent that for education reformers, "school size and not comprehensiveness became the dominant concern . . . Quality came to be viewed as a direct effect of size" (Slater, 1989; 211).

The resulting ideology of reformers in the United States, and also in Newfoundland, is that school

> *quality was, and to a large extent continues to be, equated with quantity,*

> *measured by the number of courses offered, the number of teachers with advanced degrees, and the number of books in the library. With this definition, small rural schools could never be as good as larger urban schools. The logical solution to this "rural school problem" was to make schools bigger, more like urban schools. (Nachtigal, 1992a: 81).*

The unshakeable belief in the virtues of comprehensive schools has led to repeated attempts to consolidate small rural schools. This would benefit society by making education more effective and efficient in terms of both cost and academic achievement. Indeed, in recent times of fiscal restraint, the issue of cost effectiveness in all sectors of government spending, and as such, of the education system, has dominated the reform agenda.

The issue of cost effectiveness in relation to rural education is most often defined in terms of economies of scale. The assumption is that "the principle of economies of scale operating in most economic enterprises also apply to education" (Treslan, 1992: 494). The size of the school and the school district affect the economic efficiency with which they produce educational products. It is given that there are minimum levels of "fixed capital" requirements necessary to provide a basic quality of educational service, and that economies can be realized as the number of students increase per school or district. Alternatively, there are substantial diseconomies associated with small schools and districts because of the necessity to maintain certain levels of fixed capital; as well as required levels of personnel leading to low pupil / teacher ratios (Treslan, 1992).

The typical view of policy makers is that the optimal size of educational institutions must be larger than what is currently the reality in rural areas. Therefore if these institutions were larger then savings could be realized. Our Children, Our Future, stated that

> *economies of scale are savings which come from cost reductions associated with large size operations. In the education system such savings can be realized*

> *through volume discounts, use of excess capacity and allocation of fixed and capital costs over a larger student base . . . [it] implies that financially bigger-is-better (1992: 125).*

The application of the economies of scale principle to education requires the *precise* definition of the function of education, nature of inputs and outputs of school organization, and of school output capacity. The function of schools and districts is to deliver instructional and support services (Cooper et al., 1994). Inputs are the factors of production necessary to generate educational services: personnel, supplies, facilities, and equipment. Outputs are defined as a production function: the number of graduates, scores on achievement tests. The output capacity is based on the maximum number of students who can be offered a *comprehensive* mix of instructional and support services given levels of staff ratios (Tholkes and Sederberg, 1990).

Average costs are measured as the financial value of the inputs which are required to offer a particular service, divided by the number of service units provided, and the aggregate of these average costs is representative of the entire school or district.

> *Economies of scale are realized for a particular service as long as the addition of one more student results in a lower average cost per instructional contact hour or other unit of service. For a school, economies of scale are realized as long as one service experiences lower average total costs by enrolling one more student. Economies of scale are maximized at the point where the combined costs of all services are at their minimum on the school cost scale curve (Tholkes and Sederberg, 1990: 10).*

Furthermore, these U-shaped cost curves are utilized by economists and educational researchers to suggest an "optimal size" for schools (achieved at the bottom of the U-shaped curve). Using this methodology, researchers have *discovered* the optimum size for educational institutions. At the school level, Cohn (1968) claimed that it was 1500 students,

while others have maintained 300 for elementary schools and a range of 400-600 for secondary schools (Cuban 1995; Swanson, 1988). Meanwhile, McKim (1988) advocated a figure of 1000-1500 for Newfoundland schools based solely on cost-efficiency. At the district level, Swanson (1988) has noted that there has been little agreement on optimal size, and that studies have advocated a range of 425 to 10 000 students; while a study in Newfoundland (Roebothan and Warren, 1991) has advocated a minimum size of 2000 students.

Other rationalist studies which have claimed to be more sensitive to the specific variables of rural education (such as transportation costs, and the effects of isolation) have produced other sets of figures on the optimal size for the economic operation of schools. Riew (1986) stated that 1675 students is best; while White and Tweeten (1973) proclaimed it to be 300 pupils in low density areas, and 1075 in high density areas. The underlying assumption in all these studies is that if education is systematically scrutinized for optimal size efficiencies, then increased productivity can be implemented at all levels of the education system.

However, for many rural education researchers, this application of scale economies is not only methodologically specious but also substantially and theoretically hollow. Bell and Sigsworth note that while there may be sharply escalating costs of very small schools below 25 students, there is also "a rapid evaporation of economies once schools move above 100 students" (1987: 186). Goodlad (1984: 309-310) has asserted:

> *What are the defensible reasons for operating an elementary school of more than a dozen teachers and three hundred boys and girls? I can think of none . . . Surely, any arguments for larger schools based on administrative considerations are far outweighed by educational ones against larger schools.*

More fundamentally, economies of scale assume that *inputs* and *outputs* of education can be quantified (as is the case in industries), and that *quality* is held constant. Applying these concepts to a service industry like education — and to real people — is far more problematic, and essentially invalidates the use of this concept in arguing for efficiency. When scale economies are utilized to support arguments for consolidation, it is the specific benefits and costs, as determined by the researcher, that ultimately determines the results. The economic maxim of ceteris paribus (i.e., the assumption that all other things are held constant) unjustly invalidates concerns of efficiency, and quality and thereby disqualify the very strengths of a small school — that by virtue of its size, it is able to offer a quality education (Monk, 1982; Nachtigal, 1992a).

The scale economies of larger schools and districts are often achieved at the expense of efficient and effective production of educational outcomes (Sergiovanni, 1995; Walberg and Fowler, 1987). Sher and Tompkin, (1977: 53) noted that "spending less to attain the same level of performance is efficient. However, spending less to attain less is a corruption of this concept leading to false efficiencies." Even The Royal Commission

> *recognizes that bigger schools and school districts may not always perform as efficiently as smaller ones. Services to remote areas may be more efficiently delivered through small service centres. Thus, there exists a conflict between economies of scale and organizational efficiencies. The basis of this dilemma lies in the existence of both monetary and non-monetary benefits in the education process* (1992; 125).

The crux of this issue is that much of what makes rural schools effective, and of high quality (i.e., its people and interpersonal relations) is qualitative in essence ("non-monetary"), and defies quantitative analysis or statistical description (Hind, 1977; Horn, 1991; McGuire, 1989; Sher, 1977a). Furthermore, "efficiency in education is an elusive

quality. Unit input cannot be related to unit output as clearly as it can in industry" (Rosenfeld, 1977: 246). While economic theories of scale may determine unit costs of producing unit outcomes, in education, there is no general agreement on what constitutes a unit of either quantity or quality; as well as there being numerous outcomes (Fox, 1981; Haas, 1990, 1991). Meanwhile the view of efficiency has been based on quantitative financial data, while more qualitative issues dealing with *quality* have been left outside the model. Thus, it has been asserted that, in relation to its application to small rural schools, the "economy and efficiency argument does not stand up to rigorous scrutiny" (Randhawa, 1992: 108).

Watson (1996: 106-107) noted that "In practice, efficiency is irrelevant to the performance of any organization unless it can be demonstrated that the organization is also effective." Unfortunately for small schools, education reform has focused on quantitative measures of efficiency as defined through scale economies. Thus, when small schools highlight "intangible" qualities, they are labeled economically deficient, rather than merely qualitatively different — or even qualitatively efficient and effective.

Furthermore, the functional perspective characteristic of policy making has stressed universal functional interrelationships (based on urban ideals), rather than being aware of the diacritic aspects of individual schools (Lucas, 1982). The focus on consolidating *all* small schools is misguided. The relationships between educational costs and school size or district size, should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis rather than mandated by province-wide policies (Hobbs, 1991); otherwise, this blanket consolidation will include many schools and communities for which such reform is unnecessary, inappropriate, or even harmful (Brown,

1996; Sher, 1977b).

It has traditionally been the assumption that students in large comprehensive schools outperform their peers in small rural schools. A review of the literature and studies pre-dating the 1970s confirms the view that pupils in larger schools have higher levels of achievement than those in smaller schools (Bognar and Martin, 1980; Griffen, Richardson and Lane, 1994; Segars, 1993).

However, more recently, a number of studies have concluded that there is no significant difference between small school and large school achievement scores (Government of Alberta, 1979; Haller, Monk and Tien, 1993; Melnick, Shibles and Gable, 1987; National Center for Education Statistics, 1991; United States Department of Education, 1994). Furthermore, other recent studies have concluded that students in smaller schools actually outperform those in larger schools (Edington and Gardener, 1984; Fox, 1981; Haller et al, 1992; Jewel, 1989; McCracken and Barcinas, 1991; Reck, 1987).

These contradictory findings stem from the influence of socio-economic status variables in the studies. The important variable for consideration is not school *size*, but student attributes as a function of school *location*. "The effect of social class on student performance is especially germane for rural areas" (Hobbs, 1991: 157). Socio-economic factors — such as status of parent occupation, parental education level, parental expectations, and geographic location of residence — are far more significant in determining student achievement than school size (Alberta Education, 1984; Hanushek, 1981; Hutto, 1990; Moreau, 1987; Thompson, 1994; Walberg and Fowler, 1987; Wendling and Cohen, 1981; White, 1982). Quite often, what is "being measured in rural-urban difference studies

is socio-economic status," and not the effect of school size on achievement (Edington and Koehler, 1987: 5; see also, Appalachia Educational Laboratories, 1988; Edington and Martellaro, 1985; Nachtigal, 1992).

When studies do not control for the influence of socio-economic status, they tend to find — as is the case in older studies — that there is little difference in achievement between large and small schools, or that, more often, large schools outperform small schools. However, recent studies highlight that "small schools and districts may generally produce superior results once the effects of SES are acknowledged" (Howley, 1989a). Howley and Eckman claim that newer studies which employ "better methods" show "a negative relationship between school (or district) size and student achievement" (1997: 30). For example, United States Department of Education (1994: 57) states that "small scale schooling has a positive effect on student achievement, while large schooling has a decidedly negative impact, particularly where low SES students are involved." Consolidating schools to make them larger will have a negative effect on student achievement if their socio-economic status remains low (Howley, 1989b; Monk, 1991). Furthermore, given similar school finance levels and academic background, disadvantaged students are generally served better in smaller schools and have a higher level of achievement than if they were in large schools; while advantaged students are better served and have higher levels of achievement in larger schools (Friedkin and Necochea, 1988; Berlin and Cienkus, 1989; Walberg, 1989; Webb, 1989).

A frequently highlighted deficiency of rural schooling is that students have lower aspirations than their urban counterparts (MacBrayne, 1987; Smithmier, 1994; United States

Department of Education, 1994). Consolidating schools into larger regional centres — where student aspirations may be higher — is suggested as a means to improving student aspirations , and to develop human capital for the benefit of rural communities, and, more specifically for macro-economic needs. However, Haller and Virkler (1993) suggest that low aspirations will continue to exists as long as there are few economic opportunities in students home community, regardless of which school they attend.

Furthermore, the emphasis on improving human capital in rural areas encourages students to abandon their identification with the community — the primary social unit becomes the individual, not families, communities, or other traditional groups (DeYoung and Howley, 1990). For education reformers who stress human capital formation, community related concerns of rural schools (in opposition to national concerns) and other characteristics of rural schools "appear to represent structural barriers for human capital and modernization theories" (DeYoung, 1991: 315). Meanwhile, the economic problems of rural areas are defined as a function of too many people for the available jobs and opportunities in rural communities. This implies that the solution to rural economic problems is out-migration. "People must go where the jobs are" (Hay and Basran, 1992: 271). This is reinforced by the uncritical emphasis on human resource development with little regard to the availability of local employment. "A skilled, educated workforce is of little value unless there are opportunities for application of this human capital" (Falk and Lyson, 1991: 18). Focusing on human resource development, without addressing structural factors that restrict opportunities will not improve economic conditions of rural areas, but will encourage out-migration to areas where this "human capital" can be utilized (Huang and Howley, 1991).

When education reform is placed in the context of rural schooling, the prime issue is obviously one of conflict between urban and rural interests and values. The interests that ultimately get served are those of urban residents which influence the economic and political spheres of the province. According to the official urban view, small rural schools are characterized as being economically inefficient; not offering an adequately broad curriculum or employing enough specialized teachers; not instilling an appropriate atmosphere of competition or providing enough social and academic stimulus, and; generally providing an inferior educational experience to students (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987). Meanwhile, in the general "grassroots" rural view on education, small schools are valued because of the individualized attention that can be given to pupils; the personal values of teachers such as their commitment to students; and the co-operative atmosphere fostered in the school. Moreover, the local small school is recognized aa a vital component in maintaining community viability in maintaining its own school.

Though Newfoundland is still predominantly a rural society, the locus of power, both economic and political, has always resided in the few urban areas of the province. To urban-based education reformers the problems of education are often equated with the "problem" of rural school students. The bureaucratic model developed on the basis of the city school has become the rationale, and the blueprint for the consolidation of small rural schools (Hillman, 1994; Leo-Nyquist, 1993; Wilkinson, 1991).

> *The rural school has been judged in comparison with the large urban school. Whether the comparison has been implicit or (increasingly in recent years) explicit, it has been urban schooling which has been used as the norm, the indicator of what schools can and should be like. Measured against the yardstick which is derived from urban practices, rural schools have often been defined as a 'problem' to which the recommended solution has been that they should be*

> *closed, or that the pattern of rural schooling should more closely approximate that found in urban areas. The possibility that urban models are not particularly appropriate in rural contexts is an idea that has been rarely entertained in official reports (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987: 55).*

Thus, a reified model of schooling has emerged — one which suggests that all rural schools should be miniature replicas of urban schools (DeYoung and Boyd, 1986; Nelson, 1994). As such, education reform has been preoccupied with the imposition of what Tyack (1974) defined as the "one best system." In the reform movement, "a perspective often prevails that there is 'one best way to do things,' and that this way is the "city way"" (Knight, 1993: 307). Furthermore, the closure and rationalization of small rural schools is another means of providing greater resources to the preferred urban schools (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987).

Breaking the link between small rural schools and their local community, through the reorganization of education and the imposition of an urban educational structure, is consistent with the needs of the dominant urban industrial society (Elliot, 1994; Hobbs, 1992; Parks, Ross and Just, 1982). Rural schools are being forced to inculcate their students with urban values, aspirations and skills (Rosenfeld and Sher, 1977). In addition, professional educators are increasingly expected to educate rural "students for furthering careers in the city . . . and that the expressed traditional values of rural residents are illegitimate" (DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995: 1).

As such, the education system acts as a sorting machine, whereby allegiance to local communities is eroded in favour of pursuing urban occupational possibilities; and in preferred service to the macro-economic needs of the province or nation (Bryant and Grady, 1990). Urban-modeled consolidated schools are used to impart the ideals of flexibility and

mobility to rural student, as well as to "overcome, or at least attenuate, local and regional and cultural dispositions in order to build a unified, national constituency and to transit psychological capacities required for participation in industrial society" (Gamradt and Avery, 1992: 61).

> *Modern urban models of education are symptomatic of the severance and displacement of people from their own roots, traditions and places; of the transmogrification of people into community-less individuals, well-trained to be mobile, and available to be fitted anywhere, to perform whatever '"job" the industrial system pays them to do* (Prakash, 1994: 137).

As a result, rural areas are not receiving an adequate return on their "investments" in education. They are producing students who will have skills for urban areas, and who must relocate to urban areas in order to utilize their skills (Badiuk and Cook, 1976; Haller and Virkler, 1993; Hobbs, 1991, 1994; Seal and Harmon, 1995; Theobald and Nachtigal, 1990). The curriculum, implicit and explicit, creates an urban-industrial discipline as it transcends rural concerns of family and community by socializing students to live in impersonal and diffuse social worlds, oriented towards achievement, individual isolation, and accountability.

When individuals compose the primary social group, the priority of families, communities, or other traditional groupings in the local context is undermined in favour of the pursuit of individual achievement on a provincial/national scale. The bonds connecting youth to rural concerns, the local community, and the local economy, are removed and they are free to contribute to the urban-industrial needs of the state. Consequently, the goal of government policy is, too often, excellence and maximum efficiency of the urban industrial sector, at the expense of equity for rural areas (Falk and Lyson, 1991). As Peshkin noted, what is good for the nation, or province, as a whole may not necessarily be good for the

community. "Moreover, what is good for a community is not inevitably good for the nation"(1978: 201). Thus, education reform has been propagated based on aggregate national and provincial economic needs, regardless of the negative impact this may have on specific schools and communities — such as those found in rural areas (DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995; Herzog and Pittman, 1995; Hobbs, 1992; Theobald, 1992; Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). For example, DeYoung and Howley (1990: 83) noted that

> *consolidation and the eclipse of community are related features of contemporary economic development. In rural areas, consolidated schools may typically be "better" only in the sense that they serve as more useful tools for national and international economic growth. But this growth simultaneously challenges the viability of local communities and "provides opportunities" for greater global inequality.*

For rural education theorists, and especially for rural community residents, the rural school is depicted as representing its rural community (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987). Community schools can function as catalysts to fuller community life by providing a source of pride, local identity and social cohesion, as well as being valued for their capacity to support social relationships and reflect the local culture (Ayalon, 1995; Haas and Lambert, 1995). Thus, rural residents distrust reforms imposed from outside which are aimed at alleviating the deprivations of rural life by changing the structure of schools, or of removing them from the community (Seal and Harmon, 1995).

However, it is frequently claimed that "the overriding concern in the closure of small schools must be in consideration of the school as an educational institution and not as a community centre or as an adherence to tradition" (Riggs, 1985: 52). Issues related the community concerns are not addressed when considering school consolidation. For reformers, those that oppose consolidation are accused of a preoccupation with the

community rather than the more pressing needs of students and the school (Peshkin, 1982; Towers, 1990). Consequently, the oppositional views of local community residents are ignored, as are the social costs of removing a school from a community (Randhawa, 1992).

This perspective of educational reform documents, ideologically neutral and pragmatic as it may claim to be, attacks a fundamental assumption of rural education: "That rural schools are cultural centres of the community and not just centres of pedagogy" (DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995: 1). Thus, the imposition of bureaucratic and technical arguments to justify consolidation represent an attempt to destroy what is often rural residents' "only sphere of public influence and last vestige of control over their children's educational socialization" (Sher, 1977b: 161).

The importance of the tight integration between many rural schools and community life cannot be disregarded. Communities and schools are mutually reinforcing. To remove the school from the community would alter this reciprocal balance and be destructive to the community. The presence of the local small school helps to ensure the demographic balance and economic viability of many rural communities. The loss of the local school is also a blow to the long-term survival of the community (Howley and Howley, 1995; Peshkin, 1982; Sher and Tompkins, 1977). For rural residents, the prospect of school consolidation represents "another nail in the coffin of rural life" (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987: 204).

Furthermore, if the very survival of the community is not threatened then, at the very least, the traditions and *cultural* viability of communities is affected by consolidation. Fanning (1995) claims that genuine cultures have a predominant influence over the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of their members. In the rural context, when schools are

consolidated and centralized, this serves to separate schools from the local communities and contributes to the weakening of local culture. A child in a weakened culture, or in a community with low morale due to the loss of its local school, has a reduced potential to learn; which negates any positive benefit of consolidation (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987). Thus, "the sound development of children is closely linked to the well-being of communities. Consolidating schools often destroys these links" (Fanning, 1995: 4).

In imposing urban schools structures on rural areas, and in advocating the consolidation of as many small rural schools as possible, reformers are advocating that there will be larger benefits in terms of desired educational and economic outcomes for all. But the negative costs identified — in terms of community dislocation — are potentially far in excess of any benefit (Sher and Tompkins, 1977). In contrast to the entire foundation of the reform movement in relation to rural education and rural communities, Sher asks the alternate question: "What's the point of pushing an industrial model of schooling on pre-industrial communities that must prepare students for a post-industrial world?" (1995: 145).

While previous sections of this study defended of the quality of small rural schools in relation to urban schools, and advocated that small rural schools are *not inferior* in comparison to large comprehensive schools, it is also apparent that there are certain advantages to "smallness." The notion that small schools are inadequate merely because their size precludes them from *being* comprehensive is incorrect. Small schools, which may only have 100 students *do* have sufficient members to provide the "comprehensive" curriculum that is often stated to be lacking (Howley, 1994; United States Department of Education, 1994).

More importantly, small schools have certain characteristics which make them *superior* to larger schools. These advantages are most often qualitative in nature, unamenable to quantification, and subject to disregard by rationalistic education reformers. Bell and Sigsworth (1987: 251) have argued that

> *small rural schools do have distinctive characteristics which can reasonably be thought of as potential advantages if we can escape from the assumption that the typically urban model represents the 'one best system' . . . [S]o long as small schools serving rural populations are thought of as simply smaller versions of large urban schools, and are expected to function in the same way, they will continue to appear educationally deficient.*

Quality schooling, as defined through effective schools research, is consistent with small scale schooling. Small schools are described as being inherently more effective than large schools (Verstegen, 1991; Wiles, 1995). "The consistent elements found in effective schools are both institutional and interpersonal, and are present in many rural schools as a function of their unique characteristics, size, and strong links between rural schools and their communities" (Haas, 1991: 429).

Obviously, not all small schools are effective schools — but they do have the *potential* to be effective, *if* their inherent structural advantages are recognized and emphasized. Small school advantages that have been identified include its superior instructional environment: small class size, a safe and secure environment, individualized attention and close student/teacher relationships, and teacher knowledge of individual student needs. There is also greater opportunity for students to participate in a wider variety of settings: in academic and extracurricular activities, and to assume more responsibility and important positions in the classroom and in the school (Alberta Education, 1984; Riggs, 1987). Furthermore, more time is focused on learning and working, and the opportunity also

exists to effectively integrate the curriculum into the community and various life functions.

On the organizational level, opportunities exists for purposeful leadership, for participation in leadership by teachers, for high levels of collaborative planning and collegial relationship, as well as local autonomy to innovate. Meanwhile, community presence in the school can be easily accommodated within a small rural school structure.

These characteristics of high quality, effective schooling are all consistent with small school structure and characteristics (regardless of whether or not particular small schools *are* effective). What *is* important is that small schools *can be* effective, and *can* provide a quality education within their current structure. High levels of achievement for *all* students are possible within these effective schools. Thus, the relationship of school size to educational effectiveness has been re-evaluated to favour small school structures. As Goodlad (1984: 309) noted, "It is not impossible to have a good large school, it is simply more difficult." Therefore education reform which steadfastly proclaims the consolidation of small schools as a panacea for the "problems" of rural education may be proposing misguided solutions, trying to *solve* the wrong "problems," and may be exacerbating any real limitations with which rural students are confronted (Stephens, 1987).

The issue of school consolidation is often presented as being an innately economic and political one, not an educational one (Sher, 1977a, 1977b). The real issue in proposing consolidation for fiscal efficiencies is not necessarily for economic savings, but for *control* of how revenues are spent (Hobbs, 1992; Rosenfeld, 1977). Therefore, in relation to education reform, "educational control, rather than educational quality, is of most importance in the 'appropriate' school-size debate" (Smith and DeYoung, 1988: 9).

One significant aspect of reforms aimed at consolidating schools is that it is opposed most strongly by those members of society on whom it will have the greatest impact. Meanwhile, among those which will not be directly affected by school closures — educational processionals, urban "taxpayers," and other middle class interests — there is an unshakeable consensus on the value and importance of consolidation. Yet, this unproblematic consensus on the value and importance of consolidation is within "a group normally prone to widespread dissension on even the most trivial issues and policies" (Sher, 1977a: 161). "In this sense, rural consolidation is a classic example of an externally instigated and imposed reform — that is, something done *to* communities rather than by them" (Sher, 1977b).

This conflict of interests on consolidation has been formulated by reformers as a struggle between "enlightened and progressive" members of society versus "ignorant and rustic" counterparts; or of professional educators and experts versus amateurs and dilettantes (Sher, 1977a). In effect, the consolidation controversy is a function of class interests. The view of reformers is that they, as professionals, are "better able to implement the desires of the people than the people themselves" (Rosenfeld, 1977: 251). Meanwhile, the traditional values expressed by rural residents are portrayed as illegitimate, and it is the duty of the "professionals" to convince the rural populace of the benefit of consolidation (DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995; Wright and Inman, 1988).

Furthermore, the need for consolidation is presented as a consensus view, and that it is a local choice, when in fact, no "choice" has been given to rural residents. The consensus, and real impetus for consolidation, however, comes directly from the professional reformers

- not from local residents in rural areas (DeYoung and Howley, 1990; Sher, 1977b). In light of this consensus by educational reformers on the benefits of consolidation, and their disregard of counter-arguments, Sher (1977a: 161) has posed the question: "Why does consolidation continue to be advocated not only in the staunch opposition by the alleged beneficiaries, but also despite evidence and experience that refutes the rational arguments for it?"

Consequently, DeYoung and Howley (1990: 66) illuminated this continuing state of affairs and asserted that policies on "school reform and school improvement are hardly stories about how to best structure learning opportunities for children. Rather, they are stories about the changing political economy." The emphasis on rural school consolidation stems from political and ideological motives - not pedagogical concerns. DeYoung and Howley suggest

> *that political and economic circumstances provide more compelling explanations of school consolidation than advertised curricular, pedagogical or administrative benefits . . . the latter ("technical") arguments - tiresomely repeated in the current round of school closings - actually serve to conceal the social, political, and economic agendas intended to change the behavior of the affected parties (communities, parents and students). (1990: 70).*

The Newfoundland Context

The most recent era of educational restructuring in Newfoundland has been largely, determined by the economic imperatives affecting the province. Although the history of the province, its economy, and the education system are more fully described in the following chapters of this study, it should be noted here that Newfoundland has long faced numerous structural problems in terms of economic development and unemployment (Parsons, 1978).

However, Newfoundland, with its strong resource base, has *attempted* to develop its infrastructure, upgrade its education system and retrain the labour force for industrial occupations, relocate outport fishing communities to urban centres to create both a labour pool and domestic market, and provide numerous provisions and incentives for industry to locate in the province. And yet, the net results of these efforts, by the 1980s, was increasing unemployment and a lowering of standards of living compared to mainland Canada (Marchak, 1988).

Lacking the local financial capital base for the needed greater investments in the economic structure of the province (Marchak, 1988), the focus has firmly shifted to education as a means to produce a trained, well-skilled, compliant, adaptable, and flexible workforce imbued with a spirit of competition and entrepreneurship which will lead to economic development (McCann, 1994, 1995). It was claimed that "Newfoundlanders have not always prepared themselves educationally for the job demand" (Parsons, 1978: 19). Thus, it was suggested, and continues to be suggested, that there needed to be more coordination between the education system and the business sector, and that the education system must respond to what the business sector considers to be the skills and methods necessary to educate students for future economic development (Canning, 1993).

The worsening economic conditions of the early 1980s (Warren, 1983) and, especially, "the dismal picture of economic decline during the period from the mid-1980s to 1992" (McCann, 1994: 229), acted as catalysts for reform in Newfoundland. By 1986 the fishery was only directly employing 10% of the workforce, while "22% of the labour force was unemployed" (1994: 223). Government reports on the nature of the economy, beginning

in 1986 with the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, and continuing to the present, have operationalized the ideological position that the failure of the economy is a result of character traits of the workforce and deficiencies in the education system (Canning, 1993). There was an underlying premise that there were fundamental problems in Newfoundland in terms of poverty, unemployment, dependence on government, and a lack of initiative and education to meet the needs of a "post-industrial society" (McCann, 1995: 14), rather than "any failings in the socioeconomic structure of society or the policies (or lack of policies) of governments"(1994: 235).

This economic reform movement in Newfoundland was based on a revised version of the human capital theory and ideology of the 1960s, embraced New Right ideology, and owed "much to the education reform movement of the 1980s in the U.S.A., with its plethora of reports, by government and business people, on education and the economy" (McCann, 1994: 232; 1995). Education was identified as a critical component in rising to the challenge of a new globally competitive economy, and as such, education had to be more closely linked to the workplace.

Consequently, education reform, as constituted from the report of the Royal Commission on Education (1992), has made the same connection between education and the economy and has given a "somewhat over-enthusiastic reception to the ideology" of the economic reform literature (McCann, 1994: 235). Critics claim that this ideology — inherent in such proposals as increasing global competition, the necessity of creating a skilled and adaptable workforce, and the growing interdependence of education and the economy — has been unnecessarily incorporated into the foundations of Newfoundland's

education reform movement in the 1990s (McCann, 1994, 1995).

The general population of the province had been satisfied with the education system prior to the movement to reform the education system. For example, Warren (1983) found that 80% of the population was satisfied with the education system, while for Graesser (1988) this number was 90%. However, those who were *not* satisfied with the education system and were involved in the production of economic, and eventually, educational reform reports seemed to have their own clear vision and agenda as to the direction toward which education, culture, polity, economics, and society in general should move. Singh (1991a: 8) noted that these "reformers" were "individuals in certain circles who occupy top positions in various communities, professional organizations and the state bureaucracy."

The "elites" of Newfoundland society emphasized productivity, competitiveness, efficiency, and performance accountability which was often "based on the cost-benefit approach demanded by business leaders" (McCann, 1994: 237). However, there was little interaction, or conversation between these "experts" — especially in the fields of business, academics and politics — and ordinary citizens and educators in the province in relation to the reforms that were to be enacted (Singh, 1991a).

In the province of Newfoundland, there has long existed a social and economic divide between the merchant/administrative elites concentrated in St. John's, and the remainder of the province which has relied on primary resources (especially the fishery) for their economic survival. In effect, there exists a class division between urban and rural Newfoundland. Thus, in the past, and continuing to the present, "a form of internal colonialism was evident in the dominance of St. John's and its immediate environs over the

island's economic and cultural life" (McCann, 1994: 244). This dominance also includes educational policy formation, wherein the elites in St. John's have monopolized policy making in regards to "secondary education, teacher training, and the other higher quality types of public elementary and other schools" (1994: 244).

The most influential sector of St. John's "elites" has most recently been the corporate sector. Their interests in education reform have revolved around the priority of "the development of human resources to their fullest potential" (Fortis Education Foundation, 1996), and for the business sector to be able to recruit adaptable workers who will be able to meet global standards of excellence necessary in the new post-industrial economy. The business organization which has most fully articulated its position on educational reform, and which has had a discernibly large impact on education policy, is the St. John's Board of Trade.

While the mandate of the St. John's Board of Trade is to voice the concerns of business in relation to economic development, it has also identified education as a means to economic development. As such, the "issue of education has become a key concern of the Board of Trade" (St. John's Board of Trade, 1991: 1). The Board noted that in a post-industrial age wherein Newfoundland has to compete in a "new global economy," education is the key component to creating a highly skilled workforce that will allow business to remain competitive and meet the future demands of the marketplace (Business News, 1990b, 1992a, 1994b). Furthermore, the education system needs to become more efficient and cost-effective, and "more responsible to the skill requirements of the business community" (1990a: 6; 1990b)

The Board also expressed concerns that, "compared to other Canadian provinces, Newfoundland has the lowest level of educational attainment and the lowest level of economic performance" (Business News, 1990b: 26); and therefore, "our existing education system is not meeting the demands of our current economy" (1991a: 6). To remedy this situation, the overriding priority of education should be "quality, and not accessibility at any cost (1991b: 26). The education system needs to become more competitive, with a curriculum geared toward math, science and technology leading to human resource and business development.

Furthermore, the Board has called for a "rationalized" education system with fewer schools and a non-denominational education system. The Board of Trade has had a "direct influence on government by means of annual meetings with cabinet ministers to present pre-budget and general policy briefs, special meetings with cabinet committees, and luncheon meetings with the Premier and so on" (McCann, 1995: 17). In fact, the Board has often mentioned that it is "very gratifying to see our concerns actively addressed" by the provincial government (Business News, 1990a).

The Board and other business interests were influential exponents of reforming the education system. They were so encouraged by the establishment of the Royal Commission on Education in 1991 that they made a detailed submission to the Commission. In analyzing this submission, McCann was led to the conclusion that, "the similarity of Board of Trade positions to government positions is remarkable" (1995: 17).

In this submission, the Board identified various deficiencies and structural problems in the education system. It asked this question: "If our education system is failing us in

meeting our current demands, how will it respond to the demands of the future?" (St. John's Board of Trade, 1991: 5). It also suggested that there were far too many small schools in the province, which has led to a duplication of services, financial inefficiencies, an unnecessary dilution of resources and specialized staff, and an over-administered education system.

According to the Board, these deficiencies have led to the production of students who do not have the skills needed in the marketplace, have "poorly developed work and study habits, and are not highly motivated" (1991: 14). Essentially, they are not "in tune with the realities of the labour market" (1991: 8). Relying on various economically based reports, such as those from the Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Conference Board of Canada, and the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, the Board of Trade concluded that the low levels of education in Newfoundland are a definite detriment to business. The Board averred that the deficiencies in the education system "can be linked to some extent to our low GNP per capita, our high unemployment and indeed the economic disparity which continues to plague our Province" (1991: 8-9).

Consequently, the Board recommended that not only should economic development be explicitly recognized as a goal of the education system, but also that business should be playing a more active role in the education system, since this is "vital to achieving the economic security of our Province and its people" (1991: 7). Skilled human capital, that is, a properly educated and flexible workforce, will ultimately fuel economic development. The Board suggested that in order to achieve these goals, an effective and efficient education system "must be publically and financially accountable" (1991: 12) to society and, especially, to business: particularly through the use of more standardized testing procedures.

The school system needs to be "rationalized" and the number of schools and school boards reduced. This would allow for the remaining schools to hire well-trained and specialized teachers — especially in the areas of math, science and technology, which are the subjects proclaimed to be most "relevant to the market place" (1991: 22). Finally, the Board claimed that there was too much emphasis on certain subjects, such as language. Instead, there should be more emphasis on the areas of math, science, technology and entrepreneurial studies, and that "there is a need to modify the curriculum so as to provide increased instruction on those skills which are in increasing demand in a future workplace" (1991: 16).

The significance of these statements and submissions by the St. John's Board of Trade became clear once the Royal Commission on Education was released in 1992. It became readily apparent that the educational reform recommendations from government did "embody many of these policy directives on education and the economy (and not a little of their wording), as the Board of Trade has noted" (McCann, 1995: 17).

Indeed, the Board of Trade was pleased to announce that most of its recommendations "were addressed in the Commission's final report" (St. John's Board of Trade, 1993: 17), and that it fully supported the direction of proposed educational reforms (Business News, 1994a). More specifically, it was proclaimed that the Board fully endorsed, and was "extremely pleased" (St. John's Board of Trade, 1993: 17) with the recommendations that were reached, "in concert with the Board of Trade recommendations" (Business News, 1992b: 4), in terms of the rationalization of schools and school boards in order to achieve financial efficiencies. But, even tighter and more direct control over the education budget and policy by the Provincial Government would be a step in the right

direction (St. John's Board of Trade, 1994).

Thus, the Board viewed the emphasis on more "accountability," from a financial as well as a performance perspective," as welcome news, and was "anxious for specific action on these issues" (St. John's Board of Trade, 1993: 18). The Board favoured the structural and organizational reforms proposed, especially those dealing with the removal of the denominational education system. It was also pleased with the recommendations calling for the sharing of resources, closure of non-viable schools, and reducing the number of school boards. This would help "mitigate difficulties created by the many isolated rural schools in the province" (1993: 18-19).

The link between education levels and economic prosperity was also firmly endorsed by the Board and embraced by the Royal Commission. The Board was further encouraged by recommendations made concerning human capital development by the Royal Commission, and even more so by similar "assurances in the Strategic Economic Plan that the Province will undertake initiatives to ensure that the system is more responsive to the changing labour market demands" (1993: 17).

As a result, reforms regarding the curriculum reflected this belief in human capital development. The emphasis on science, math, technology and entrepreneurship — representing the "type of courses they [students] should be taking at school" (Business News, 1994b: 11) — were directed at improving business growth and economic development (1993).

Both the Board of Trade and the Royal Commission on Education favoured "more rigid testing in the school system to measure and improve achievement levels" as a means to ultimately raising performance levels (St. John's Board of Trade, 1993: 18). This is to be

enhanced by a greater emphasis on "healthy competition" within the school that will instill the adaptive skills that will be needed in a globally competitive marketplace.

However, critics have claimed that this "flexibility" has proved to be little more than a synonym for "insecurity." Society needs to be exceptionally wary of the claims of self-serving interests, even those with the ear of the government, such as the St. John's business community. This is especially true of "interests" that would view Newfoundland's students less as "human beings with creative abilities and potentialities, than as future productive units in the economic process, with roles and functions circumscribed by the imperatives of the market" (McCann, 1995: 18). Careful consideration has to be given to those statements claiming that it is within the capacity of any education system to realize the lofty economic goals linked to it.

Although Newfoundland has remained a predominantly rural province there has been little rural economic development policy that has been successfully directed at rural communities. The rural economy has remained resource-based, and it is often accepted that those with higher level skills and education will migrate to urban areas where there is a greater earning potential and more employment in general (Bulcock and Dawe, 1996; Singh, 1991b). Consequently, many rural residents continue to wonder if they "will be able to remain in the communities where they want to live. Powerful state agents would prefer them to move" (Sinclair, 1992: 21).

Due to various disadvantages, such as isolation and a "deprived environment" of restricted cultural and economic opportunities, that residents of "rural areas have long suffered rural deprivations" (Warren, 1982: 226; Nagy, Drost and Banfield, 1982). Rural

students and small schools are also affected by these rural deprivations. While education reforms have been proffered in the expectation of revitalizing the Newfoundland economy, the deficiencies of rural areas have never been adequately addressed so that rural-urban differences could be reduced.

Standard procedures addressing the needs of rural students have been to advocate school consolidation. The result of this policy over the past three decades can be seen in the steady reduction of the number of schools in the province: in 1966 there were 1216 schools, by 1986 there were only half this number at 607, and in 1995 this was further reduced to 479 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1995b; McCann, 1994). Almost all of the schools which have been closed were located in rural areas and could be classified as a "small school." It should be noted that a "small school" is defined by the provincial government as the following:

> 3(a) a primary and elementary school in which the enrolment divided by the number of grades is not greater than twelve
>
> (b) an all grade central or regional high school whose enrolment divided by twenty five is not greater than the number of grades in the school
>
> This translates into schools in the following categories being identified as small:
>
> (a) K-6 < 84 pupils; (b) 7-12 < 150 pupils; and (c) K-12 < 325 pupils
>
> (Rideout, 1996: 4).

Despite the ongoing policy of rationalization (i.e., school closures and consolidation), however, the majority of schools in the province are still located in rural regions. **Table 1**

shows that over 68% of all the schools in the province are located in rural area. With the exception of the Avalon peninsula (in which a majority of schools are located in urban areas), the remainder of the province is overwhelmingly rural and a vast majority of schools are, consequently, located in rural communities. Also, there are 179 schools (37.4% of all schools) which are classified as "small schools" by the government. These small schools are mostly found in rural areas. There are only 15 urban small schools in the province. Consequently, the issues of rural schooling and small schools are inextricably linked — you cannot conceive of one without the other. A broad study on rural education must address the issue of small schools, just as a broad study of small scale schooling must address issues of ruralness and rural communities. In a "non-urban" province like Newfoundland the existence of "small rural schools" is an ontological given.

In **Table 2**, the enrolment figures for Newfoundland are provided. In terms of urban/ rural levels of enrolment, there are slightly more students attending urban schools than rural ones (and the trend has been to increase the proportion of urban students to rural ones for a number of years). Furthermore, even though there are so many small schools in the province, in absolute enrollment numbers there are only 18 694 students (16.4% of the total) attending small schools.

For the purposes of this study, it is also necessary to delineate how the terms "urban" and rural are defined. While Newfoundland is often conceived as a rural province, the majority of its citizens now reside in urban areas (refer to **Table 3** for a listing of Newfoundland's urban centres). In presenting its statistical data on education, the Government also provides a "Definition of Urban" (1992-1993: 153). The term "urban"

Table 1

A Regional Profile of the Number of Urban and Rural Schools, and the Number of Small Schools in Newfoundland, 1994-1995[1]

	Region					
	Avalon	South	Central	West	Labrador	Total
Number of Schools						
All Schools	152	58	133	98	38	479
Urban	80 (53.9%)	6 (10.3%)	28 (21.1%)	24 (24.5%)	12 (31.6%)	152 (31.7%)
Rural	70 (46.1%)	52 (89.7%)	105 (78.9%)	74 (75.5%)	26 68.4%)	327 (68.3%)
Small Schools	21 (13.8%)	34 (58.6%)	57 (42.9%)	46 (46.9%)	21 (55.3%)	179 (37.4%)
Urban	4 (2.6%)	1 (1.7%)	5 (3.8%)	3 (3.1%)	2 (5.3%)	15 (3.1%)
Rural	17 (11.2%)	33 (56.9%)	52 (39.1%)	43 (43.9%)	19 (50.0%)	164 (34.2%)

[1]Source: *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995) Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 18.*

Table 2

A Regional Profile of School Enrollment in Urban and Rural Schools, and the Enrollment of Number of Small Schools in Newfoundland, 1994-1995[2]

	Region					
	Avalon	South	Central	West	Labrador	Total
Enrolment						
All Schools	49 950	11 059	26 574	19 417	7 010	114 010
Urban	35 831 (71.7%)	2 441 (22.1%)	7 240 (27.2%)	8 334 (42.9%)	4 436 (63.3%)	58 282 (51.1%)
Rural	14 119 (28.3%)	8 618 (77.9%)	19 334 (72.8%)	11 083 (57.1%)	2 574 (36.7%)	55 728 (48.9%)
Small Schools	2 116 (4.2%)	3 969 (35.9%)	6 358 (23.9%)	4 651 (24.0%)	1 600 (22.8%)	18 694 (16.4%)
Urban	176 (0.4%)	56 (0.5%)	562 (2.1%)	147 (0.8%)	373 (5.3%)	1 313 (1.2%)
Rural	1 940 (3.9%)	3 913 (35.4%)	5 797 (21.8%)	4504 (23.2%)	1 227 (17.5%)	17 381 (15.2%)

[2]Source: *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995) Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 18.*

Table 3

Census Population of Newfoundland, 1991[3]

Type of Area: Community		Population
URBAN		
Census Metropolitan Area		
St. John's		171 859
Census Agglomerate		
Corner Brook		33 790
Gander		11 053
Grand Falls - Windsor		25 285
Labrador City		11 392
Community with 5 000 or More		
Bay Roberts		5 474
Carbonear		5 259
Channel - Port aux Basques		5 644
Happy - Goose Bay		8 610
Marystown		6 739
Stephenville		7 621
	Total Urban	292 726
"NON-URBAN"		
All Rural Communities	**Total Rural**	275 748
	Total All	568 726

[3]Source: *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995) Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 18.*

includes Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), Census Agglomeration (CA), and other communities which have over 5000 residents. A CMA is defined as the main labour market area of an urban area of at least 100 000 population, based on the previous census. A CA is defined as the main labour market area of an urban area of at least 10 000, based on the previous census. However, no definition is provided to describe "rural." Whatever does not fit into these "urban" categories then, are, by default, rural. Furthermore, these definitions of urban and rural communities (less than 5 000 inhabitant) help delimit what the terms "urban" and "rural" mean in the Newfoundland context.

Finally, a seminal study on the existence of rural schools in Newfoundland was the Report of the Small Schools Study Project, by Riggs (1987), which presented recommendations to the government. The study's stated objective was to "investigate problems peculiar to small schools with an aim toward developing proposals to enhance educational opportunities for students in these schools" (Riggs, 1987: 3). Numerous benefits of small schools dealing with greater student/teacher involvement, and superior instructional environment were identified. Also, various limitations of small schools were identified: a lack of resources, facilities, specialized teaching staff; an inability to offer a comprehensive and quality programs of courses; a less positive attitude toward education by small rural school students, and; the fact the small schools are more expensive to operate then larger ones" (Riggs, 1987: 11).

Riggs also addressed the level of achievement in small schools. He noted that due to the effects of socioeconomic status on levels of student achievement, the comparison on achievement is inconclusive. Yet, Riggs stated that despite inconclusive empirical evidence,

achievement "does tend to favour large schools" (1987: 50).

Riggs noted that in many small communities in Newfoundland, the school is the centre of the community and the "catalyst which promotes harmony within the community" (1987: 50). A myriad of possibly negative sociological and psychological effects on children can result from moving them out of their community to a school in another community. However, Riggs proposed that since a "quality" education program could *not* be offered in many small schools as they were constituted, the government should consolidate as many small schools as possible anyway.

Riggs recommended that all schools which "need not exist" should be subject to consolidation, since the necessity of providing a quality education takes precedence over concerns related to the loss of the local school (1987: 52, 61). Meanwhile, it was also accepted that, due to geographic considerations, a large number of small schools cannot be consolidated. For these schools, it was recommended that more funding be provided in order to improve facilities and attain a more highly qualified teaching staff in order to ameliorate the inherent problems of the province's many small rural schools.

Notwithstanding the study by Riggs, the needs of rural areas and smaller communities, as well as their small schools, have too often been subject to an "apparent lack of concern, indifference, and insensitivity on the part of educational authorities" (Mulcahy, 1993: 2). There has long been a "poor match between community values and activities of those of the school" (Meaney, 1977: 76). Most recently, the Government's "official view" has been that rural education reform is synonymous with small school closures and consolidation; which will reduce costs and improve results. In order to improve the cost efficiency and

educational effectiveness of rural schools it will be necessary to transport students to larger schools in other communities where there are better educational opportunities. And rural residents are told to accept these reforms and "changes because they are in the best interests of their children" (Mulcahy, 1997).

Given the view that Newfoundland is destined to develop a "post-industrial" economy, it is assumed that rural schools will inevitably have to be more like urban ones. Yet, this assumes that rural needs are not important, or at least, that urban values are more relevant than rural ones. Obviously, rural residents do not concur (Brown, 1996, Mulcahy, 1997). When solutions have been advanced for rural education they have been based on the urban schooling model. Thus, policy makers from an urban background have (legitimately) been blamed for

> *ignoring the rural component; of seeking to have smaller rural schools mirror larger ones in programs, practices, procedures, and outcomes. They have been accused of providing urban solutions to rural problems; of preparing children for lives in the urban environment they see as being inevitable; of aiding, and perhaps hastening the process of decay of our rural communities* (Warren, 1982: 221).

Small rural schools in Newfoundland have often been identified with reduced learning conditions due to a "cultural deficit" that is prevalent in rural areas. One example is the lower level of literacy compared to urban areas (Norris, Phillips, and Bulcock, 1992; Norris, Phillips and Crocker, 1992). At the school level, rural schools are plagued by a lack of resources, a non-comprehensive course selection, non-specialized staffing and cost ineffectiveness. This has led to the conclusion that students in small rural schools are less well educated than their urban peers, and this is supported by the results of standardized

examinations which show that "rural students in all subjects perform at levels below those attained by urban students" (Bulcock and Dawe, 1996: 8).

The usual response to this rural schooling deficit in Newfoundland has been to propose school consolidation (Meaney, 1977; Mulcahy, 1997; Vincent, 1994) in order to increase school size and student achievement. However, it is not school size, in itself, which affects achievement, but community size (Martin and Spain, 1986; Nagy, Drost and Banfield, 1982). Moreover, it has been further suggested that the factors contributing to low academic achievement by rural students are not related to school size, or community size, but to broader socio-economic status factors (Day, 1975; Meaney, 1977; Vincent, 1994; Warren, 1982).

In fact, Day concluded that in our search for the "the causative factors of low school performance of rural students, we may have to look more at the effects of poverty rather than ruralness or urbanness per se" (1977: 91). Schools are not overcoming the socio-economic limitations placed on rural students. Efforts to improve achievement levels by merely consolidating schools and moving rural students to larger schools are ill-conceived and unlikely to be successful (Vinton, 1994). Thus, education reforms to improve achievement levels will generally have little impact unless economic variables affecting rural areas are adequately addressed (Bolaria, 1991).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

A necessary component of a critical research study is the establishment of a relational framework. The researcher should consciously attempt to formulate theoretical connections while focussing on differential power relations and how these are continually produced, mediated and/or transformed in the context of the phenomena under study. This process is ultimately concerned with a constitutive synthesis of all the 'facts,' constructs, and theories under consideration.

The methodology of this study, itself, represents a synthesis of historiographical method and critical pedagogy. In brief, the process of historical research utilized in this study required a solid conceptual grasp of large amounts of material - facts, structures, constructs - which are subjected to a selection process in order to present an integrated work (Krathwohl, 1985). Historical research embodies synthesis, or stated differently: "History is the realm of juxtaposition" (Veyne, 1984). It is an interpretive, inductive process concerned with presenting a 'whole' and with presenting the multiplicity or variety of the human condition. Furthermore, this type of research implies subjectivism. It is acknowledged that researchers "carry their personal philosophies and values to their work and they affect the search for evidence and the interpretation of that evidence" (Shafer, 1980: 16). Thus, systematic sampling, selection and synthesis of appropriate material for the study is vital. Indeed, the quality of the research is to be judged by how well those decisions were made.

In this study, the confluence of historical method and critical theory is in the

constructivist nature of the research. For the critical theorist, the research process is perceived as inherently political. "Policy analysis ought to be critical in intent, where analysts try to expose sources of domination and repression." (Peters and Marshall, 1993: 311; see also Scheurich, 1990; Troyna, 1994). This also recognizes that there is no process by which to identify "true" knowledge. Knowledge is always contested, and involves the establishment and challenge, and protection and contestation of hegemonic definitions. However, this does not negate the necessity of a rigorous methodological framework for the study.

Design of the Study

The design for this study addressing the deligitimization of small rural schools is based on an altered model of the research framework proposed by Carspecken and Apple (1992). They propose "The Five Stages of Critical Qualitative Research" which are operant in a critical study. This model is flexible enough to allow variation in its application and in the sequencing of research steps, while being rigorous enough to serve as an instrumental guide to ensuring a unity of purpose in this research study.

Stage One — Collection of Data

The data collected in this study consisted of primary source documents specific to the contemporary educational reform movement in the Newfoundland context; and of secondary source literature related to the general reform movement, the historical position of rural schools vis-a-vis past and current reform agendas, and critical theory resources which address the issues of hegemony and political struggle. The selection and sampling of this data was based on its relevance and "fit" within the unifying structure of the study and functioned to

direct the emergent "interpretations" of this research.

Primary Sources: As previously noted, the impetus for education reform is hypothesized to be a result of the changing political economy as perceived by policy makers. A significant new re-direction of the economy (and consequently, also of the education system) of Newfoundland was proposed in the document, Building on Our Strengths: Report or the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, released in 1986. Thus, contemporary educational reform in Newfoundland is conceptually and temporally demarcated from 1986 to the present (and beyond). This sample of influential economic documents preceded the appearance of educational reform documents:

Education for Self-Reliance: A Report on Education and Training in Newfoundland (1986);
Education and Labour Market Training: Prerequisites to Economic Training in Newfoundland and Labrador (1990);
Change and Challenge: A Strategic Economic Plan For Newfoundland and Labrador (1992); and
Towards a New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador (1992-1993).

The response of the education sector to the "need" to reform the structure of education has been contingent on the findings of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Development of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education presented in the seminal document Our Children Our Future (1992). Other documents which have subsequently refined the direction of educational reform include:

Adjusting the Course (Part I): Restructuring the School System for Educational Excellence (1993);
Adjusting the Course (Part II): Improving the Conditions for Learning (1994);

Proposed Bill: An Act to Revise the Law Respecting the Operation of Schools in the Province (1996); and

Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador (1996).

Secondary Sources: A comprehensive selection of appropriate secondary sources — books, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, the Internet etc. — was accessed in order to provide the theoretical grounding and the means to the development of theoretical constructs related to the hypothesis of this study. A limited sample of this literature is provided in the review of the literature and the references to this study.

Stage Two — Construction of Preliminary Analysis

The focal point of this stage of the study was document analysis and text analysis. In a critical analysis, it is acknowledged that the researcher is *not* an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing outside the text. "Meaning does not reside in the text, but in the writing and reading of it" (Hodder, 1994). There is no "original' or "true" meaning of a text outside specific historical contexts. This is an hermeneutical exercise in which the lived experience surrounding the material culture within various contexts is translated into a different context of interpretation. Proceeding on this basis, I was aware of "the importance of context both in the formulation of problems and in the activity of policy analysis, emphasizing the fact that interpretation is an inherently politically loaded activity" (Peters and Marshall, 1993: 311).

Thus, the provincial economic and education reform documents were analysed as "active texts" — as constitutive of social relations (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994; Raab, 1994). A necessary component of this analysis was to strip the texts of their external claims to

authority (Smith, 1990). This takes into account the way in which certain sets of values and assumptions — often masked as empirically objective or neutral — intrude into the text (and the reading of the text), and predominate at the expense of other possible opposing sets of values and assumptions (Peters and Marshall, 1993). Secondary sources were also subjected to content validity checks which included external validation or criticism (from other literature), and internal criticism (from the researcher, in terms of the meaning, value and credibility of the information).

Stage Three — Generation of New Data

It was assumed that the initial data gathering procedures would not be adequate in themselves to address all the concerns of the study. The initial data set, inclusive of primary and secondary sources, served to delineate alternative but relevant directions for exploration and lead to an expanded body of "data." This process of continual data expansion and refinement has been an ongoing process throughout the research process. As such, this research involved an open "dialogue" between the researcher and that which was to be understood, wherein the interpretive realities located within these documents were subjected to the researchers own interpretations — an example of the double hermeneutic at work (Scott and Usher, 1996).

Stage Four — Describing System Relationships

As this was a critical research study, particular questions of paramount importance were asked throughout the data analysis. For example: What is the meaning of particular relations? Do these relations tend to reproduce or contest existing forms of subordination or oppression? (Ozga and Gewirtz, 1994). Is the "data" sufficient to determine the relations and

connections between the reform movement (posited as a function of the dominant urban, industrial sectors of society), and those who attend small rural school or live in rural communities (posited as the subordinate class)? Through the organization, integration, and synthesis of the data, specific relationships between these constructs were, indeed, determined which formed the basis for an *understanding* of these research questions.

Stage Five — System Relationships as Explanation

The system relationships identified in stage four are the foundation for this stage, in which the reasons for these system relationships were sought, and the findings were built "outward" toward general theoretical models of society (Dale, 1994). However, given the interpretive epistemology expounded vis-a-vis this research method, it should be noted that the findings are not concerned so much with generalization and prediction, but with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Scott and Usher, 1996). The theoretical synthesis expounding the evolution of the political economy and cultural patterns of existence are contextually located in the process of historical, economic and social change — past, present, and future (see Ball, 1994, Kogan, 1985, Power, 1992). Ultimately, the goal has been to demystify the process of politico-economic and cultural hegemony, and to clarify the effects of political domination and struggle.

Validity Concerns

The hermeneutic character of this research process means that positivistically conceived concerns related to standards of evaluation (internal and external validity, "objectivity") are not applicable. Veyne (1984: 12) stated that "so long as one relates true

things, [history] is satisfied. It seeks only truth, in which it is not a science, which seeks exactness." Yet, it is also acknowledged that there is no single interpretation of truth. Consequently, history "provides the potentiality for transformation by negating reification. For critical research, social structures are always historical: created by humans, and potentially alterable by humans" (Quantz, 1992: 493).

Thus, good interpretation is evaluated based on its "trustworthiness" - wherein internal validity is replaced by "credibility," external validity by "transferability," and objectivity by "confirmability." Carspecken and Apple (1992) proposed that validity in critical qualitative research should be based on the following criteria:

1. The overall fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques.
2. Effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques.
3. Alertness and coherence of prior knowledge.
4. Value constraints: (i) external - whether the research is valuable
   (ii) internal - whether the research is ethical.
5. Comprehensiveness - clarity, technical quality, extensive theoretical constructs and information sources.

The researcher contends that the above criteria for validity have been integral parts of the research design of this study. Continual self-reflexivity in relation to the process of data collection and the nature of the data itself, as well as the rigorous application of the above research design methodology will ensure a high level of "trustworthiness" of the product of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Economic Documents

Introduction

The current education reform movement in Newfoundland — beginning over a decade ago — received its initial impetus from provincial economic renewal documents. The particular structure and substance of provincially mandated education reforms are explicitly presaged by government sponsored economic reform documents since this time; which invariably identify *education* as one of the primary causes of Newfoundland's depressed economy, as well as being the critical tool by which to rehabilitate the province's economy for the future. Subsequent education reform documents have taken their cue from these economic documents on the necessity of directly linking education to economic principles and economic renewal. The ideals and ideology propagated within the economic sphere have provided the overriding framework for education reforms such that even the strictly pedagogical reforms cannot be abstracted from ultimate economic concerns. Finally, of significance to this study, the purported limitations of small rural schools in effectively and efficiently providing the kind of education the province requires (for economic renewal) were explicitly highlighted in the economic reform documents. Consequently, the educational effectiveness and viability of small rural schools have received considerable attention in the educational sphere as the main inhibitors to attaining high educational achievement and fiscally efficient educational service delivery.

The progenitor of the ongoing education reform movement in Newfoundland was the

seminal Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, Building on Our Strengths, and its various background reports, released in 1986. Although the Commission was set up by the provincial government with a mandate "to investigate, report on, and make recommendations about all aspects of employment and unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador" (Royal Commission, 1986b: 1), the province's education system also became a central concern of the Commission. The *educational* findings of this Report, with its emphasis on human capital formation, laid the foundation for all subsequent economic reports to make similar (albeit far more instrumental) recommendations; as well as setting the framework under which educational reform documents were produced. The following section provides an overview of the *findings* of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment and of selected Background Reports to the Royal Commission: which address the state of the provincial economy; the direction to which the economy is to be moved; and the role of education system (including small rural schools) in hampering economic development in the past and present. This is counterposed against the potential of a *properly* restructured education system to lead the province toward economic prosperity.

Economic Reform Documents

Building on Our Strengths: Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986),

Education for Self-Reliance: A Report on Education and Training (1986)

The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was established in 1985 in response to a perceived crisis in the

local economy. Indeed, the report noted that the Newfoundland economy suffered "a dismal 1985 during which we experienced record low employment rates and record high unemployment rates" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 82). The historical foundation of specific means of production utilized in the province, as well as the geography, politics, and economic realities imposed on Newfoundland are identified as limiting the kinds of industrial activities currently being practiced. As such, Newfoundland and its economy has been characterized by a "dependency upon exports of raw materials, a weak manufacturing base, domination by the public sector, weak local labour markets, the practice of occupational pluralism, low levels of formal education, and the continuing importance of household production" (1986: 26). A continuation of current of these practices, in light of an emerging global economy, will lead to even greater unemployment in the future (Royal Commission, 1986b: 10).

The Report recognized that past attempts to solve the province's economic ills have focused on large-scale industrial projects coupled with the centralization of the population. However, it acknowledged that:

> *A hundred years of effort to create a fully urbanized and industrialized society has had some successes, but failed to provide employment levels and standards of living that Newfoundlanders need. The single-minded quest for a highly industrialized Newfoundland must be abandoned. Newfoundland has too small a local market, is too distant from major metropolitan markets, and is too dependent upon outside ownership to finance and run its major resource industries for it to aspire realistically to becoming a major centre of heavy industry and manufacturing.* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 19).

Simms (1986: 23) noted in his Background Report for the Royal Commission that, as a result of these failed efforts to industrialize the provincial economy, Newfoundland has continuously found itself "at the lowest end of the Canadian scale in terms of employment,

incomes, industrial investment and other standard indicators of economic progress. There are also significant intra-provincial disparities which exist between urban and rural areas within the province."

Historically, the reality of Newfoundland's economic situation has been that the fishery has constituted the primary industrial activity for a majority of its citizens. And this fishery has been conducted in a large number of relatively isolated, widely dispersed, low density settlements scattered throughout the province's coastline. However, since Confederation with Canada in 1949, government policy has been directed toward reducing the role of the fishery in the economy by diversifying into other industrial activities. Indeed, there has been a readily "apparent urban-industrial bias in development policies since Confederation" (Simms, 1986: 13).

The fishing industry and the rural communities in which it was located were viewed as economic liabilities and barriers to prosperity:

> *The traditional subsistence-based rural economy was considered the main impediment to the province's efforts to reproduce the industrial culture of North America within Newfoundland society . . . The new industrial model required a concentrated settlement pattern that was capable of supplying large, readily available pools of labour for new industry* (Simms, 1986: 7).

The low levels of incomes and industrial activity in Newfoundland were identified as standard economic structural inefficiencies due to the rural character of the province. The solution, of course, was greater population centralization. Economic theory suggests that "the main long term remedy for structural maladjustment is labour mobility" (May and Hollett, 1986: 39).

The traditional development policy of the province has consisted of large scale urbanization efforts coupled with attempts to resettle and modernize the rural population. The resettlement initiative was forcibly imposed upon the rural population. This was accompanied by a simultaneous withdrawal of essential services from "non-viable" communities, and upgrading of government services (such as medical and educational) to designated viable communities. From 1955 to 1975 the household resettlement program relocated 28, 000 people to designated growth centres, "resulting in the complete evacuation of 255 communities and the partial resettlement of a further 312 communities" (Simms, 1986: 7). Those who were relocated were promised a better standard of living and greater economic opportunities. However, the wrenching social dislocation of resettlement presented substantial impediments to reaching the proposed economic benefits. It was evident that the émigrés from these isolated rural communities "all too often became a new underclass which was artificially grafted onto the traditional social structure of the receiving communities" (Simms, 1986: 7).

As is still the case in the province, the very real, but not easily quantified, social costs suffered by some rural residents was deemed necessary in order to improve the welfare of the province as a whole. Then, as now, this conflict of rural viability versus urban needs was portrayed as a "political issue as to how far governments should trade-off the economic benefits of structural adjustment [resettlement] against the social costs involved" (May and Hollett, 1986: 39).

Politically, the decision had been reached by the Smallwood administration that the social displacement of rural citizens by a policy of resettlement was a necessary cost in the effort to modernize the province in an urban-industrial mold. Unfortunately, by the 1970s it

was "quite obvious that the modernization efforts were not succeeding in bringing economic prosperity to Newfoundland" (Simms, 1986: 7). However since the 1970s, the government has continued to follow the course of large-scale industrialization programs with an emphasis on urban development; "while rural development has still not received its deserving position within public policy" (Simms, 1986: 76).

Consequently, a central theme of the Report of the Royal Commission is the acknowledgment of the reality of Newfoundland as still being a rural province in which past attempts at forming an urban-industrialized society have had only limited success. The Report took a pragmatic approach in rejecting the means by which past governments have attempted to reform the province, yet still recommending, or defending the ends to which they aimed. It noted that in rural Newfoundland, many "communities have persisted despite neglect and discouragement, rather than because of official support. The attention of government and developers has been elsewhere" (Royal Commission, 1986b: 7). However, the process of resettlement and associated policies is also portrayed as an "active government policy designed to enhance, over the long term, the lives of future generations of Newfoundlanders. Unfortunately, even the best intentioned plans may produce undesirable results" (May and Hollett, 1986: 291).

The post-Confederation policy of economic development, for both urban and rural Newfoundland, was long based on the consolidation and elimination of rural communities. Progress for the province as a whole was always equated with urban advancement. Even the Royal Commission noted that the root of the problem is still current:

A paradox and a problem for Newfoundland is that our decision-makers

> *and policy-makers all live and work in the only part of our society that is truly urban. Hence, their views of life, even for those who come from rural backgrounds, tends to be urban as well* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 307).

However, Canning, in his Background Report to the Royal Commission was more optimistic about the future position of rural communities. He noted:

> *Prior to 1972, there was an ideological schizophrenia evident in government policy for rural Newfoundland. Today however, the rural economy is regarded as an integral component of the provincial economy, and the resettlement mentality which once dominated provincial policies for rural communities has been largely eliminated . . .[I]t is clear that today the province has a long term political commitment to rural development. The necessity to achieve a more viable rural economy has become a legitimate objective within overall provincial economic policy* (Canning, 1986: 49, 48).

The starting point for the Royal Commission's recommendations for future economic development calls for a fundamental, but pragmatic change in public policy:

> *Newfoundland is predominantly a rural society. The prospects for solving its development and employment problems through large-scale resource and manufacturing industries seem bleak and the 'adjustment process,' whereby conventional economic approaches would have rural Newfoundlanders move to urban centres to find employment, is much less realistic than assumed . . . This Commission advocates that - because realistic alternatives are not presently available, and because many Newfoundlanders themselves believe in the economic viability of their small communities - a strong policy supporting regional development, which builds on the strengths of the outport economy, should form an important part of a long term employment strategy for Newfoundland* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 112).

It was recognized that past efforts at industrialization and industrial diversification have not only undermined the existence of rural communities, but also failed to create sufficient economic activities in urban areas. Therefore, the Commission set its sights on the emerging global post-industrial society characterized by rapid technological change, automation and computerization, modern transportation and communication systems, and an

increasingly specialized service sector. A thoroughly modernized economic infrastructure would lay the groundwork for a multitude of small-scale developments throughout the province, such that the need for large-scale manufacturing industries or of a centralized population base would no longer be necessary.

Thus, taking into account the *reality* that Newfoundland's industrial development has been stunted by the province's peripheral location with respect to major markets, a predominantly rural population that is dispersed and sparse, a lack of capital, and an over-reliance on primary resources, it was recommended that the "antiquated dreams" of becoming an industrial society be abandoned. Instead a new "clear vision of where we should be headed" is proffered. (Royal Commission, 1986a: 446). The preferred course is "to leap-frog the industrial age and move directly from a non-industrial (or partially-industrial) society to a post-industrial society" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 20). The Royal Commission states:

> *The main aim of this Report will be to outline an integrated strategy of economic and social change designed to enhance employment . . . Our greatest needs are for new provincial and regional development strategies that will promote the viability of post-industrial towns and villages, and for much stronger integration of the rural and urban sectors of out society . . . Our vision is of a balanced, multi-sectored society, with strong sophisticated urban and rural communities, with both goods-producing and service industries, all linked together in an integrated society which will itself be integrated with the larger Canadian society* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 19-21).

The new provincial economy is to be characterized by a rigorous economic enterprise and self-reliance in all communities such that specialized high-technology service industries will flourish. Furthermore, the new Newfoundland citizen will become highly educated and well-trained, while also being flexible and adaptable enough to keep pace with the demands of a rapidly evolving technological world. Of special consideration is the imperative to include

rural communities in this new vision since the Commission proclaims that the rural economy and lifestyle is now "not appropriate to a post-industrial Canada and it is not one to which people aspire" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 308). Consequently:

> *The biggest transformation has to come in those small communities with less than five thousand people where most Newfoundlanders (60 percent) live. From fishing outports we have to create, not welfare ghettos, but modern forms of enterprise, so as to achieve a new kind of self-reliance appropriate to the post-industrial age. If we are to achieve this, these modern villages will need to experience a revolution in the education of their citizens* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 19).

The basis of the Commission's views on education are directed by a wholehearted acceptance of human capital theory. Thus, emphasis is placed on education as "fundamental to economic development and employment. Research in other countries has also shown that there is a strong relationship between general education levels and economic growth. Successful societies are well-educated societies" (Royal Commission, 1986b: 29). Given the economic and employment crisis facing the province it is advocated that education *must* be directed towards human capital development.

These conclusions reached by the Royal Commission, on the link between education and economic growth, are based on the findings of the substantial background report, Education for Self-Reliance: A Report on Education and Training In Newfoundland. Through human capital development theory, education is not only redefined primarily as a direct cause of economic growth, but is also reified as a valuable commodity in itself — one in which individuals and society can accumulate as an *investment*. In fact, "The Commission advocates that education be seen as an investment, both for the individual and for society" (Education for Self-Reliance, 1986: 9). The Report disclaims other studies which do not fully support the

tenets of human capital theory. Instead, it avers that investment in quality education will lead to individual benefits such as higher employment potential and more career success, greater earning potential, improved productivity, innovation, flexibility, competitiveness, and, most importantly, self reliance.

The Commission noted six major components to the integrated strategy for economic renewal of the province. Fundamental changes are recommended in the manner in which the income security system is administered, how government policies and programs are delivered, and in providing more harmonious industrial relations. Of particular note to this study, it is also stated that the approach to industrial (or post-industrial) development must change; regional and rural community development must be part of a diversified small-scale entrepreneurial economy; and finally, there needs to be a long overdue "revamping of our education system" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 35).

Thus, while the Royal Commission was established in order to analyze issues relating to employment and unemployment in Newfoundland, it also placed a very high level of emphasis on reforming the education system of the province as a pre-requisite to employment growth and post-industrial economic development. It states that: "All the recommendations in this Report rest upon one basic assumption: that the population of the province, in rural areas as well as urban areas, in the fishery as well as service industries, be well-educated" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 312).

Education geared to economic aims was presented as "the key to becoming employable in Newfoundland, and to being *mobile* throughout Canada and the rest of the world" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 209). Beyond these individual benefits, however, are the

aggregate benefits to the *post-industrial* economy of the province as a whole when qualified, well-trained workers are available. Consequently, the state of the education system was scrutinized as to its effectiveness in providing the appropriate level of human capital for the province to attain greater economic development. The Commission concluded that "Newfoundland's education and training system needs to be re-oriented to the kind of society we are, and the kind of society we reasonably aspire to become" (Education for Self-Reliance, 1986: 17).

The Commission perceived a crisis in the quality of education being offered, because it did not instill the appropriate qualities required for their vision of the emerging economy. Since the Commission advocated that there is a direct link between the level of education and the resulting economic development of a society, it identified the low quality of education in the province as a *cause* of its economic stagnation. Therefore, not only are there "serious weaknesses in education and training that contribute to our unemployment problems . . . [but] poor education levels in the province are hindering our economic development" (Education for Self-Reliance, 1986: 112, 44). Unfortunately, even when the Commission does weaken its own arguments by showing some doubt as to the validity of human capital theory, it still continued to proclaim the education system as a cause of economic malaise.

> *The Commission cannot demonstrate conclusively that better education would necessarily mean more economic development and more employment in Newfoundland, but we are convinced . . . that one major problem of our languishing economy stems from inadequacies within our schools* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 209).

The Commission's conclusion that "Newfoundland is failing to provide the province's youth with a satisfactory level of education" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 215) is based on the

results of various standardized tests (such as the Canadian Test of Basic Skills - CTBS) which consistently revealed that Newfoundland students performed at levels below their Canadian counterparts in all basic educational skill categories — especially in the areas of vocabulary and reading. Of particular concern is the identified continuing disparity of educational attainment between those fortunate enough to reside in urban areas and those who live in rural communities wherein a "large proportion . . . remain functionally illiterate and poorly educated" (Royal Commission, 1986b: 29).

The report, Education for Self-Reliance, provided an analysis of the conflict between the structure of Newfoundland's past (and current) education system and Newfoundland's rural society. It noted that Newfoundland's education and training systems have been modeled on that of urban-industrial centres in North America. The school system provided students with the skills and aptitudes to participate in an industrial society. For rural students, it represented a means to a *better life* in St. John's or mainland Canada. The education system was structured with the aim of producing the human capital for an industrial society, while ignoring the needs of the rural population. Thus,

> *the formal education system was never geared to the needs and lifestyles of those Newfoundlanders who chose to live in the outports . . . It has been oriented to teaching people to become professionals and white collar workers, rather than fisherman, technicians, or mechanics . . . Newfoundland was to become not only urbanized, but also industrialized* (Royal Commission, 1986c: 6, 4).

While Newfoundland has remained a predominantly rural society, the province's schools and the curriculum covered has been, and is, geared for children of at least middle-class families in the province's few urban centres. "For poorer families, however, and particularly those living in small rural communities . . . school is an alienating experience with

little meaning in their lives" (Royal Commission, 1986c: 116). Therefore, the curriculum *does* need to be more balanced in order to be relevant to the lives and experiences of urban as well as rural students, and supply the skills required for success in either milieu.

The final report of the Royal Commission acknowledged that one reason for lower educational achievement of students in rural areas is due to the dissonance between the school curriculum and local requirements. It recommended that one method to improve educational attainment is by reforming the curriculum to make it more applicable to, and reflective of, rural lifestyles.

However, far greater emphasis is placed on blaming rural areas for their low educational achievement. Still, the education system is structured in such a way that those with high levels of education will only be able to utilize those skills and find employment in urban areas. Therefore, in an education system geared to produce people for an urban, industrial society, high achieving rural students inevitably must move to urban centres, while many lower achieving students remain in rural areas where employment prospects are slim. However, for the Commission, the high levels of unemployment in rural areas is *caused* by low education. From their viewpoint:

> *A vicious cycle appears to be in existence in which unemployment remains high because people are poorly educated, but people fail to see the value of education because jobs are so scarce. Poor standards of education in rural areas can only make this situation worse* (Royal Commission, 1986a: 214-215).

Furthermore, the discrepancy in achievement levels between urban and rural areas is extrapolated to be an issue of school size. The Commission reproduced the findings of Fagan (1985: 12) which show that Newfoundland's largest schools (mostly urban) achieve near the

national median on national standards tests, while small schools with less than forty students (a rural phenomenon) achieve to levels only slightly above the thirtieth percentile. This "serious difference" in achievement levels between small and large schools provides the justification for recommendations to eliminate small, underachieving schools in rural areas.

The issue of appropriate school size is further entangled within issues related to the province's denominational structure, as well as the province's fiscal capacity to maintain underachieving rural schools. "Duplication" of educational services was viewed as a result of the province's denominational school system. "Moreover, particularly in rural areas, there seems to be more schools than are needed given the size of the local population" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 325). Given the imperative that scarce financial resources be utilized efficiently to educate the populace, it was formally recommended that "*The province must undertake a review and cost-analysis of the denominational education system*" (1986: 325). (The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary and Secondary Education was established precisely on this basis.) It Royal Commission contended that the province was not able to satisfy *all* the needs of *all* its citizens. Therefore, it would seem that the *over-abundance* of rural schools needed to be curtailed for the benefit of all (i.e., urban taxpayers).

Beyond merely looking at various comparisons of student achievement levels, the Commission proposed fundamental reforms to the education system based on the belief that a higher level of educational attainment will spur economic development and provincial self-reliance — and that everyone in the province should adhere to this belief. The very aims of education in the province are criticized for the lack of clear objectives related to economic

growth. Therefore, the Commission advocated that: "Government and the educational institutions need to adopt aims and objectives for education that identify self-reliance, community development, and economic development as primary goals" (Royal Commission, 1986c: 156).

These objectives should suffuse every level of the education system and its curriculum as all students, especially those in rural areas, learn about how the present (and future post-industrial) economic system works, as well as come to appreciate the economic value of investing in education that is geared toward economic self-reliance. In fact, education and training should be re-oriented toward "work opportunities that will characterize the post-industrial era" (Royal Commission, 1986c: 113). Concomitantly, schooling should "instill the spirit of entrepreneurship" and enterprise in all students

As for the rest of the curriculum, a new "basic education" program is to be implemented with special emphasis on literacy, mathematics and science. This basic education also includes technology and computer skills for all students (subject area which are most urgently required by rural students). The rationale for espousing these "new basics" is that it will increase the province's human capital: it will "promote a strong scientific research and development capability, which in turn can be used to promote economic development" (Royal Commission, 1986c: 12). Furthermore, these new basics, and all other schooling, need to be made more challenging in order to develop solid fundamental academic skills in all students. A more challenging course of studies will serve to improve the quality of education provided as well as instill an appropriate work ethic and attitude of self-reliance in all students.

Finally, the Commission presented a call-to-arms for all the stakeholders in education

to support their recommendations and conclusions, and support their view of education through "a province wide publicity campaign." Moreover, like most political statements it made an appeal for non-partisan support of their agenda. It makes a plea for a *consensus* — wherein alternative "ideological predispositions or beliefs" will not interfere with the implementation of their proposed reforms. Whether it is redirecting the economy toward a post-industrial society, or reforming the education system (by reducing the number of rural schools, or redefining the curriculum), "the important issue is not political philosophy but rather the

immediate need to stimulate enterprise and create jobs" (Royal Commission, 1986a: 32).

Education and Labour Market Training: Prerequisites to Economic Development in Newfoundland and Labrador (1990)

In the wake of recommendations put forth by the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, subsequent policy documents reinforced the notion that education will be the solution to the province's economic problems. However, the Commission's somewhat sympathetic analysis of rural economic problems and low rural educational attainment are not present in later policy reports. The Commission's ideal of an integrated economic development policy inclusive of both rural and urban sectors is largely ignored. Instead, there is a return to past policies of pursuing economic development (this time for an industrial and post-industrial society) which resembles that found in urban North America. These policies are dismissive of the rural character of Newfoundland society, and are ill-conceived as policy necessary to address the needs of those living in rural communities.

Human capital theory, though, continues to provide the unquestionable foundation for more recent policy statements. This is plainly evident in the report, Education and Labour Market Training: Prerequisite to Economic Development in Newfoundland and Labrador, by the Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (ECNL), released in 1990. The Economic Council stated that the

> *purpose of this report is to increase the awareness in Newfoundland of the importance of education and labour-market training to economic development, and to make policy recommendations that would facilitate the role of education and labour-market training in influencing the future economic development of Newfoundland.* (ECNL, 1990: 3).

Consistent with the vision of the Royal Commission, the Economic Council also foresees the emergence of a new post-industrial society and economic structure characterized by increasing global competition, rapid technological growth, innovation and computerization, as well as the emergence of the service sector. And in order for this emerging economy to fully develop, as well as reduce the damage of structural dislocations caused by this shift, a better educated, and more highly skilled and productive workforce is required. This better educated workforce will be more adaptable and flexible, productive, innovative, and efficient: therefore, more employable.

Thus, education is firmly linked to economic development. The report claims that its findings conclusively show that "the level of educational attainment of the population is positively correlated with the level of economic performance" (ECNL, 1990: x), and that there is a strong cause and effect relationship between higher levels of education leading to economic development. Unfortunately, while the report's recommendations are founded on this cause and effect relationship, it does not provide any substantive or empirical proof of this

relationship. This cause and effect relationship is proffered based on its own unsubstantiated belief system. In fact, the Economic Council does submit that:

> *While it is recognized that education does contribute to economic development, it is difficult to identify and measure precisely this contribution relative to other factors which also influence the economy. Nevertheless, contemporary research, as well as logic, supports the view that education and labour market training are important prerequisites to economic growth and development.* (ECNL, 1990: x).

Furthermore, not only is education a prerequisite to economic development, but it will, in and of itself, increase employment and industrial growth. The Economic Council naively, and very simplistically stated that:

> *Because the labour-market operates efficiently to the extent that available workers are matched to jobs that require that level of education and training, education can provide the means of increasing the level of labour force participation, reducing the level of unemployment and reducing the cost of employers searching for qualified workers.* (ECNL, 1990: 7).

The existing education system is viewed as inadequate and ineffectual. The education system is portrayed as, at best, "a major obstacle" to economic development and, at worst, as a major *cause* of Newfoundland's economic stagnation. The Economic Council concurs with the Royal Commission that the education system cannot meet the needs of students entering the new economy.

> *In Newfoundland, the education and training provided in the past has failed to meet the needs of students (high youth unemployment is characteristic of an unsuccessful school to work transition), the needs of employers (labour-market entrants or re-entrants often lack the required skills to adapt to structural changes occurring in the economy), and the needs of the unemployed and disadvantaged (low levels of education continue to present a significant barrier to labour market success).* (ECNL, 1990: xvi).

Given the magnitude of the Newfoundland education system's failures, and the

repercussions for the economy, the Economic Council identified the most urgent problems which help to "shed light on the system's poor performance" (ECNL, 1990: xii) and proceeded to recommend policy changes which would rectify the situation. Firstly, the aims and objectives of education are remiss because they are not easily measurable, and, more importantly, they do not explicitly recognize economic development as an aim of education. The aims of education need to be amended to ensure that economic objectives are fully incorporated in the school system. Also, measurable school level indicators such as graduation rates and achievement levels need to become more exhaustive and publicly available. This will reveal the "success" and effectiveness of the education system in meeting its goals, as well as provide a measure of accountability for its performance.

Another problem is that the core curriculum of schools is unsatisfactory. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the basics of language, math, and science. Furthermore, the non-core curriculum should be revised to reflect the importance of education to economic development. Courses such as economics, cooperative education, and entrepreneurial studies should be emphasized. A final problem with the curriculum is that many small rural schools are not able to offer advanced high school math and science courses, and will not be able to offer all the economic-oriented courses necessary due to a lack of students and resources. There is a problem of a lack of qualified and specialized teachers for many schools — especially in small rural schools with few teachers. And, Newfoundland's schools are underfunded: spending a lower amount per student in comparison with other Canadian provinces. This has resulted in inadequate amounts of instructional materials, equipment, and facilities in many schools. Again, small rural schools are identified as facing the greatest

deficiencies. The Economic Council is also concerned that Newfoundland students consistently rank as the lowest achievers on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. Equally worrisome are the findings which show that Newfoundland's "rural students consistently perform lower that their urban counterparts" (ECNL, 1990: 106).

The obvious solution proposed to remedy the above problems of a lack of qualified teachers, lack of physical resources, and low achievement on standardized tests would be for the government to provide more financial resources to address the inadequacies. However, the denominational education system, as well as the rural nature of the province, are identified as the roots of these problems. Together, these factors have led to an unacceptable amount of duplication and inefficiency in the system. The most obvious manifestation of this state of affairs is the existence of many small rural schools throughout the province. The Economic Council concludes that there are "too many schools, particularly small schools" (ECNL, 1990: 61). This view is further reinforced by comparing the enrollment per school and percentage of small schools within the province to similar statistics in other provinces across Canada. Indeed, since Newfoundland has the lowest enrollment rate per school, and the highest percentage of small schools, this is taken as an indication that there are certainly too many schools in the province.

The Economic Council had serious doubts about the fiscal ability of the province to provide extra resources to remedy the problems of an education system with so many schools. It also held doubts as to "whether Newfoundland can provide a quality education through so many small schools" (ECNL, 1990: 62). It notes that, since the school system is already so seriously underfunded, what are needed are larger, "more cost-efficient and effective" schools

to replace small rural schools. These small rural schools not only exhibit the worst symptoms of the problems afflicting the school system, but also exacerbate them for all other schools by being cost-ineffective. Existing expenditures need to be effectively allocated to those schools which are performing well. "Priorities" need to be established in order to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the system as a whole. This will

> *require an independent and immediate assessment of the financial implications of continuing to operate the existing denominational school system, the closure of inefficient and ineffective schools, and the consolidation and sharing of facilities and resources among schools and school boards.* (ECNL, 1990: xv-xvi).

These recommendations are portentous of the issues addressed in the Royal Commission on Education, and serve to focus attention on small rural schools and their many identified limitations. Also, like the Royal Commission before it, the Economic Council makes a plea for cooperation and consensus among all levels of government, business and labour, and educators on these recommendations in order to move Newfoundland down the path to a brighter economic future.

Change and Challenge: A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (1992)

Status Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan (1995)

Economic policy statements directly authored by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, such as Change and Challenge, have not deviated much from the "vision" established by the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (which was refined by the Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador). Change and Challenge outlines the Government's own vision for Newfoundland in an emerging competitive global economy, and

highlights the "fundamental changes" which need to occur in order for Newfoundland to find its appropriate "niche" in the post-industrial economy.

However, unlike the Royal Commission, Change and Challenge did not present a view that the economic growth of the province should be driven by an integrated (urban and rural) development strategy. In the new economy, there will be a shift from labour-intensive, resource-based industries to knowledge-intensive, service-sector industries. The potential for growth and employment opportunities in these industries will be "concentrated in urban centres" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador [GNL], 1992: 4). No mention is made of rural community-based development strategies. In fact, the "small widely dispersed population" of the province is identified as a primary cause of Newfoundland's economic problems.

The Government, cognizant of the importance placed on human capital development in previous policy statements, not only endorsed human capital theory, but stated that it is an absolute fact. As was stated: "Education is key to economic development. Studies have shown conclusively that skills, qualifications, innovation, and the adaptability of individuals are critical determinants of economic performance and success of enterprise" (GNL, 1992: 25).

The Newfoundland education system should be producing these highly qualified, innovative and adaptable students. However, the government itself has "serious reservations about the ability of the education system, as it is currently structured, to meet the challenges" (GNL, 1992: 25). Furthermore, the poor quality of schools and low levels of educational attainment in the past and present, are blamed as major causes of Newfoundland's faltering economy. Since education is critical to economic development, it is essential that fundamental

reforms are enacted to bring the education system in line with its potential to "create" the kind of economy and society that is envisioned. The status quo would no longer be acceptable. Thus, the Government made the following *strategic statement:*

> *The province will undertake initiatives to ensure that the education and training system is more responsive to changing labour market demands for a highly-skilled, innovative and adaptable workforce. Special initiatives will be pursued which will allow governments, business, and labour to work together to improve the level and quantity of education, training and retraining* (GNL, 1992: 25).

The first of these initiatives involved the review and update of the curriculum to ensure it is relevant to "the changing requirements of society and the economy" (GNL, 1992: 27). The basic core areas of literacy, numeracy, and science will be emphasized. There will also be a new focus on enterprise and cooperative education, as well as computer and technology-based education. Indeed, the Status Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan (1995: 2) noted that beyond this focus, there has also been, and continues to be, a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship and self-reliance. However, merely directing the curriculum toward economic matters is not sufficient. The links between the education system and private industry need to be strengthened and made more direct. Therefore, the government, through the lead of the Economic Recovery Commission, is in the process of "expanding enterprise education throughout the school system." It has been noted that the Royal Commission on Education has proposed the same curriculum reforms as is noted above (Status Report, 1995: 9).

Another initiative would inject greater accountability into the system to ensure that educational objectives are being met. The first step is to "establish measurable objectives"

against which to evaluate the students', and the school system's success, and then prepare public reports on various indicators which are collected.

Finally, it is noted that the school system needs to be more cost effective and efficient. Reforms need to be implemented to increase efficiency, and the savings should be reinvested in educational resources that are most beneficial for students. For the government, the most urgent need in the school system is to supply improved facilities and equipment in schools. The Government's main means of improving cost-efficiency is to eliminate educational staff, programs, and schools. Not surprisingly, small rural schools across the province are targeted as the most cost-inefficient and described as a drain on the system's resources. Therefore, when the Government (1996 Budget, 1996: 19) stated that "we have chosen to rationalize education facilities to ensure that adequate funding is provided for students," this meant little beyond the fact that small rural schools would have to be closed in order to provide more resources for large and/or urban schools.

Change and Challenge is a document directed at all sectors of Newfoundland society: government, business, labour, academe, and community groups. It seeks a "consensus about the need for change" in order to build its vision of a more productive and efficient economy. Within this scope, education occupies a prominent position in establishing this new level of economic development — and education is perceived as little else other than a prerequisite to economic regeneration.

The Economic Recovery Commission

The Economic Recovery Commission has been instrumental in determining and

delineating the scope and content of government economic policy initiatives throughout the 1990s. In a series of published reports and accompanying background papers, the Economic Recovery Commission has reiterated and reinforced past government policy statements while actively aiding in the formation of current policy directives.

> *The Economic Recovery Commission (ERC) was established in 1989 to advise the provincial government on long-term strategies for economic renewal in Newfoundland and Labrador, guided initially by the recommendations of* Building on Our Strengths, *the 1986 Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment* (ERC, 1986: iii).

Furthermore, the government used these long-range strategy reports in developing Change and Challenge: A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (ERC, 1992).

The ERC's stated mandate is that it is required to act as an initiator of societal changes which *must* be made during the 1990s in order to create the climate and lay the foundation for economic development in Newfoundland (ERC, 1996a). It has attempted to be a catalyst, via its efforts at public education through its various publications and other media outlets, in affecting wide-ranging societal reforms aimed at economic development (ERC, 1996b). Therefore, it has worked with government, private industry and businesses, labour organizations, educational institutions, and community groups in an effort to form a consensus on the direction of the economy and to link the activities of the government (and the public sector) with those of the private sector in an effort to spur economic growth. It views this fully-integrated approach of government, educational and social sectors, and the private sector working in concert toward a new vision of economic prosperity as necessary for success (ERC, 1992-93, 1994a, 1994b).

The Economic Recovery Commission described the provincial economy as being in a

time of structural upheaval and transition toward a new global economy — characterized by rapid change and innovation, computerization and technological growth, free trade and global competition. The service sector and other knowledge-based industries are displacing older resource-based industries (ERC, 1993; Business News, 1994). This emerging post-industrial economy will allow for niche marketing and competitive economic activities in all regions of Newfoundland, both urban and rural. This is of extreme importance to rural Newfoundland because, as is suggested, the resource-based economies of many communities - especially the fishery - will face substantial contraction in the short and long terms. Therefore, the opportunities created by this economic restructuring represents the greatest potential for post-industrial economic development and self-reliance (Greenwood, 1992; May, 1993). However, rural communities, which in theory could participate in the emerging economy, are not, in reality, expected to benefit from restructuring. Potential benefits are reserved for urban areas.

While the future is portrayed in positive terms, the contemporary economy is cited as being in a state of crisis. The options presented by the ERC are for the province: (1) to fully accept the ERC vision, exploit the opportunities of a post-industrial society, and become part of the global economic community; or (2) to "settle for continuing economic decline, chronic high unemployment and a reduced standard of living" (ERC, 1992-93: 3).

The economic crisis facing the province is in part a direct result of the inadequate education system. In May's background report to the ERC, he stated,

> *that the growing dependency of Newfoundland on federal transfers, the falling productivity levels, and the growing divergence with the rest of Canada in our relative earned per capita incomes may be due to education levels remaining stagnant or falling relative to other provinces* (May, 1993: 3).

Although education may be identified as a cause of Newfoundland's economic problems, it is also proposed as the solution. May stated that "if we want to adjust the course to a society that achieves its full economic potential . . . then education is the key" (1993: 73). Newfoundland's problem is that its level of "investment" in education is too low. The future of economic growth and development "depends on the stock of human capital in existence" (May, 1993: 11). The economy of Newfoundland needs to be transformed by strengthening human resources through better education and training, and through the propitious acquisition of new knowledge and technology. Thus, "to be successful in the economy of the future, we must raise the education level of our people in all parts of Newfoundland" (ERC, 1991-92: 2).

As in previous reports, this unequivocal endorsement of human capital theory, with its view that improved education will result in economic development, is founded on little empirical evidence. Only other local economic agencies and previous policy statements which make the same unsubstantiated claims are cited as proof and "evidence" that an improved education system equals an improved economy. For example, it is noted that the

> *demand for a more responsive education system is increasing. Groups as diverse as the Board of Trade, the Task Force on Mathematics and Science . . . have all pointed to educational change and the increased relevance of education as crucial to the future of our province. The relationships between education and economic growth is being recognized . . . the correlations have been borne out in study after study. The Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador reiterated this point in its 1990 report* (Case, 1992: 8-9).

The Economic Recovery Commission provided recommendations for restructuring the education system. First, the curriculum of schools needs to be updated to reflect the challenges of the "new economy." The education system needs to be more flexible and accountable to the exigencies of the marketplace by producing flexible and enterprising students. The ERC *is* encouraged with the government's previous movements in this direction

— with its emphasis on the core curriculum and economic/business courses, and on the implementation of new programs such as entrepreneurial education and cooperative education. In fact, it commends the Royal Commission on Education for moving the direction of education in line with its vision for the future. The ERC states that: " As changes recommended in this report [The Royal Commission on Education] are instituted, we will be better prepared to provide our young people with the kind of education they need for the knowledge based economy of the future." (ERC, 1992-93: 12).

A second major issue of concern is the low level of educational achievement and attainment by students in this province — especially in rural areas. As a whole, Newfoundlanders receive lower scores on standardized tests than other Canadians. Also, "Newfoundlanders stop investing in education at an earlier age than other Canadians" (May, 1993: 51). Another serious concern is that students in rural areas consistently achieve at lower levels on standardized exams (such as the CTBS) than their urban counterparts. "Far lower" educational attainment levels are found in rural communities. This lack of educational investment in rural areas does not foster the much needed labour flexibility and mobility, or overall economic growth and diversification that is deemed necessary. Therefore, it is stated that a large percentage of the rural Newfoundland population "will have a very difficult time changing to a new economic environment" which is eminent (May, 1993: 60). It is imperative that rural residents improve their level of economic investment, both for their own future prosperity and for the future economic viability of rural Newfoundland itself. Education, as espoused by the ERC and other economic reports, is the *key* to rural survival — and continuing low low levels of education will lead to the ultimate degeneration and disappearance schools in rural areas.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis of Education Documents

Introduction

For the purpose of this study, the various education reform policy documents will be divided into three main groups. First, there are those documents immediately preceding the Royal Commission on Education and which already bare the influence of past economic reform documents — and which also foreshadow future education reform documents. Second, there are the Royal Commission and its Commissioned Studies which are the basis for reform. Third, there are the post-Royal Commission policy documents which have delimited, refined, and "readjusted" the actual direction of education reforms that have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

Education Reports: Pre-Royal Commission on Education

Towards an Achieving Society (1989), Achievement in Mathematics and Science (1989)

In 1989, the Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education produced the report, Towards an Achieving Society (Task Force, 1989). The Task Force was established by the Newfoundland Government in order to address the "problem" of low levels of achievement in mathematics and science — areas in which there is a high demand in the marketplace. In fact, the belief that higher educational attainment in math, science, and technology can improve a person's economic prospects is cited as one of the few explicit arguments presented by government as a reason for commissioning this study. More directly, the Task Force is a result

of government's acceptance of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment which called for an "improvement in the quality of basic education, especially in rural areas, and for explicit economic development objectives for all levels of the education system" (Task Force, 1989: 23). Consequently:

> *One of the thrusts of this report is to reinforce the principles of self-reliance espoused by the Commission, and to attempt to find ways in which mathematics and science education can be improved along lines consistent with these principles . . . At the most general level, this report represents a plea to make a determined effort to bring about a substantial change in educational expectations, participation, and performance. If the concept of education as an economic catalyst has any merit, the payoff from such a decision can be expected to be an economy which is more attractive to those seeking high levels of human resources, and which is much less vulnerable to external events* (Task Force, 1989: 23-26).

The Task Force reiterated the Royal Commission's viewpoint that the Newfoundland economy needs to be restructured toward producing a knowledge-based, post-industrial economy that will be globally competitive. For the Task Force, the *key* to this transformation is better education in math, science, and technology which will produce the highly skilled, adaptable, and technically innovative workers that are required. The role of education in this transformation is paramount. It is claimed that the myriad of economic-based factors which are negatively affecting the Newfoundland economy are beyond the control of the provincial government. However, the Task Force is pleased to note that: "Our own level of educational attainment, on the other hand, is something that is largely within our own control" (Task Force, 1989: 25).

Currently, though, the educational standards in the province are not high enough. It is noted that: "In comparison with Canadian and international standards, achievements in

mathematics and science in this province are consistently low" (Task Force, 1989: 88). There is a "crisis of low expectations" in schools, such that students receive high grades for mediocre performance levels (Task Force, 1989: 46). Thus, those with high grades may not be prepared for post-secondary education or the world of work and are subject to future failure. Furthermore, too many students are not even meeting these low expectations. This presents an alarming picture to the Task Force. It states that "the demands of society are such that those who fail to attain reasonable levels of performance are doomed to play a marginal role in the economic and social system" (Task Force, 1989: 46).

The Task Force proposes several solutions to improving standards within the education system. First, the curriculum should be modified such that a core program of literacy and especially math, science, and technology are emphasized. This is based on the assumption that "not all school subjects are of equal value" (Task Force, 1989: 42). Thus a core of academic and advanced courses in literature, and especially math, science, and technology will be advocated for all students, since they *are* of higher priority than other subjects.

Another recommendation for improving educational standards is that current public examinations, as well as other standardized exams such as the CTBS, should be replaced with a set of curriculum-specific criterion-referenced tests that would permit comparative analysis of results, provide the basis for teacher/school accountability, and allow for educational objectives to be clearly stated and measured. While McLean (1989: 20), in his background report, suggested that standardized exams have to be balanced against student achievement levels in their everyday classroom life, the Task Force states that student achievement levels

should be based solely on the results of these standardized exams. Meanwhile, marks given to students by their own teachers should not be utilized in measuring student achievement levels. The Task Force states that students should not be evaluated on such non-academic criteria as participation, behavior, attitudes, or other similar affective attributes, but only by means of impersonal, technocratic criterion-referenced exams. Also, the current weighting of school-based marks for "important" core subjects areas with public examinations should be immediately de-emphasized, since the "validity" of teachers' marking schemes and tests, with respect to the broad objectives of courses, are highly suspect (Task Force, 1989: 241).

The Task Force acknowledges that these higher standards in curriculum and evaluation procedures may lead some to conclude that there will be a higher rate of failure as students (especially those of low socio-economic status) will not be able to meet the standards. However, the Task Force asserts that students will rise to the challenge and that hard work, extra effort, and persistence will be sufficient to overcome any obstacles and lead to high achievement levels.

The last issue of concern for the Task Force is the large number of small rural schools in the province. Achievement levels in Newfoundland *are* correlated with school size, community size, and region of the province. In various measures of achievement, such as public examinations or the CTBS:

> *Students from larger schools and schools in urban areas tend to achieve at higher levels than those from smaller and rural schools. However, these differences are quite small... This suggests that the emphasis on school size [and ruralness] as a factor in achievement may be exaggerated* (Task Force, 1989: 89).

These findings, related to achievement levels based on an urban/rural and school size

distinction, were supported by Crocker's (1989) findings in a background paper to the Task Force — Achievement in Mathematics and Science. In relation to achievement levels based on the urban or rural setting of the school, it was found that students in rural schools performed only slightly below their urban counterparts — if at all. This is evident in **Table 4**, where it is shown thaturban students receive marginally higher grades in the sciences, but rural students actually perform slightly better on academic math public exams.

Crocker also analyzed the mean results of public examination scores in mathematics and science based on school size — small, medium and large. As is evident in **Table 5**, Crocker found that students in small schools do achieve at a lower level than students in large school as a whole — but only marginally so. Thus Crocker concluded that: "The difference in performance is not as great as might be expected, given the concerns over small schools" (1989: 20).

Nevertheless, small rural schools in Newfoundland are still described as deficient. The main problem noted is that, "for reasons that are fairly obvious, students in small schools do not have the opportunity to take advanced courses" (1989: 20). Small rural schools often lack adequate resources and facilities, have difficulty in maintaining specialist teachers (notably in math and science), and, as a consequence, are not able to offer the required variety of advanced-level courses. Two solutions are offered. The first is to rationalize the school system by enhancing the level denominational cooperation, and increasing the rate of school closures and consolidation in an effort to create large, centralized schools which can offer a comprehensive curriculum. However, this option would have serious repercussions. The Task Force notes that "schools are powerful symbols of community viability. It is obvious that any

Table 4

Mean Public Examinations Marks by Urban / Rural Schools, June, 1988[1]

Subject	District Type			
	Urban		Rural	
	X	N	X	N
Advanced Math	65.4	659	63.7	294
Academic Math	50.2	2899	52.9	2661
Biology	51.4	2976	49.0	2071
Chemistry	60.3	1756	60.5	911
Physics	59.1	1537	55.6	1522

Table 5

Mean Public Examinations Marks by School Size, June 1988[1]

Subject	School Size					
	Small		Medium		Large	
	X	N	X	N	X	N
Advanced Math	62.5	24	62.5	406	67.0	523
Academic Math	54.7	588	52.0	2607	50.3	2190
Biology	49.0	561	49.7	2735	51.3	2367
Chemistry	56.5	74	60.4	1195	60.6	1410
Physics	55.5	257	56.8	1526	58.6	1299

[1]Source: *Crocker, R.K. (1989). Achievement in Mathematics and Science. St. John's, NF: Task Force on Mathematics and Sciences Education, p. 27.*

proposal to move students away from home for secondary education would be viewed as a death sentence in some communities" (Task Force, 1989: 158).

Thus, although rationalizing the school system would address the Task Force's concerns, it stated somewhat reluctantly that the possible repercussions make this option beyond the mandate of the Task Force. Therefore, the second solution to the problem of the existence of small rural schools is that the curriculum itself needs to be transformed into a reduced core program of advanced level courses in literacy, mathematics, science, and technology for *all* students. As a result, a higher standard of education will have to be implemented in all small rural schools.

Financing Greater Equity and Excellence in the Newfoundland School System (1989)

Another report released in 1989 was Financing Greater Equity and Excellence in the Newfoundland School System by the Task Force on Education Finance (TFEF). The Task Force's mandate was to provide a full review of financing levels in the elementary and secondary school system and to identify inequalities in the abilities of schools and school districts to provide equal access to basic educational services. It also reviewed the adequacy of accountability measures in the system to ensure effective and efficient use of resources.

It is noted that in the emerging technological and knowledge-based economy, education is under tremendous pressure to be responsive to the changing needs of society. Doubt is cast on whether the current education system is as effective a source of personal "investment" as it should be. The public is demanding better quality and higher standards of education, as well as demanding a more back-to-basics approach coupled with more

intensive testing. This

> *pressure for "better" education has come from both taxpayers and politicians. Both want to ensure an efficient and effective use of tax dollars in the achievement of educational goals . . . [Thus,] the public demand for better quality and increased efficiency in the operation of their schools in increasingly presented in terms of accountability — that the outcomes be related to the inputs* (TFEF, 1989: 205).

Beyond analyzing various economic and political pressures which are directing the education system toward greater efficiency and accountability, the Task Force noted the demographic and geographic realities of Newfoundland which hinder system-wide efficiency and equality of services. The first concern is that the population is aging and in relative decline. Similar to the findings of Press (1990), the education system is identified as having a declining enrollment over the past twenty years which will continue to decline in the immediate future. Obviously, expenditures on education will also need to reflect this contraction.

A more basic concern revolves around the fact that over half the population of Newfoundland "is scattered throughout 500-600 small communities . . . The cost of providing services for such communities is very high" (TFEF, 1989: 13). The cost of providing *standard* educational services and programs to small rural schools is higher per pupil than providing the same services to urban areas. However, the Task Force reports that "the actual expenditure figures for school boards show only a slightly higher per pupil cost for smaller schools" (TFEF, 1989, 95).

The Task Force states that the lower than expected costs in small schools points to a problem of inequality since these schools operate without the required number of personnel,

do not have specialized teachers, and are not offering a full curriculum of basic and advanced level courses. Therefore, the only way to make education in rural areas more effective and equitable is to increase the size of schools through amalgamations. This will allow for adequate funding and staffing of schools based on provincial standards.

The variance in cost of providing education in different regions of the province is also reflected in school board costs. The Task Force's analysis of data indicates that small-sized school boards (a rural phenomena) with less than 2000 students are much more costly per student (i.e., inefficient) than larger urban schools boards with more than 6000 students. Consequently, it would be preferable to amalgamate smaller school boards to ensure that they will also have over 6000 students per board. Apparently, this will lead to greater efficiency. Thus, for rural schools and school boards, the *urban* standards of appropriate size and resulting efficiency are advanced as the solutions to their higher costs.

Education Reports: The Royal Commission

Introduction

The Royal Commission on Education was appointed in 1990 to conduct an *impartial* assessment into the delivery of programs and services in primary, elementary and secondary education. In the Proclamation establishing the Royal Commission, it is asked to address a number of concerns held by Government. Most notably, there was a growing concern about the effectiveness, cost-efficiency and overall quality of the education system. In a climate of increasing budgetary fiscal restraint, the provincial government wanted education to provide more "value" for the money spent. It is also noted that the geographic composition of the

province — with many rural, isolated communities — and the decline in student population has resulted in too many small schools with declining enrollments. This posed major challenges to delivering quality education in an equitable and efficient manner. A final concern was that the education system should be meeting the demands of the workplace and engaging in relevant human resource development for the future.

Thus, the Royal Commission was given a broad mandate. For the purposes of this study, it is integral to note that "the emphasis of the Terms of Reference [mandate] is on consolidation, efficiency and costs" (Royal Commission, 1992: 6). The Commission was asked to examine current organizational and administrative structures, to analyze the effectiveness of existing cooperative efforts across school districts, and to identify any existing barriers to the effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of programs and services. The explicitly stated mandate given to the Commission also include the following:

- to examine the extent to which school districts and schools can be further consolidated and the costs associated with such consolidation,
- to examine the extent of duplication resulting from the denominational system and the costs associated with duplication (Royal Commission, 1992: 428-429).

The Commission was invoked to make recommendations for reform to Government and administrative groups in education in order to realize the most effective, equitable and efficient utilization of personnel and financial resources in the education system. The *primary* focus of the Commission — of educational quality — was to be the end result.

Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies (1992)

The Royal Commission utilized a diverse range of information sources in carrying

out its mandate. Input from the general public was accepted through presentations, interviews, and submissions. Major educational reports and studies [and economic ones also] were assessed. And, finally, a number of research studies and background papers were commissioned. These came from the commission's own staff and from education experts in such areas as the Department of Education, Memorial University, and the school system. These background papers were collected in the report, Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies.

The Commissioned Studies covered a broad array of educational issues from a variety of viewpoints and ideological perspectives. Taken together, there was no coherent consensus on the direction which educational reforms should proceed. Some studies approached their issues from critical social perspectives and noted the inherent inequalities and conflicts that exist within schools, the education system, and society. These studies, which found limitations not in schools but in society as a whole, did not seem to make any noticeable impact on the final report of the Royal Commission. Other technical studies — dealing with such issues as performance indicators, accountability, and costs — provided measurable, concrete solutions to the problems being examined. These studies, from a structuralist-functionalist perspective, *were* fully incorporated into the final report of the Royal Commission.

A number of the chapters in the Commissioned Studies report directly address the issues of this study, and it is necessary to briefly review the findings of these studies. Furthermore, a review of the relevant studies — those that were largely ignored, those that were somewhat accepted, and those that were fully implemented — should help to highlight

the choice of directions which Newfoundland's education reform could have taken; and unmasks the ideological foundation upon which education reform, in reality, has occurred.

In "Equalizing Educational Opportunity," by Charlotte Strong, the focus is on poverty and other socio-economic factors which impinge on student success in school. In Newfoundland, over 20% of children live in poverty. This is, in and of itself, the prime impediment to these children's success in school. Strong indicates that the influences of family socio-economic background — such as parental occupational status, level of education and income level — are more powerful factors in determining the level of student success or failure than anything having to do with the students' innate mental abilities, or structure of the school system. However, the current structure of the education system, with its middle class biases, is also a contributing factor to the lower achievement of poor children.

Strong asserts that schools and the school system cannot be blamed for student failure when socio-economic status is the prime impediment to achievement. Therefore, a *quality* education for all cannot be achieved "unless social and economic problems are identified as barriers to success and sincere efforts made to reduce and ultimately eliminate their force" (Strong, 1992: 127).

Strong is also very critical of the human capital production function of education. She states that the belief that providing a quality education to all students will lead to greater economic success for all these students is a naive one at best. There are too many social and economic barriers in place which hinder those from a low socio-economic status from fully realizing their economic potential. The unfortunate reality in Newfoundland is that:

"Schools can do little to prepare students for employment and place students in decent jobs if those jobs do not exist" (Strong, 1992: 122; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985).

Finally, Strong proclaims that the school reform movement — as exemplified by the report A Nation at Risk — has been contrary to the needs of the disadvantaged by placing too much emphasis on educational excellence. She claimed that:

> *"Poverty is a learning disability that is not cured by higher expectations" (Robertson, 1991). "Tightening the screws" without creating necessary conditions for success cannot possibly result in an equitable, responsive, effective education system, and ironically, the effect of some current efforts to improve education, such as stiffer graduation requirements, may have the effect of increasing drop-out rates, contributing to increased unemployment, welfare dependency, and the emergence of a large and permanent underclass* (Strong, 1992: 128).

In the chapter, "Mandate of Schools: A Position Paper," Lloyd Brown notes that the ongoing drive to consolidate smaller schools to form larger ones has been justified by the need to offer a greater variety of courses, to provide more facilities, and to have more specialized teachers and personnel. However, when schools are consolidated some communities must lose their schools — schools which are important community centres. The consolidation of schools increases the length of bus rides that students must endure, leads to less parental involvement in the school, and depersonalizes the school environment.

Brown claims that the benefits attributed to large schools do not necessarily outweigh the benefits of small schools. Small schools allow for closer relationships, more student participation and belonging, and are more productive. Thus, he states: "We should, then, be more cautious than we have been about closing small schools; larger is not always better"

(Brown, 1992: 24).

Garfield Fizzard addressed the issue of "Distance Education." He notes that while many people may have fond memories of small schools, the reality is that "small schools have many limitations in the quality of education they can provide" (Fizzard, 1992: 87). The "inferior" education currently provided in these small schools has personal, social, and economic consequences. The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment is cited as *proof* that small, rural schools are not meeting educational standards and that rural areas need to greatly improve educational policy.

In the past, the means to improving the quality of education was to consolidate schools and increase the busing of children. However, parental opposition to this solution has been growing. Still, Fizzard states the response of policy makers has been that

> *these parents are being unreasonable. It is said that they cannot have it both ways. They want their children to get a quality education and they want them to attend a small school close to home. And it is only common sense, it is claimed, that it is impossible to offer quality education in small schools. To provide quality (and affordable) education, schooling must be centralized to the maximum. This has been the common wisdom in our province for many years.* (Fizzard, 1992: 87).

Fizzard does accept that small schools are "inadequate," but he firmly believes that technology and the use of distance education will be the key to providing quality education directly to small, rural schools. As a result, the need for further consolidation will be eliminated.

Dennis Treslan examined issues surrounding the establishment of effective and efficient school districts. In light of the government's emphasis on school closures and consolidation as a way to address perceived problems of duplication and inefficiency in the

education system — coupled with demographic shifts in the school age population in the province — Treslan attempted to establish the limits of viable and effective school districts. Through an extensive review of literature and research related to the management of school districts and the optimal level of centralization, cost-efficiency, achievement levels of different size school districts, and other issues related to consolidation, Treslan proclaims that there is no *conclusive* data as to what the appropriate size of school districts *should* be in this province.

> *Based on a review of the literature it can be concluded that the ideal operating size of a school district is simply that — "an ideal": a rather abstract idea that helps to guide the thinking of individuals and groups in their quest for reality . . . [T]he ideal operating size of any school district is somewhat relative, depending on a number of factors including geography, location, population, financial circumstances and the tradition associated with any particular area* (Treslan, 1992: 490).

Treslan notes that determining the appropriate level of centralization /decentralization in the school system is a controversial and ambiguous issue. Those who desire a high level of centralization and greater school district consolidation state that larger districts are able to offer a wider range of student programs and services, allow for education specialists, and make possible the efficient use of economic resources which will lead to greater student achievement and educational effectiveness (see Rogers, 1986). However, Treslan (1992: 495) states: "There is little research to conclusively support these claims" — even though it has become the consensus to believe so.

Contrary to the view that "bigger is better," Treslan highlights a number of studies which question the value of consolidation. These studies purport to show that small schools are more administratively flexible (Carnoy, 1988); small districts produce better educational

results (Jewel, 1989); are more efficient in relation to costs, curriculum development, and instruction (Berlin, Cienkus, and Jensen, 1989; Jess, 1988); and that small districts are more beneficial for children of low socioeconomic status (Berlin and Cienkis, 1989). Consolidation does not automatically result in better education but may only result in *small*, poor, inefficient districts becoming *larger*, poor, inefficient districts (see Roebothan, 1987; Sher, 1986). Finally, consolidation results in a loss of local influence and control over education. Echoing the theme of this study that education reform is *not* about educational quality per se, Treslan does make note of research by Smith and DeYoung (1988) that succinctly states that "the key to the school size debate may well be educational control rather than educational quality" (Treslan, 1992: 496).

Treslan also analyzed literature dealing with the cost-effectiveness of school districts. Small school districts require a set minimum teacher and resource allocations (i.e., "fixed capital" requirements). This results in dis-economies as compared to larger districts which can spread out these human and capital resources to a larger number of students. However, he warns: "To assume that consolidation will automatically result in substantial savings is, for the most part, a defiance of reality" (Treslan, 1992: 489), since consolidation often results in increased bus transportation costs, maintenance costs, and central office travel costs. Moreover, the emphasis on cost-efficiency — performing a task economically — has to be weighed against the system's effectiveness. As noted in Butler (1985) and Howley (1989), large districts *may* show greater cost efficiency, but if this is at the cost of effectiveness then it is a *false* efficiency.

Treslan also analyzed studies on the relationship between school district size and

selected indicators of educational quality — i.e., student achievement levels. While some studies noted that students in larger districts may outperform those from smaller districts, it was *not district size*, in itself, which accounted for the variance; but other factors such as socio-economic status (see Melnick, 1986; O'Neil and Beckner, 1980; Wilson, 1985; Manahan, 1989). Other studies noted that larger school districts are able to offer a higher quality/quantity of educational services, such as advanced course offerings and specialized staff, but that it was determined that there is actually no significant difference in student achievement (see Melnick, 1987; Kennedy, 1989); or that while there may *be* some difference, it does not mean that small districts are unable to attain high levels of achievement (see Coleman, 1986; Walberg, 1989). Finally, some studies concluded that there was actually an inverse relationship between school/district size and educational outcomes (achievement levels) (see Fowler, 1989; Howley, 1989).

Finally, Treslan reviewed previous studies on school district restructuring plans for Newfoundland commissioned by the Task Force on Integrated School District Boundaries (Roebothan, 1987) and the Committee to Study Roman Catholic School District Boundaries (Treslan, 1988). Both studies viewed more consolidation as a viable policy, but the Roman Catholic Boundaries Report was very cautious as to the possible benefits of larger districts.

After reviewing all the relevant literature Treslan concludes that while there is no "ideal" operating size for school districts, there is still some need for consolidating some current districts. However, (as noted in Galgay, 1987; Rogers, 1986) boundaries should not be determined by meeting district size targets, but should be determined by other factors directly related to providing quality programs. In any case, consolidation will only be

successful if extra resources are provided to ensure new district viability.

The topic of "Performance Indicators and System Accountability," by Robert Crocker, is duplicated in **both** the Commissioned Studies report and the final report of the Royal Commission. Crocker contends that the *need* for greater accountability of the education system stems from several factors. He notes that a substantial portion of the provincial budget is allocated to education, and in a time of fiscal restraint it is expected that the education system should be fiscally accountable to tax payers. The education system should reduce costs while maintaining comparable level of service.

Most notably, Crocker states that much of the impetus for accountability derives from the United States model — a nation in which the standards and quality of education are claimed to be in decline. He identified A Nation at Risk as the most influential report for reform from the United States. This report decried "the rising tide of mediocrity" in the United States school system (Crocker, 1992: 212). Crocker shares the same concerns as those expressed for the United States; and also reiterates the ideals and discourse of past-economic reports on the status of education in this province. While the aim of greater accountability is for a higher quality education, the underlying justification is that economic development of the province is dependent upon increasing the educational level of the populace.

The education system is described as being inadequate to meet the changing needs of the economy: not producing enough adaptable and innovative workers who will be required for the information-based economy. Crocker explicitly states that the recent interest in accountability

> *is associated with economic considerations such as global competitiveness and the increased importance of education to economic development. Under these conditions it is not surprising that educators would turn to economic concepts to address some of the perceived problems of accountability . . . All of this points to an economically driven demand for accountability in education, with business leaders coming increasingly to the forefront in calling for improvements in education, and , not surprisingly, for the application of economic accountability concepts, such as productivity, competitiveness, and efficiency to the educational system* (Crocker, 1992: 202,201).

In order for accountability standards to be established, indicators need to be developed which will permit the assessment and comparison of the performance of schools on standardized criteria — regardless of the local context of the school itself. Reliable indicators may measure such things as participation rates, or graduation rates; but most often they are standardized examinations. Thus, Crocker advocates that future indicators of educational quality should be based on a criterion-referenced achievement tests. Even though there are various limitations to these indicators, in terms of validity and reliability, Crocker urges policy makers to implement these performance indicators and "not be deterred from action because the indicators are imperfect" (Crocker, 1992: 249).

Crocker notes that past performance indicators, such as the CTBS (which he cites from the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment) show that "a few districts, most notably those in St. John's perform very well, while those in rural areas "perform very poorly" (Crocker, 1992: 221). He further states that this may be due to "considerable tolerance of inefficiency" in these under-performing small rural schools which should be closed or consolidated.

In the final analysis, Crocker does suggest that a reliable accountability system will draw attention to severe problems and provide the basis for policy decisions which will

address these problems. Schools are to be the basic accountability unit.

> *The social context in which a particular school functions must be used to interpret the results attained by that school, and to develop policies aimed at ameliorating causes of poor performance, whether or not these originate in the school itself* (Crocker, 1992: 243).

Harold Press produced a chapter entitled "Costs and Consequences: An Examination of the Potential for Consolidation within the Education System and Associated Costs." Press' technocratic description of schooling concentrated on describing the costs of schooling, given specified assumptions about the structure and organization of schools. He established four cost models of the education system by analyzing the variables of school size, total cost, and per pupil cost of schools. Therefore, a statistical relationship between school size and cost was formulated and recommendations offered as to how best to structure the education system in order to most effectively utilize resources while maximizing educational outcomes.

By implementing his cost model it was found that small schools cost more per student than larger schools in Newfoundland. The problem of high costs in the Newfoundland education system is identified as a consequence of the "geography, topography and settlement patterns in this province [which] have resulted in a large number of small, isolated schools" (Press, 1992: 523). Therefore, the consolidation of schools into larger units would produce the most cost-efficient education system possible.

Given the assumption that larger schools are more cost-effective, Press produced four models of reform and stated the comparative costs of each model. Model A represented the status quo with a cost of almost $520 million. Model B represented a rationalization of

schools and school districts within the current denominational structure — at a cost saving of $6.8 million. Model C represented the status quo in terms of schools and school boards structure, but with a non-denominational structure which would allow for a savings of $13.3 million due to a reduction in service duplication. Model D represented a fully rationalized school system within a non-denominational structure, which would save $21.3 million — or 4.1% annually — over the current status quo.

The findings of Press are **fully accepted and replicated** in the final report of the Royal Commission. Model D is identified as the preferred model on which to proceed with education reform. This model is predicated upon

> *a maximum level of consolidation and sharing among schools and school districts. Within this framework there would also exist a set of non-denominational boards reduced to minimal levels. In addition, schools would be consolidated based on acceptable parameters for school size, reasonable conditions for student transportation and demonstrated need.* (Royal Commission, 1992: 110-111).

The final section of the Commissioned Studies report has two chapters about public opinion on education in Newfoundland. Interestingly, Graesser found that there is a general positive attitude toward the quality of local schools. In the study respondents were asked to "grade" their local schools from "A" to "F." It was found that 35% gave their local school an "A" grade, and 47% a "B" grade, while only 4% gave a grade of "D" or less. This indicates a high level of satisfaction with schools and casts into doubt the governments claims that the general public is *demanding* reforms.

Meanwhile, In Bulcock's chapter, "Public Attitudes toward Educational Change in Newfoundland," much is made of the emergence of a new high-tech knowledge-based economy in Newfoundland and the education system that needs to develop with it. Bulcock

contends that there is a reasonable consensus on the direction of change and the *need* for change — both economic and educational. Therefore, he states:

> *What the present study shows is that Newfoundland is embarked on an inexorable course of change . . . The findings indicate that most Newfoundlanders support the changes that are occurring and that for most of them the change includes the promotion of a secularized school system* (Bulcock, 1992: 658).

Our Children, Our Future

The Royal Commission presented a comprehensive document addressing a large number of issues affecting the educational enterprise. It covered aspects of pedagogy, curriculum, governance and structure of the system, as well as many other topics. However, this study will only analyze those topics directly relevant to the focus of this study — the context and rationale for reform, and the repercussions of reform for small rural schools. It should be noted that the final report of the Royal Commission does provide a more coherent and focused direction for educational reform than Commissioned Studies. However, the overall direction for reform seems predetermined by the mandate of the Commission to such an extent that, at times, the recommendations proposed are oblivious, or even contrary to the various data and research findings presented in the Commissioned Studies or the final report itself. Of course, in order to fully understand the ramifications of any proposed reforms in the Report, it is necessary to restate the "context for change" that is identified. The direction of any, and all, stated reforms must ultimately be ensconced within this framework and rationale for education reform.

The Commission notes one of the realities facing the province is demographic trends.

There are declining birth rates, an aging population, and substantial out-migration resulting in decreasing school enrollments — particularly in rural areas. The small, scattered and declining student population also results in extra costs and complexities in delivering educational services. Possible problems of under-funding are further exacerbated by the province's weak financial position. There is little hope for any increase in public expenditure on education, and it is most likely that there will actually be a policy of retrenchment and spending reductions. These financial realities mean that new qualitative changes need to occur which will result in structural efficiencies in the education system just to keep the current level of services education.

Most importantly, there are economic dislocations in the province's "rapidly restructuring" economy. Traditional resource-based industries are in decline, and employment in these industries has plummeted, while international political changes have created an open global marketplace with fierce international competition in Newfoundland's traditional industries. Meanwhile there is an emerging post-industrial technological economy which requires that Newfoundland become "an information society based on interdependence, non-linearity, knowledge, and understanding" (Royal Commission, 1992: 34).

The Commission notes that education does not take place in isolation from economic, political, or social changes affecting the province — they are all interdependent. The education system has to be responsive to new economic trends, and produce the highly qualified, skilled and flexible individuals required for the "new economy." The Report states: "There is no greater challenge facing the province than ensuring that our children

obtain the skills, knowledge and abilities essential to survival in a fast-changing highly competitive world." (Royal Commission, 1992: xix).

The Commission fully endorses human capital theory as a rationale for reforming the education system. The Commission claims that education is "inextricably linked with economic development" and stands "firmly behind the belief that a better education will bring significant economic benefits to individuals, to government, and to society . . . everyone, in fact, is better served by a higher quality education" (Royal Commission, 1992: 401). Investment in human capital development is necessary for improving the competitiveness of the province's economy. Without it, the provincial economy will stagnate. The Commission also restates the findings of previous economic reform documents that education must be responsive to the needs of business and industry by producing a labor force that will foster economic self-reliance.

> *As reported in the House Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986), an educated population can attract industry, foster growth of research and development, improve competitiveness, productivity and innovation, become an economic good suitable for export, and can lead to the creation of employment* (Royal Commission, 1992: 27).

It is extremely significant that the push to make the education system more responsive to the requirements of the changing economy "primarily arises from the business and political communities" (Royal Commission, 1992: 207). It is also not surprising that the business sector "wants to redirect educational priorities to an economic agenda" (Royal Commission, 1992: 273). Thus, more links (such as through co-operative education courses) should be forged between high schools and business, and students need to develop a value system which prepares them for a competitive, international marketplace.

Indeed, the education system's assumed inadequacies in meeting these requirements have provided the impetus for reform. The Commission holds the belief that the Newfoundland education system has severe fiscal and educational inefficiencies and that

> *education standards are too low, and that many graduates lack the basic and relevant skills required to function in our present society, let alone the modern, global marketplace that is quickly establishing itself as the economic arena of the future . . . Although such concerns as access, equity, and choice are also important, the key issue fueling the reform momentum is the view that the overall "productivity" of the education system is insufficient and, specifically, that the educational success rate for students is too low. Individual and collective well-being is increasingly dependent upon high educational attainment. It is important to recognize that improving educational outcomes will require change to the entire system* (Royal Commission, 1992: xv, 242).

Very briefly, some of the relevant topics that the Commission addressed are as follows.

Echoing economic reform documents, it states that the goal of schooling, and of the education system, must be more closely focused and articulated. Also, drawing on the reform literature from the United States (notably A Nation at Risk), "quality" and "excellence" are identified as central goals of education. Quality will be achieved by raising academic standards and expectations of student success, calling for greater accountability, lengthening the school day and year, and requiring higher standards for teacher certification (Royal Commission, 1992: 203-204). The curriculum should focus on academic education. Language arts, math, and science will from the core subject matter. Students will be provided the basic skills required for "survival in a technological age" and be prepared to "become enterprising individuals" (Royal Commission, 1992: 216).

Equity in educational opportunity needs to be enhanced by ensuring that all children, regardless of individual characteristics, socioeconomic background, or geographic location,

have full participation and involvement in the education system. At times, this may require unequal, higher funding to rural school boards and small schools to attempt to equalize differences between rural and urban schools. Also, greater efficiencies in the delivery of educational services must be realized through restructuring the education system as a whole (based on Press' (1992) recommendations), and emphasizing greater local school effectiveness. Any savings realized through this restructuring should be reallocated within the education system to meet its most urgent needs.

Raising students' achievement levels is one of the major goals of the Commission; since it is noted that Newfoundland students "consistently score below the national median level" on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (Royal Commission, 1992: 38). Drawing on the results of the Task Force on Mathematics and Science (1989), the Commission determined that there was a significant relationship between school size and achievement: "students from larger schools and in urban areas tend to achieve at higher levels than those from smaller, rural schools" (Royal Commission, 1992: 39).

However, school size in itself is not significantly related to achievement, and simply increasing school size will *not* increase achievement levels. Larger schools are found in urban areas which have access to a wide variety of human, physical, and cultural resources, and which support a well-educated, skilled workforce. It is not surprising that the children of relatively well-off parents in urban centers such as St. John's — with its civil service and university — have higher achievement levels than children from less well-off rural areas of the province. "Most recent studies have shown that when socio-economic status is controlled for, school size itself becomes an insignificant predictor of achievement" (Royal

Commission, 1992: 129).

Socio-economic status is recognized as a significant variable related to achievement. Poverty in childhood is associated with poor performance in school and ultimately to poor social and economic standing in adulthood. Although schools should provide a quality education to all students, regardless of socio-economic background, the Commission notes that when

> *poor children come to school, they encounter all the middle-class biases of the education system . . . in spite of having equal access to education programs, the opportunity to achieve success is diminished for many poor children. School, like life itself, becomes a major uphill struggle . . . the school's ability to achieve the goal of providing equal opportunities for all students will depend to a large measure on how well the broader community addresses the social, economic, and development needs of the children. No child should be condemned to a permanent marginal status in society because of social and economic circumstances beyond their control* (Royal Commission, 1992: 336-337).

Returning to the issue of school size as a determinant of achievement, it is apparent that other factors associated with the location of the school (such as socio-economic standing in the school's community) are mostly responsible for variations in achievement levels. The Commission states:

> *The main conclusion reached after careful analysis of the available research, focus group responses, and interviews is that the school size debate is inconclusive. This is because school size is but one of many factors which affect educational outcomes and the quality of school life . . .* other things being equal, small schools *generally do no better or no more than large schools — except that other things are almost never equal* (Royal Commission, 1992: 130-131).

Small schools are also portrayed as disadvantaged since larger schools have better physical facilities, have a wider selection of course offerings and more extra-curricular activities, and have the ability to retain specialist teachers for advanced level courses. Also,

small schools are said to be more expensive per unit cost than larger schools. That is, they are less fiscally efficient. Economies of scale are supposed to exist in large schools and result in the realization of savings through volume purchasing, the use of excess capacity, and the allocation of fixed and capital costs over a larger student base. "Economy of scale theory, by its nature, implies that — financially — bigger is better" (Royal Commission, 1992: 125).

However, the province's school system as a whole, and individual schools are, for the most part, too small to realize any possible savings from economies of scale. Even more telling in terms of organizational efficiency, it is recognized that larger schools may not always perform as efficiently as smaller schools.

> *Services to remote areas may be more efficiently delivered through small service centers. Thus there exists, a conflict between economies of scale and organizational efficiencies . . . Economies of scale associated with larger schools and districts result in quantifiable, monetary savings, but may also cause less apparent, yet nonetheless relevant, qualitative, non-monetary losses in efficient and effective education* (Royal Commission, 1992: 125).

The Commission states that there are strengths and potential advantages of maintaining small, local schools such as increasing the sense of belonging and community for the student. It also allows for greater school / community interaction and parental involvement. Schools and communities, especially in rural areas, have traditionally been closely connected. Consolidation of these schools will lead to a loss of a vital community resource and result in community alienation. The Commission does report that many submissions did express a sense of fear that consolidation would lead to more busing of students and the problems that busing entails (Royal Commission, 1992: 18).

Still, the contention is that there are too many small schools, and not enough resources, to adequately meet the requirements for producing educational quality. In the current movement for educational improvement, the consolidation of schools is "inevitable" (Royal Commission, 1992: 228). It is stated that small schools that exist due to a community's relative isolation must remain. However, where the denominational structure of the education system has resulted in separate denominational schools, and where there is a duplication of services in neighboring communities (often the result of the denominational structure of the education system which forces the maintenance of separate denominational schools), consolidation should occur. Consolidation will result in educational benefits for students and "must take precedence over tangential local concerns and issues," which communities have when they are faced with losing their only school (Royal Commission, 1992: 130).

The consolidation of "ineffective" small rural schools is stressed — despite the fact that the Commission acknowledged that "while there has been a great deal of research on school size, much of it is inconclusive" (Royal Commission, 1992: 228). Also, while the Commission does hold that "it would be improper, impractical, and insensitive for the Department of Education or any other provincial body to legislate minimum or maximum school size," the Report proposes "guidelines" for the establishment of optimal school size (Royal Commission, 1992: 130). It is proposed that primary / elementary schools (kindergarten - Grade 6) should have a maximum enrollment of 420 students. Junior high schools (Grade 7-9) should optimally have 90 students for each grade, while high schools (Level I - Level III) should have an enrollment of between 500-800 students.

Given that the median size of all schools across the province is 200 students, it is obvious that extensive amalgamation and consolidation of schools will be necessary in order for schools to meet these "guidelines" of optimal school size. As a result, school consolidation is proposed as the policy objective by which to improve the educational quality of small schools (by turning then into large schools). It is stated:

The Commission therefore recommends . . . that school consolidation be considered on the following grounds:
1. Schools which are not viable, and are within reasonable distance of another school, be targeted for consolidation, and
2. Schools which are not *viable and* not *within reasonable distance of another school should be mandated a basic foundation program . . .*

. . . that viability be considered in relation to
1. the enrollment, location and quality of school facilities
2. the scope of the program offered
3. the availability of resources within the school
4 the type of services available within the surrounding areas, and
5. the attainment of provincially-developed standards of achievement . . .

. . . that, once the conditions for consolidation have been identified and a suitable process established, the communities identified . . . be examined to ensure that only viable schools continue to operate. (Royal Commission, 1992: 229).

The Commission's findings on school board /district size generally repeated those found by Treslan (1992). School district size was studied in terms of effectiveness in

providing quality educational services; of maximizing fiscal opportunities and economies of scale; and noting the special difficulties in delivering educational services to small, isolated schools. It was concluded that there was no ideal operating size for school districts since "the Commission found no evidence that district size is a significant factor in student achievement, the quality of services, or cost effectiveness" (Royal Commission, 1992: 126).

Despite the lack of conclusive evidence to suggest that school districts should be larger, the Commission recommends that the number of school boards should be drastically reduced through board consolidation. Also, the notion that larger school districts will lead to less community involvement and more bureaucratic remoteness (as the Commission notes it has in the past) is dismissed by the Commission which holds that "bigger is better," or at least, it is no worse than small size. "While the Commission believes school boards and school board office personnel are important, there is no evidence to suggest that the consolidation of boards results in a negative impact on educational performance" (Royal Commission, 1992: 237).

Furthermore, when evidence on school district size is "inconclusive," the larger districts are still imputed to be more effective. "Although some people may disagree with the creation of more comprehensive districts, there is significant evidence that large administrative bodies can deliver a wider range of activities and options more cost-effectively and more efficiently than smaller districts" (Royal Commission, 1992: 240-241).

The Commission states that many problems endemic in the Newfoundland education system are the result of the external realities of geography, topography, settlement patterns, and demographic trends in the province which has resulted in not only a very large number

of small isolated schools, but also "sometimes insurmountable difficulties" in providing quality education services to these schools (Royal Commission, 1992: 122).

> *Over one-half of the province's children attend small, rural schools where learning conditions and curriculum opportunities are more restricted than those prevailing in urban schools. The differences are such that it is questionable whether equal opportunities for all children can ever prevail* (Royal Commission, 1992: 217).

The existence of these small, rural schools is identified as an impediment to reaching desired levels of student achievement, cost-efficiency, and overall quality of services. This is despite the fact that the Commission was not able to provide any conclusive evidence pointing to small rural schools, in and of themselves, as being directly responsible for poor performance.

A major component of Our Children Our Future deals with performance and accountability. The findings here are merely an expansion of the views of Crocker (1992) in the Commissioned Studies. It is noted that the demands for accountability in the education system have come from political rhetoric and recent studies in the province, such as Education and Market Place Training(1990), which focus on "both educational achievement and economic competitiveness" (Royal Commission, 1992: 379). Demands for accountability are also emanating from taxpayers who realize that public resources are limited, and want to be assured that their tax dollars being spent on "education represent a sound and cost-effective investment in the future" (Royal Commission, 1992: 380).

> *Many business leaders have also come to demand improvements in education in terms of economic accountability, applying such concepts as* productivity, competitiveness, *and* efficiency. *This suggests that it is not only the results of education which need to be measured, but also how much effort and money go into achieving those outcomes* (Royal Commission, 1992: 380).

The education system must be held accountable for its performance due to the above reasons. As well, it needs to set uniform acceptable standards to make the system more competitive, and recognize "the increased importance of education for economic development" (Royal Commission, 1992: 380). But, ultimately, the aim is to improve the *quality* of education.

As noted in Crocker (1992), new criterion-referenced examinations will function as quantifiable performance indicators, and individual schools will be the basic unit of comparison and accountability. Those schools not efficiently producing results will be targeted for interventions necessary to improve performance, while exemplary schools will be recognized, and rewarded, for high performance (perhaps, as the Commission advocates, by provincial leaders from the political and business sectors).

Contrary to the findings of Graesser (1992), the Commission conveys the message that very few people are satisfied with the current school system and that they are asking for fundamental changes. The Commission rejects the idea that only minor changes will address the problems in the school system. It states:

> *Most people believe that the present system is neither adequate for the needs of today nor economically defensible. Very few people advocated a system without further modification. The Commission could thus arrive at no other conclusion than the system must change significantly* (Royal Commission, 1992: 218).

Therefore, the Commission advocates that the only means by which to attain a new effective and efficient school system is for all "partners" in the education enterprise — including teachers, " tudents and parents, community and business leaders, health, welfare and enforcement agencies, other educational institutions (from pre-schools to post-

secondary), and other interested groups and individuals" — should work toward the Commission's "visions and goals, with a devotion to a common purpose that transcends self-interest" (Royal Commission, 1992: 212, 216). Only through achieving this consensus will educational reforms be successful.

Education Reports: Post-Royal Commission

Introduction

The Royal Commission formulated a general ideological and pragmatic framework for the future of education reform initiatives. There were a large number of recommendations regarding change to all aspects of the education system and the organizational structure of education in the province. Immediately following the release of the Royal Commission's report, it was averred: "The Government is in substantial agreement with the reports direction for education" (Profile '92, 1993: 13). Subsequently, all government policy statements have flowed from the recommendations proposed in the Royal Commission report — although they have been extremely selective regarding which aspects of the report are emphasized. Thus, the government states:

> *The Royal Commission, like most such broad reviews, identified areas of weakness and established general directions for educational improvement, but was less definitive in its recommendations of actually how to accomplish many of the necessary changes. It therefore fell to the Implementation Secretariat to initiate further consultation and research, and prepare policy proposals in many of these areas (Adjusting the Course - A Status Report, 1996: 3).*

The following sections highlight the government's major public policy statements which have been released in the aftermath of the Royal Commission. These policy

documents fully articulate the scope and direction in which education reforms are being advanced — some of which have already been implemented.

Profile '92 - Educational Indicators (Primary, Elementary, Secondary) (1993)

This annual report from the Education Minister came on the heals of the Royal Commission and warmly received its recommendations. Specifically, it deals with the issue of performance indicators in the education system. These performance indicators describe the performance of the system (and of individual schools and students) relative to its goals, provide evidence to taxpayers that they "are receiving value for their investment in the education system," and identify ways to improve the effectiveness of schools and improve student performance. Ultimately, this should lead to an "improvement in the ability of our students to succeed in the global economy" (Profile '92, 1993: 11-12). In light of the necessity to improve the education system and reduce costs, these indicators are meant to ensure that the education system is accountable to the public for efficiently and effectively delivering its education "product."

One major concern noted in the Report is that current indicators point to a deficit in the performance of students from small rural schools. Most notably, on the recent Canadian Test of Basic Skills, it highlighted the fact that scores in urban schools are higher than in rural schools for all grade levels. The poor quality of small rural school performance is also further exacerbated by the limited range of courses available to students due to small enrollment sizes and a lack of suitably qualified teachers (Profile '92; 1993: 37, 25).

Adjusting the Course (Part I): Restructuring the School System for Educational Excellence (November 25, 1993).

This document highlights the government's commitment to reform the education system in order to improve the level of human capital in the province. It also notes that the main theme of the Royal Commission was that higher standards and expectations are required in the school system. This is predicated on the belief that higher levels of achievement are necessary for improving the economic well-being of the province. It is stated that "awareness" of this link between improving education and economic renewal "has been amply illustrated in public consultations held by the recent Royal Commission on Education, by the consultative group on the Province's Strategic Economic Plan, and in a variety of other reports and submissions" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: 1).

Given this affirmation of human capital theory, the Government states: "Our goal for education is to transform this society from one of persistent under-achievement to one whose achievement levels rank with the best in the nation" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: i). The first concrete step toward this goal is to minimize the number of administrative bodies in the education system in order to concentrate decision making directly in the government. This means that school boards should be organized along non-denominational lines and reducing the number of school boards from 27 to 9 — and perhaps even fewer in the future.

A major component of removing denominational interests from the education system is that the government — and more specifically, the Department of Education — will have total control over school construction and renovations in the future based on its own set of priorities. In effect, this will mean the construction of large centralized schools in order to

replace current smaller local schools where possible.

Considerable emphasis is also placed upon setting higher provincial goals and standards, assessing the effectiveness of the system, and making the system more accountable by ensuring "that the resources utilized, be they human or financial, are effectively and efficiently utilized" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: 8). To meet these objectives, it is essential that schools are "reorganized along neighborhood lines, with one school serving all students within a particular geographical area" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: 13). It is asserted that *under-utilized* schools must be consolidated in order to produce economies in both capital and operating costs. Province wide guidelines for school-viability need to be developed and "non-viable schools consolidated as soon as possible;" especially through "removing any incentive to keep open such [small] schools in areas where consolidation is possible" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: 17, 18).

However, some schools that may not be viable will have to remain open. This is due to the relative isolation of the community in which it is located and lack of a nearby alternative. The government recognizes that the general policy of consolidation will present many problems because of "local community politics, traditional patterns of community cooperation or competition, and the very real decline of some communities to the point where the loss of a school can be a substantial threat to community viability" (Adjusting the Course, 1993: 15). Still, the government maintains that the consolidation of schools must proceed in order to achieve excellence in the education system. And, like all other previous government policy directives, it is stated that a consensus of children, parents, teachers, school boards, Churches, and the Government must develop to produce a united effort to

achieve the goals set forth. Otherwise, the education system will continue to be mired in mediocrity.

Adjusting the Course (Part II): Improving the Conditions for Learning (February, 1994).

This document acknowledges that the government has accepted the general direction for education reform presented in the Royal Commission on Education, while at the same time noting that these Adjusting the Course documents will specify the process of reform. Many of the details of the proposed changes in the Royal Commission will be worked out by all stakeholders in the education system "within the overall framework outlined in these reports" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: iii). Moreover, education reform will proceed based on the goals outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan (1992), such as "streamlining the system for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. Some of the specific means of implementing these goals are outlined in this report" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 5).

In Adjusting the Course (1994), the Government assumes full responsibility for establishing basic goals, setting standards, and providing resources and structures for a reformed education system, while also setting clear goals and expectations for various stakeholders in education: "Specific roles and functions are identified for students, teachers, and parents" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 7). It asserts that all those involved in educating children *must* join with the government in achieving its goals for a reformed education system, and that "the public at large, including business, service agencies, and individuals must promote and reinforce the goals wherever possible" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 3). A consensus and sense of unity in working towards these changes must develop in order for the

reforms to produce a higher quality education system.

The Government notes that in a new economy with high levels of technology and global competition, one of the primary foci of education is to produce highly skilled and flexible graduates required in the transforming workplace. Within this functionalist perspective, education is said to "exist primarily to prepare students for their future roles as contributing members of society" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 1). Thus, as in Adjusting the Course (Part I), it is stated that the goal of reform is to produce educational quality and attain high levels of educational performance in order to improve the economic well-being of the province.

The Government states that the "overriding" objective in all the attempts at educational reform is to transform the Newfoundland *society* to one of high economic achievement. It notes that forces outside our control — the province's geography, history, national and global economic conditions, and even climate and environmental conditions — have combined to inhibit the full economic and social development of the province. Fortunately though, education is advanced as an entity "not under the influence of outside forces. Reaching high levels of educational achievement is a matter entirely within our own control" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 4). Furthermore, the accepted link between high educational achievement and economic development is advanced as the key to improving Newfoundland's stagnant economy. The Government states:

> *A strong case can be made that reaching higher levels of educational achievement can, in itself, yield considerable economic and social gain. A highly educated society is likely to be more adaptable to changing economic conditions, less likely to be content with low levels of economic activity, less dependent on social programs, and generally more self-confident and self-*

> *reliant. More tangibly, a highly educated workforce is a major resource in its own right. In fact, it may be argued that this will become the most important asset of any society in the future. It may be an exaggeration to argue that improved education, in itself, is sufficient to transform the economy of this province from one of the weakest to one of the strongest in Canada. Nevertheless, achieving our educational goal is clearly a necessary and important step in bringing about this transformation.* (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 5).

The first step toward improving educational achievement is to establish higher expectations and standards for all students, since it is assumed current performance expectations are too low. Achievement is not directly related to ability. "Ability is not seen as something innate," but as something linked to individual effort, time on task, and perseverance (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 10). Therefore, it is recommended that we should expect *all* children to achieve at common high standards since achievement is merely a function of effort and perseverance. Furthermore, achievement levels are not "linked to circumstances beyond the individuals control." In any case, the school does not have any influence on factors which may be seen as "beyond the student's control" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 10). Individual students are to be held solely accountable for their level of achievement. Those who do not exhibit sufficient levels of effort and perseverance are forewarned that "students who do not perform at adequate levels in the education system are at risk of having to function at the margins of the future society in which they must live" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: 6).

In order to improve the quality of education, the current school curriculum also needs to be reformed such that the primary core areas of language, mathematics, science, and technology are fully emphasized. Although the curriculum should be based on a sound

pedagogical rationale, the government admits here that, in reality, it is shaped by political forces, as well as external professional education agencies. The curriculum does not necessarily address the needs of particular students which are politically disempowered.

Along with a revised curriculum, it is also necessary to implement standardized criterion-based measures which will ensure that student achievement in the core curriculum is meeting established standards. This will permit the monitoring of student and system performance and provide the basis of a public accountability system.

"Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat - Department of Education and Training," Education Statistics: Elementary - Secondary (1994-1995)

In the wake of the Adjusting the Course documents, the Government moved from a position of outlining their proposed direction for future education reform, to presenting documents which state the actual course in which educational reform is progressing, while simultaneously justifying and defending these actions. In an extensive series of reports, the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat has addressed the progress which these reforms have or have not yet made.

Echoing the economic reform documents of a decade earlier, the Implementation Secretariat declares that there is major restructuring occurring in the global economy, and that the Newfoundland economy, with its reliance on primary resources, must quickly adapt or face perpetual economic malaise. Therefore, the education system should be producing an educated, flexible workforce that possesses a high level of basic skills in mathematics, science, and language and be able to function in a "high tech" world. It is noted that the

importance of education in reviving the economy has been recognized by Government in the Strategic Economic Plan, and that the Government fully recognizes that "education and economic and social development have quite clearly been linked" (Ensuring Quality in Education, 1995a: 9).

The Secretariat also states that the public is, in its own right, demanding greater accountability, higher standards of achievement, and greater efficiency in the education system (Ensuring Quality in Education, 1995b: 1). Although it is suggested that there is a fairly clear consensus on the need for these changes, there is also the problem of disagreement on the process of reaching these goals. Thus, the government asserts that all stakeholders in the education system should be united behind the **government's** vision on the direction of education reform.

> *In order for large scale reform to succeed, it is necessary for each of us to look beyond our own immediate agendas, to the welfare of the system as a whole . . . [T]he interests of students cannot be served when groups hold contradictory agendas, each pulling the system in a different direction. Compromises are required, and consensus must be arrived at in order to move forward with reform. (Ensuring Quality in Education, 1996: 3).*

The consensus which the government desires in relation to the small rural schools is the view that: they are scholastically ineffective, fiscally inefficient and, ultimately, unaffordable. The focus on universally applied standardized tests, and especially the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), has been a prominent feature of economic and education reform documents; and have provided reformers with substantive evidence of the inferiority of small rural schools. Though these tests have been criticized for being culturally biased, or that they ignore socio-economic factors when small schools or rural areas are

uncritically judged, it is true that, at a cursory glance, they highlight that there are major deficiencies in small rural schools.

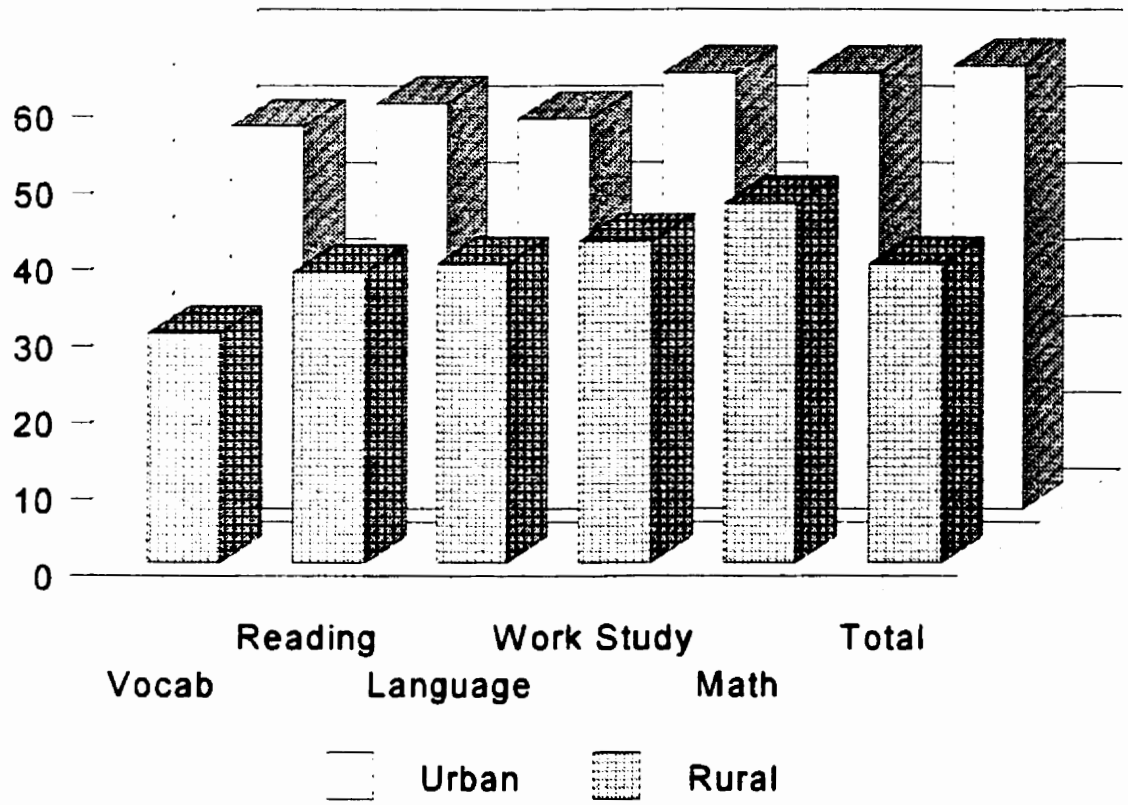
One of the means by which Government controls the discourse on effective education and keeps the results of these tests in the public domain is by publishing them in annual reports of Education Statistics. The Grade 7 results for 1994-1995 are representative of the typical findings on standardized tests in these reports. The data in **Table 6** indicate that there is a wide variance on these standardized tests between urban and rural areas of the province. In fact, the urban areas of the province achieve to levels above the national median on all skills of the CTBS. Unfortunately, students from rural areas perform very poorly in comparison to the national mean and to their urban counterparts. **Figure 1** highlights this discrepancy.

The issues of school size and achievement levels is also of great concern to the Government. The data presented in **Table 7** and **Figure 2** reinforce the government's position that small schools, in and of themselves, are also detrimental to student achievement. There is a very clear progression in achievement levels as the size of the school increases: the smallest schools only achieving to the 39th percentile, while the largest schools, with over 130 students, achieve to the 59th percentile.

The message is very clear. Students from rural areas are holding back provincial achievement levels, and ultimately, provincial prosperity as a result of these high achievements. Meanwhile, small schools are conspicuously linked with low achievement. Therefore, small rural schools embody the *worst* of both worlds. The government laments: "Geography prohibits consolidation for some schools and this combined with the continued

Figure 1

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills: Urban and Rural Performance in the Five Basic Skill Areas, Grade 7, Fall 1994[2]



[2]Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995). Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 95.

Table 6

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills: Percentile Rankings of Urban and Rural Performance in the Five Basic Skills Areas, Grade 7, Fall 1994

	Subject					
	Vocabulary	**Reading**	**Language**	**Work Study**	**Math**	**Total**
Urban	50	53	51	57	57	56
Rural	30	38	39	42	47	39

Table 7

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills: Percentile Rankings of Achievement by School Size On Composite Test Results, Grade 7, Fall 1994[4]

CTBS - Achievement by School Size on Composite Test Results					
	School Enrolment (Number of Students in the School)				
	1-19	20-39	40-74	74-129	130+
CTBS Percentile Score	39	42	45	52	59

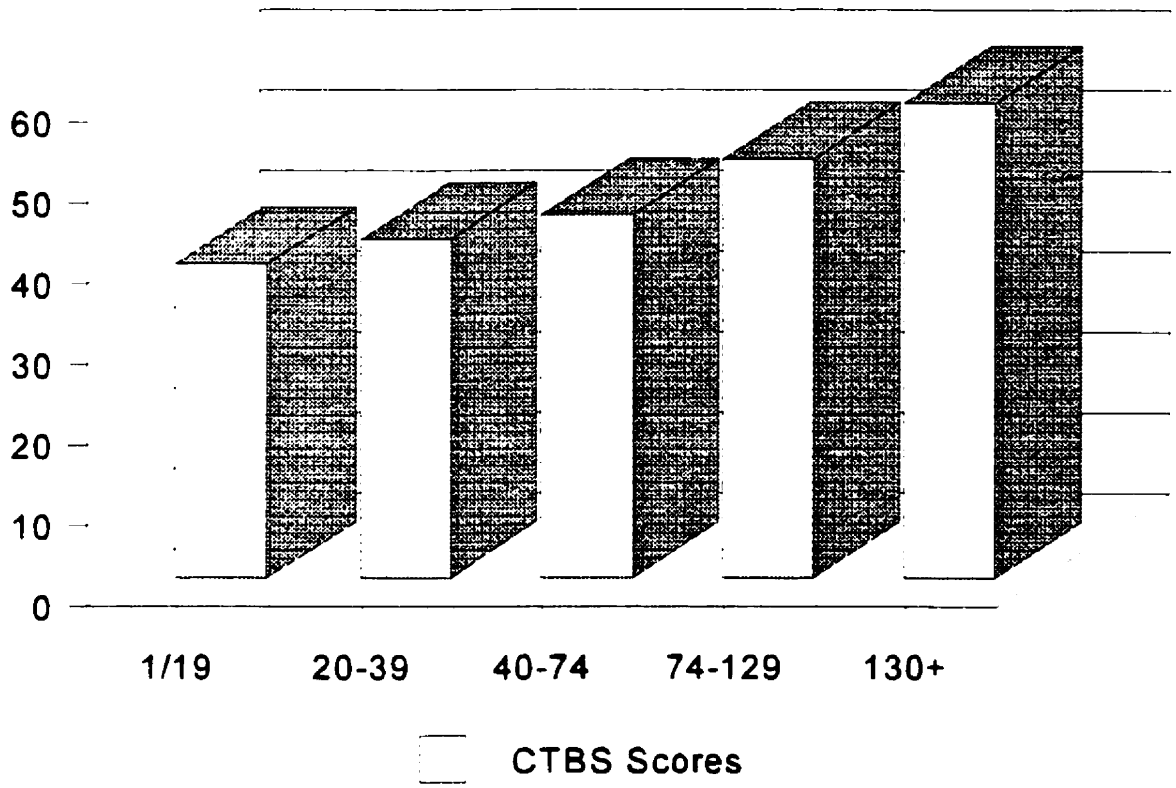
[3]Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995). Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 95.

[4]Source: Ibid., p. 96.

Figure 2

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills: Achievement Levels by School Size

On Composite Test Results, Grade 7, Fall 1994[5]



[5]Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994-1995). Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author, p. 96.

decline of enrollment ensures that small schools will always exist in this province" (Ensuring Quality in Education, 1995a: 7-8). Of great concern are the "highly talented" rural students who are not able to avail themselves of the opportunities which students in larger urban schools have. For these high achievers, it is suggested that society must recognize that their "individual needs can be better served elsewhere. Ways and means of achieving early exit" from inadequate rural schools (and communities) need to be afforded these students (Ensuring Quality in Education, 1995a: 51).

Proposed Bill - Schools Act 1996, Ready For a Better Tomorrow: Platform of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador (January 3, 1996), and Press Releases (1996).

Following the referendum in September, 1995, in which the Government was granted majority consent to try to amend the Constitution and allow it to bypass church control on education, the Government forwarded the Proposed Bill — Schools Act 1996 in January 1996. This provided a provincial legislative framework for the full implementation of education reforms. For the purposes of this study, the most significant section of the Act is found in Appendix A: "School Viability Guidelines."

This section directly addresses the recommendations made by the Adjusting the Course (1993, 1994) documents which called for the establishment of provincial school viability guidelines in order to identify non-viable schools which should be consolidated. However, the guidelines themselves are contrary to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Education, which proposed that school viability should be determined through a variety of factors — not just school size. Nevertheless, the Schools Act, 1996

proposed "school viability" guidelines which are deterministically based on school (grade level) enrollment — irrespective of any other qualities of the school. It states:

> 3. (I) An established school is viable if the average total enrollment for the school for the 3 previous years on September 30 is not less than a base total enrollment for the school calculated at a rate of
>
> (a) 20 students per grade for kindergarten to grade 6;
>
> (b) 25 students per grade for grades 7 to 9;
>
> (c) 40 students per year for levels I to III.
>
> (II) A proposed school is viable if the expected enrollment upon opening of the school is not less than the base total enrollment calculated at the rate set up in subsection (I) . . .
>
> (IV) A non-viable school is a school that does not satisfy the conditions for a viable school under subsections (I), (II), . . . (Schools Act, 1996: Appendix A)

The establishment of viability guidelines set the standard by which schools would be identified for consolidation. The government promised that "reform will mean some consolidation of schools in the next few years" (Ready for a Better Tomorrow, 1996: 68). Indeed, an integral part of the liberal government re-election platform was to continue with education reform in order to achieve the highest quality of education possible in the face of major challenges: "among them a declining number of students, the need to adapt curriculum

to a changing economy, and the very difficult fiscal situation of the provincial government" (Ready for a Better Tomorrow, 1996: 66).

A critical component of the reform process occurred in July, 1996, when school board districts were realigned, resulting in 10 non-denominational school districts. The locations of these boundaries are meant to "reflect the most efficient arrangement to administer schools" (Press Release: The Consolidation of School Boards, 1996).

Another fundamental component in setting the preconditions for substantial school consolidations is related to transportation (i.e., busing). Regulations regarding busing are proposed in the Schools Act, 1996 (Appendix A, page 3):

> *(3) No student in kindergarten to grade 6 shall be required to spend more than 45 minutes one way en route to school, under normal road conditions.*
>
> *(4) No student in grade 7 to level III shall be required to spend more than 60 minutes one way en route to school, under normal road conditions.*
>
> *(5) The Board may make exceptions to subsections (3) and (4) when not more than 5 percent of the student population of the school is required to travel for longer than the prescribed times.*

This lengthening of busing times allows for the closure of small schools in isolated communities and consolidation of school services in distant regional centers. Whether one considers the government Janus-faced, or pragmatic, it is striking to note that just a few months later, the government was using the issue of extended busing as a justification for ending Newfoundland's denomination-based school system. The brief by the Newfoundland

Minister of Education to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs noted that in many

> *communities students do not attend their local school because it is not of their denomination. Instead, they are forced to leave home early in the morning and travel by school bus for as long as 60 minutes, often passing schools of other denominations along the way. These children often arrive at school tired and sleepy, therefore, ill prepared for a day of productive learning. These same children often return home late in the evening too tired to attend to their homework in the manner required* (Press release: Education Reform in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1996: 2).

Therefore, while busing students for long periods of time may be desirable in order to facilitate the consolidation of small rural schools, it is reprehensible, and a hindrance to student learning, when it occurs due to the exigencies of the denomination-based school system.

Structuring the Education System: A Public Consolidation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador (September, 1996)

This paper outlines the government's continuing direction for education reform, and also contains a survey questionnaire asking for public input on the future direction of reform. The government notes that the context for change is determined by the need to produce the highest quality education possible in order for Newfoundland students to become economically competitive on the "world stage." However, the government is hampered in reaching this goal: due to the financial constraints and economic realities of the 1990s, the sparsity of Newfoundland communities, and a student enrollment that "is currently declining by about 3% or 3,500 students per year" (Structuring the Education System, 1996: 1).

The extent of this problem is most clearly manifested in the fact that 40% of all the schools in the province are classified as "small schools" — almost all of which are in rural areas. A "small school" is defined by the government as any school where the average enrollment per grade is 12 or less, or a school where any senior high courses are offered and the average enrollment per grade is 25 or less. Due to the very large proportion of small schools, the median school enrollment in the province was less than 200 students in the 1995/96 school year (Structuring the Education System, 1996: 2).

Given that small school size "is identified as *the* major obstacle to producing a high quality, effective, and efficient school system," this paper concentrates of three main themes: formulating school viability regulations, determining the amount of consolidation that will be necessary, and setting guidelines for the amount of time students can reasonably be bussed to school. Larger schools are identified as being more financially efficient: providing greater opportunities because of comprehensive programs, better physical resources and specialized staff, and providing a higher level of educational quality — the exemplary model for all schools in the province. Therefore, the government focused on the three main themes above with an eye to bringing "students in small schools to larger ones which will offer them greater opportunities" (Structuring the Education System, 1996: Introduction).

In terms of school viability, the government's position has already been proposed in the Schools Act, 1996. In terms of consolidation under the reformed education system, the government states that it is their

> *belief that in order to provide adequate resources for a high quality of education program, parents and school boards should agree to close schools that clearly duplicate educational services within an area. Other schools may*

> *have to be consolidated if enrollment declines to the point where the quality of education that can be provided diminishes. Government believes it is inappropriate to provide additional resources when a better opportunity for students is available nearby.* (Restructuring the Education System, 1996: 5).

Finally, the government maintains that in order to provide the highest possible quality of education, especially for secondary students, long bus rides will be necessary. Parents may have to choose between maintaining their inferior local small school, "or busing their children to a larger school that is able to offer a wider range of program options which would provide better opportunities for students" (Restructuring the Education System, 1996: 6).

The paper concludes with a survey questionnaire asking for input on school viability guidelines. It asks if the criteria to determine school "viability" should be based on enrolment numbers, extent of community isolation, the possibility and feasibility of consolidation, and/or any other variables. It also addresses the amount of time students should be bussed. Parents are presented with a mutually exclusive choice: that school consolidations should occur and rural children will face long bus rides to *quality* large schools, or schools will not be consolidated and rural children will attend their local, *inferior* small school.

Consultation Report on Educational Reform (1996)

The results of the survey in Structuring the Education System, as well as of public consultation were published in this report. For the Government, "the most significant finding was the widespread support (76.7%) shown by the public for the Government's proposal of "not busing students further than the school nearest their home" (Consultation

Report, 1996: 1). This is important in terms of the Government's commitment to eliminate duplication in the denominational system.

However, the Government's position on consolidating as many small schools as possible was not shared by the public. "There was a clear consensus that people would prefer to place their children in small schools rather than bus them to larger schools, particularly at the K-3 level" (Consultation Report, 1996: 1). The public did not want to increase the length of busing, as the Government had hoped. Instead, they would rather have multi-grade schooling for primary students and distance education in small schools, rather than bus students long distances. Still, there was support for busing high school students longer distances to schools that offer a wider range of program options.

The Government also acknowledged that the public wants many factors other than enrollment to be considered in deciding school viability. Factors that should be considered when decisions are made about the viability of school should include the cost of busing to new schools as well as the cost of renovating/building schools to accommodate additional students. For small rural schools which are targeted for closure, the public believes that there is a need to examine

> *the quality of the overall program, geographic isolation, community size, population stability, enrollment trends, impact on community viability, community support, parental involvement, parental choice, student preferences, how efficiently a school uses its current resources, the condition of school buildings, types of facilities and the quality of the extracurricular program.* (Consultation Report, 1996: 2).

Profile '96: Educational Indicators (1997)

This latest annual report from the Education Minister provides some evidence of the impact that education reforms have had on "improving" education and it offers considerable evidence that the "problems" in the education system identified by government a decade ago have still not been resolved. The relevant findings of this report include evidence that the public is still demanding higher standards for education, and that levels of educational achievement and attainment (as noted in the CTBS) are improving. However, a newly identified concern is that nearly 80% of the public is unsatisfied with the level of government funding provided for education.

While results on the CTBS have improved, they are still below the national average. And, as it was a decade earlier, "rural students continue to perform [at] significantly lower levels than students in urban areas" (Profile '96, 1997: 5). In fact, while rural students were ranked at the 30th percentile, urban students were above the national average — at the 51st percentile. Thus, rural students, and **rural schools** are still identified as the prime inhibitor to attaining high achievement levels and system-wide educational quality.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion and Conclusion

The Bases of Education Reform

The current education reform movement in Newfoundland received its initial impetus over a decade ago from economic renewal documents. While the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986) was the catalyst (proposing educational reform based on economic needs), it was the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary and Secondary (1992) which took its cue from economic reform documents on the necessity of linking education to economic principles and economic renewal and provided the blueprint for education reform.

The stated mandate of the Royal Commission (1992), and the continuing focus of education reform, was twofold: to establish a rationalized school structure (based on the ideals of fiscal efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, and scale economies); and to provide a structure for a non-denominational school system (which would allow for more of the former). However, the issues revolving around the removal the denominational structure of the education system are viewed as a secondary concern for rural areas of the province. Indeed, highlighting the social and cultural class differences between urban and rural areas of the province, Mulcahy has noted that issues related to the denominational designation of schools have "generated considerable heat and interest in the capital city of St. John's. This reflected an urban /rural split on this issue. With a few notable exceptions, rural areas were less interested in the denominational issue" (1997, 15).

While urban areas may have fiercely debated the denominational or non-denominational designation of various schools within their community, rural areas have been concerned with the basic issue of *maintaining* a school — any school — in their community. In rural communities, concerns about the denominational designation of schools have mostly been subordinated, to the more pressing concerns of keeping the community school open, or keeping bussing times and distance to a minimum if they are forced to close their small school (Mulcahy, 1997).

For the purposes of this study, the critical question is how the fulfillment of the mandate for a rationalized school system (being efficient, effective, and non-denominational) will call into question the continued existence of small rural schools. The data suggests that it was the coalescence of economic renewal documents and governmental economic policy statements which provided the central framework upon which education reform has been conceptualized. The central tenets and ideologically consistent policies of the economic-based reports have been enthusiastically invoked as the very foundation upon which education reform is to be anchored. Thus, even "strictly" pedagogical reforms cannot be abstracted from this overriding ideological position of economic development.

The imperative of economic growth has influenced all sectors of society, and has been established as the ultimate end of government action. Schumacher has stated that:

> *Economics plays a central role in shaping the activities of the modern world, in as much as it supplies the criteria of what is 'economic' and what is 'uneconomic,' and there is no other set of criteria that exercise a greater influence over the actions of individuals and groups, as well as over those of government (1974: 33).*

This is especially true of recent efforts at education reform. Education is being

defined as little more than a means to increase the store of human capital in the province — as an *investment* in economic growth. This instrumental, economic-goal-directed education system is being formulated through "appropriate" consolidation, restructuring, and rationalization in order to establish a more economically effective, efficient, accountable, and, ultimately, responsive system. The *aims* of education are being redefined to accommodate a focus on economic development. Meanwhile, in the reform documents there is also a discernable absence of "any conception of education as a means to the development of human capabilities, of individual creativity, the appreciation of the arts, critical consciousness, a sense of social and international cooperation" (McCann, 1994: 234), or of the necessity to provide an equitable education for *all*.

Notably, the initial mobilization of the reform movement by neo-conservative government and economic interests took place during a period of high public support and satisfaction with the education system. The impetus for reform did not emanate from a populace that was dissatisfied with the education system. However, it *has* been the dismal reality of economic decline, from the 1980s and into the 1990s, which has been the catalyst for reform (McCann, 1994). Consequently, a reductionist set of values and beliefs about the function of education — as to how it can alleviate this economic decline — has been provided by policy makers obsessed with linking and applying economics to the education system.

Thus, although education reform is advanced as an ideologically neutral and non-political exercise based on pragmatic and rational knowledge alone, it is quite apparent that Newfoundland's education reforms have occurred during a period of transition and societal

dislocations marked by economic crises, a restructuring of the world economic system, as well as other social, cultural, and political crises. Education reform must be conceived and analyzed within the context of socio-economic, and political ideological considerations. *All* educational decisions made as part of the reform process *are* proffered on political, economic, ideological, and pragmatic grounds (Levin and Young, 1994); and their ultimate directions are highly interrelated with concurrent events in the educational, socio-cultural, and political system. Furthermore, the pedagogical and *educational* relevance of many reforms are often of secondary consideration: "political and economic factors are more important in shaping education reforms than are factors internal to the education system itself" (Ginsberg, Cooper, Raghu and Zegarra, 1991: 7).

The proposed education reforms in Newfoundland were also unquestioningly influenced by the general education reform movement that has been occurring in the United States since the 1980s. Coupled with a "New Right" ideology that celebrates the virtues of the market, seeks to develop a free market for entrepreneurial talent, and emphasizes individualistic self-interest and competition (McCann, 1995; Singh, 1991b), the scope of the proposed reforms was not unexpected. Major themes of the general reform process — identifying the new basics and selectively pushing math, science, and business courses for all; justifying inequality through standardized testing and accountability; disguising this inequality as "excellence," and; restoring the good name of business and enterprise (Singh, 1991a) — are all integral parts of the Newfoundland educational reform movement.

These reforms also mirror the business community's "vision" of what education should become (see Kissick, 1990; St. John's Board of Trade, 1991). Not *only* has there

been a consensus between business and political interests "that education reform is essential to prosperity, [but] business leaders have been among the most active and radical reformers" (Downey, 1990: 5). Governments have lauded the renewed influence of business in education; claiming that: "Business intervention has helped develop higher standards and accountability, strengthen professionalism and restructure the schools" (Timpane, 1990: 7). These business interests in education are predicated on the belief that there is a level of "mediocrity" in the education system that is depressing the economy. The Newfoundland reform reports suggests that the "literacy level of the labour force is below that required by employers" (Hanrahan & Montgomery, 1986: 25). At risk is the province's (and even the country's)

> *ability to compete in the global marketplace and the ability of young people to succeed in the world of work. Education is too important for business to remain a silent partner. Business must have determination and a commitment to get involved (Ross, 1990: 13).*

The underlying foundation of reform is the belief that "education is facing a crisis" (Kissick, 1990: 6). However, this crisis is not based on inherent problems with pedagogy, but with education's inability to meet the needs of an emerging economy. The timing and the focus of reforms are determined by the government-defined needs of society; and by the need to prepare children "for the major transformation in economic and social conditions which are now underway" (Adjusting the Course, 1994).

The reform reports note that education is a central public policy issue vital to the province's economic and social well-being. Education is being proposed as the means of producing a highly skilled, flexible, and adaptable workforce imbued with a spirit of

entrepreneurship, capable of lifelong learning, and which will lead to greater economic productivity and competitiveness (Becker, 1990). Graduates are expected to acquire generic and transferable technologically-oriented skills and become "subservient to the changing demands of industry and the economy" (McCann, 1994: 235).

Thus, education is formulated as a human capital production enterprise that will help the province gain a "competitive edge" in the global marketplace (McCann, 1995). Education is presented as a necessary socializing agent; it is fundamentally and "inextricably linked with economic development" (Royal Commission, 1992: 27). In fact, in its general preamble to the report, the Commission states:

> *To a large degree, the education system in the coming years will be influenced by various global conditions, over which we have little control . . . they will force us to rethink everything from how we organize our schools to how we teach our classes. To use an industrial metaphor, we will be forced to retool our schools to deal with new expectations for a new type of learning — one capable of responding to an ever-changing post-industrial, high technology age. Much of the criticism of education, which has emanated to a large degree from the business community, has centered on the need for a graduate who is not so much a storehouse of knowledge, but a manipulator of knowledge, capable of responding to personal, social and business needs (Royal Commission, 1992: 7).*

The resurgent influence of business and corporate interests on education is transforming the education system. Business advocates, such as the St. John's Board of Trade, or the Conference Board of Canada, have explicitly proclaimed that "business must tell education what kind of training it needs and education must listen harder" (McDougall, 1990: 4). However, educators need to be aware of this influence, and ask the question: "Is education to be dictated by what the business community sees as its needs?" (Canning, 1993: 35). Furthermore, in the Newfoundland context, there needs to be some reflection on the

ability of human capital formation to produce economic development. Producing higher levels of human capital — while ignoring the structural bases responsible for the depressed economy — may only lead to higher qualified individuals being unemployed in a still dormant economy (Hanrahan & Montgomery, 1986: Parsons, 1978).

Implications for Rural Education

Rural areas are often condemned for their depressed economic structures compared to urban areas. In the field of education, the "problems" of the Newfoundland education system, as a whole, are equated with small rural schools. They are portrayed as an undesirable consequence of a duplicative, non-rationalized, and denominationally-based education system. Small rural schools are accorded special consideration as tangible barriers to attaining efficiency, academic achievement, economies of scale, and accountability.

While the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment did envision an integrated and fairly equitable education system (and economy) for both urban and rural regions of the province, subsequent reports have steadily evolved toward the more traditional urban-industrial bias of transforming education into a source of human capital production directly responsive to the needs of urban-capitalist/business interests. Schools (especially small schools) are also identified as the primary agents which must enact large scale changes and transformation, or else perish in the face of the new emerging post-industrial economy. However, the concerns of small rural schools are being overshadowed by the more publicized needs of the economic transformation of the province through the implementation of technocratic and individualistic educational reforms which are also consistent with urban

and industrial needs. The emphasis on large schools and their corresponding structure has led to a situation where "many students in small schools believe that their schools have been neglected in favour of larger ones" (Martin and Spain, 1986: 63). This parallels the feeling of rural citizens who also believe that their small communities have been neglected in favour of larger ones.

Newfoundland's education reform policies are ensconced within an urban-rational language which has "furnished educators with a "one best" way" of doing things (Dobson and Dobson, 1990: 28). Thus, the limitations ascribed to small rural schools are predicted on this

> *urbanized one-best-system model of education. If communities were given the opportunity to pursue some other models, the problems related to size might not be problems at all. The present rules of the game, however, place small rural schools at a distinct disadvantage (Nachtigal, 1982: 11).*

Although urban models of education may not be appropriate for rural schools (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987), the assumption exists in government policies that urban solutions to educational problems can also be applied uniformly to rural schools. Urban solutions to rural education problems usually involve the consolidation of small rural schools in order to form larger comprehensive schools that mirror the urban model.

However, the reforms focusing on consolidation deny the importance of local knowledge, history, and culture in the education process. The challenge for school reform in rural areas *should* be to "realize the advantage to be found in every situation — to capitalize on context" (Newton, 1993: 11). Attempting to impose an urban-based "one-best-system" ignores the value of context. Holmes (1992: 150) has noted the "impossibility of imposing a

single education doctrine on everyone. There is, and can be, no consensus . . . a return to . . . more consensual times (educationally speaking) when the state could dictate the single dogma, is both unrealistic and, in a sense, undemocratic."

Still, the reform focus has been on highlighting the limitations which rural schools face as a function of their small size: being ineffective, not achieving economic efficiency, and having low achievement levels. Thus small rural schools, which are proffered by reform policies as not being conducive with the attainment of these comprehensive schooling goals, are viewed as not only anachronisms, but also liabilities for the rest of the province. Yet, the validity of these claims, regarding the inherent limitations of rural schools based solely on their small size, needs to be questioned.

Economies of scale are applied to rural schools on a comparative basis with larger, urban, comprehensive schools. Costs are based on the assumption that *all* schools require urban-defined comprehensiveness, and that the problems of Newfoundland's rural schools are due to their restricted course offerings, lack of specialized staff, and limited resources and supplies (Downer and Downer, 1993; Newfoundland Teacher's Federation, 1989; Warren, 1982). As such, the perception is that "small schools are more expensive to operate than larger ones" (Riggs, 1986: 11). These normative comparisons with urban schools function to reconstruct rural schools as marginal enterprises.

Economies of scale are deemed necessary in order to economically achieve the more sophisticated programs, improved facilities, and expanded professional staffing that will be necessary for the reformed education system (Roebothan and Warren, 1991). However, the application of scale economies to education is not only methodologically specious but also

substantively and theoretically hollow. As Howley and Eckman (1997: 34) have stated, the application of scale economies to schools "breaks down beyond a superficial level." It is not picayune to point out that "educators and economists, with few exceptions, do not understand each others work very well. After all, supply and demand (for economists) and teaching and learning (for educators) are very different phenomena" (Howley, 1991: 73).

Economies of scale assumes that the *inputs* and *outputs* of education can be quantified (as is the case in industries), and the quality is held constant. Applying these concepts to people is far more problematic, and essentially invalidates the use of this concept in arguing about efficiency. When size economies are utilized to support arguments for consolidation, it is the specific benefits and costs which are imputed that determine the results. The economic maxim of ceteris paribus unjustly invalidates concerns of efficiency and quality and thereby disqualify the very strengths of a small school — that by virtue of its size, it is able to offer a "quality" education (Unks, 1989).

Although economies of scale are proffered as a rationale to consolidate small rural schools, a theoretical and methodological problem arises when it is acknowledged that there is no general agreement on what constitutes a unit of either quality or quantity of educational "output." There are numerous outcomes of education — many of which are not amenable to quantification. This has led many to question the validity of the economies of scale as applied to education (Fox, 1981; Haas, 1990, 1991). Indeed, if education is characterized by numerous outcomes, then it becomes quite difficult to determine and/or advocate a minimum effective size and/or optimal size for educational activity as are outlined in the provincial school viability guidelines. "The idea of optimal school or district size does not stand up to

close scrutiny" (Monk, 1991: 195; Stephenson and Pellecer, 1998).

Scale economies ascribed to large schools and districts come at the expense of the efficient and effective production of educational outcomes (Bray, 1988, Butler and Monk, 1985). Sher and Tompkin (1977: 53) astutely professed that "spending less to attain the same level of performance is efficient. However, spending less to attain less is a corruption of this concept leading to false efficiencies." Furthermore, even the Royal Commission recognized that bigger school and school districts may not always perform as efficiently as smaller ones. Services to remote areas may be more efficiently delivered through small service centres. Thus, there exists a conflict between economies of scale and organizational efficiencies. The basis of this dilemmas lies in the existence of both monetary and non-monetary benefits in the education process" (1992: 125). The crux of this issue is that much of what makes rural schools effective, and of high quality (i.e., its people and interpersonal relations) is qualitative in essence ("non-monetary"), and defies quantitative analysis or statistical description (Hind, 1977; Horn, 1991; McGuire, 1989; Sher, 1977a).

Unfortunately for small schools, education reformers have tended to discount that which they cannot measure. When small rural schools highlight "intangible" qualities, they are labeled economically deficient, rather than merely qualitatively different - or even efficient. Consequently, using economies of scale to justify the consolidation of small schools is duplicitous. There is increasing doubt whether they have ever been "proven to exist at all in the case of rural schools and districts" (Tholkes and Sederberg, 1990: 13). The rurality's spatial context cannot be discounted. Schools in rural areas, no matter what their size, will cost more than those in rural areas. Thus, many studies claim to show that there is

no evidence that consolidation results in cost savings (Haas, 1990; Streifel, Foldesy and Hodman, 1991; Newton and Newton, 1992).

Studies have revealed that there is "little evidence suggesting a causal link between school size and financial efficiency" (Ward and Rink, 1992: 12; see also Cooze, 1991; Guthrie, 1979). Therefore, there must be other compelling reasons to propose the consolidation of small rural schools. In the absence of positive "facts" about educational efficiencies, effectiveness, and quality vis-a-vis economies of scale, the politico-economic and ideological foundations of consolidation come to the fore.

However, reformers also propose that small schools are also synonymous with substandard achievement levels. Some studies proclaim that small rural schools are a cause of low achievement, and should be consolidated in order to improve the achievement levels of children in rural communities. However, critics of the education reform movement have noted that many of the reform recommendations are "founded on questionable research and outdated data" (Popkewitz, 1991: 158). This is especially true of research linking school size (or ruralness) with educational achievement. Studies linking school size and achievement levels have presented very conflicting results: that smaller schools achieve at low levels (Bognar and Martin, 1980; Segars, 1993); that there is no significant difference in achievement levels (Haller, Monk and Tien, 1993; Melnick, Shibles and Gable, 1987), and; that smaller schools outperform larger schools (Edington and Gardener, 1984; Fox, 1981; McCracken and Barcinas, 1991). In Newfoundland, students in small rural schools have been found to either achieve substantially below their urban peers (Royal Commission, 1992), or marginally lower than students in larger schools (Task Force on Mathematics and

Science Education, 1989).

However, the validity of any study that merely equates school size with achievement levels on standardized exams is suspect. The important variable for consideration is not school *size*, but student attributes as a function of school *location*. Socioeconomic factors such as the as level of parental education, parental occupation, and parental expectations are far more significant in determining student achievement levels than school size (Sher and Tompkin, 1977; Wendling and Cohen, 1981; Alberta Education, 1984; Moreau, 1987; Hutto, 1990; Thompson, 1994).

Recognizing the importance of this connection between socioeconomic status and achievement is critical in interpreting the achievement levels in Newfoundland's small rural schools versus larger urban schools. Various reform documents and other studies have recognized the causal relationship of low socioeconomic status to low academic achievement in Newfoundland (Case, 1992; Nagy, Drost and Banfield, 1982; Riggs, 1987; Royal Commission, 1992; Warren, 1982). Therefore, it has been proffered that, in the rural areas of Newfoundland,

> *small scale schooling makes sense. Larger schools might make economic sense in urban areas with high levels of population concentration; but in rural areas with a dispersed and distant population, particularly in areas with large numbers of "at risk" students, small schools are required* (Mulcahy, 1997: 9).

Another aspect of achievement, as stated in the reform documents, is the overriding emphasis on individual responsibility and accountability. The goal of schooling is to stimulate presumably innate abilities, personal qualities and individual aspirations of students. This will increase their educational achievement, and thereby fulfill both

individual needs *and* the economic needs of the state. As is stated in Adjusting the Course: "Reaching high levels of educational achievement is a matter of individual effort and perseverence . . . High achievement is seen as a function of high levels of effort, rather than something linked to the circumstances beyond the individual's control" (1993: 3, 10). This assumes that society is composed of equal individuals who have an equal stake in the reproduction of society. However,:

> *To suggest that the challenge of reform is to stimulate the 'innate' capabilities of every citizen is to ignore the relationship of individuality to socialization and pedagogy to broader structural relations. [This p]ossessive individualism, however, does reinforce the ideology of the new science that holds that knowledge is a commodity that generates a return (Popkewitz, 1991: 151)*

The tragedy of this emphasis on individual responsibility is that the government (and the dominant elite), without remorse, have abrogated their responsibility to those individuals who do not (or cannot) avail themselves of their "innate potential" for achievement. "Those who fail are themselves at fault. This is an absolutely fundamental lesson in capitalist society. Having a class that fails provides the necessary preconditions to develop a class identity among those who succeed" (Weaver, 1977: 203). Those who do not meet expected achievement levels are given the prescient warning: "It is clear that the demands of society are such that those who fail to attain reasonable levels of performance are doomed to play a marginal role in the economic and social system." (Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education, 1989: 42; Adjusting the Course, 1993).

The statement that all that is necessary to achieve to high standards is sufficient effort and perseverance — regardless of the circumstances with which a student is faced — conveniently ignores the consistent findings of the effects of socioeconomic status and

family background on student achievement. Emphasizing the necessity of high academic achievement levels, while not adequately addressing the educational needs of the disadvantaged (e.g., the rural poor) will merely serve to widen inequalities in the present unequal social and educational structures; such that "there will be one "high achieving" dominant class of elites while the vast majority of disadvantaged students will be "legitimately" relegated to positions of lesser status, power and wealth" (Martin, 1991: 353).

Rural areas in Newfoundland not only have small schools, but also have lower socioeconomic characteristics. Thus, perceived lower achievement levels in these areas should not be merely viewed as a consequence of school size. The consolidation of schools into larger units in order to ensure higher achievement may be an exercise in futility since other significant cultural and economic variables are not being adequately addressed (Bolaria, 1991). Therefore, policies intended to improve student performance will likely continue to be met with limited net effect until adverse social and economic conditions affecting school performance are concurrently addressed (Hobbs, 1991).

In the Newfoundland context, large schools are generally located in economically-advantaged urban areas; while small school are located in economically depressed rural areas. Consequently, it is logical to posit that the positive correlation between school size and "average student scores on achievement tests is removed when socioeconomic status is taken into account"(Walberg, 1989: 156). Furthermore, the effect of increasing school size has a "negative effect on achievement when SES and expenditures are controlled" (Howley, 1989: 33; Monk, 1991). Given similar school financing and academic background, disadvantaged students are generally served better in smaller schools, and have higher levels

of achievement than if they were in larger schools; while advantaged student are better served and have higher levels of achievement in larger schools (Friedkin and Necochea, 1988; Berlin and Cienkus, 1989; Walberg, 1989; Webb, 1989). Indeed, Howley and Eckman have stated that in jurisdictions where there are more low-income communities than high-income communities (such as Newfoundland), "overall achievement will be served better if schools are smaller" (1997: 31).

Small schools *do* "mitigate the effects of disadvantage, whereas large schools tend to compound those effects" (Huang and Howley, 1993: 143), and large schools are beneficial to advantaged students. Therefore, it is apparent why education reforms in Newfoundland - emanating, as they are from the urbanized, educated sectors of the province, and aimed toward economic elitism — are so focused on the "benefits" of consolidation of small schools? Obviously,

> *the question then becomes: Who benefits from the creation of larger schools...? Existing evidence might suggest to some that the affluent have generally benefitted at the expense of the disadvantaged . . . Small schools make a meaningful contribution to improving the prospects for so many disadvantaged students . . . "Is making such a contribution a priority?"* (Huang and Howley, 1993: 145).

Ameliorating conditions that affect disadvantaged schools is not a priority of the government-sponsored educational reforms. A more concrete priority to educational restructuring has been to set a deterministic policy demanding the abolition of small rural schools whereever possible (Schools Act, 1996; Structuring the Education System, 1996). Consolidation has long been a favoured policy of government (Roebothan, 1987), and continues to be so (Sullivan, 1996). Brown has noted that "the government's stated intention

is to close one hundred schools . . . [I]n many instances it means that a rural community will lose its only school" (1996: 20)

Substantive educational restructuring for rural areas has meant little more than consolidation — as imposed by urban reformers. There is a conflict between urban and rural interests. While Newfoundland may still be a predominantly rural society, urban *culture* has attained dominant status in the province. Therefore, it is not surprising that the interests that ultimately get served are of those who are adequately politically positioned — a directorate of urban elites including those in the Department of Education, business and professional men, university professors, and high ranking school administrators. Thus, a critical component of the reform process has been the centralization of decision making and the consolidation of organizational structures such that those with power can more easily enact "social control" and impose their views and values on everyone (Tyack, 1974). Meanwhile , the politically disempowered rural people are severely compromised in "their ability to determine what their children will be taught, by whom, and how" (Nachtigal, 1994: 161). Rural school reorganization functions to "ensure that those students and individuals who have historically been disenfranchised and under-represented remain in a subordinated position and bear the burden of proposed school reform" (Bhaerman, 1994: 180).

Urban-modeled education reform, which stresses consolidation and an economic-directed education system, attempts to bring rural students into "the social and cultural milieu of urban centres" (Roebothan and Warren, 1991: 13). It formulates rural education as a type of emancipation, and assumes that all individuals are career-oriented and in quest of urban lifestyles (Haas, 1991). On this basis, rural education is meant to provide advanced

training of local talent in order produce a future workforce that is flexible, adaptable, and, especially, mobile. Indeed, rural schools "have "successfully" socialized most rural children with the skills, norms, information, and values required for modern metropolitan occupations and civil participation" (DeYoung and Theobald, 1991: 11).

Recent reforms have emphasized education's capacity to produce human capital and to "overcome the tyranny of rural space. In other words, the potential exists for rural areas to move closer to mainstream economic activity" (Mulkey, 1993: 16). This "mainstream economic activity" is consonant with urban-industrial activity. Bulcock and Dawe have noted that rural education is being given a mandate to teach the specific values and skills

> *needed for urban employment, thereby further contributing to the decline of rural areas and their economy . . . In terms of prevailing ideology, the successful rural school is one which does the best job of training students for export — a policy unlikely to find support in much of rural Newfoundland because it fails to support rural lifestyles and values (1992: 9).*

If education policy makers were cognizant of small rural school needs, they would emphasize ways to capitalize on the inherent strengths of small schools, as well as the natural and traditional resources of rural schooling. Moreover, they would attempt to compensate for any inherent limitations of small schools (Dunne, 1977). However, policies aimed at the reorganization (consolidate) rural schools

> *are yet another attempt to impose urban standards and industrial management methods on rural schools . The students under any system, will still be predominantly rural. They come from rural homes, were raised on rural traditions and values, and experienced all the strengths and weaknesses of rural life. Making the schools bigger by reorganizing or building a modern factory-like structure cannot change this rural inheritance* (Rosenfeld, 1977: 267).

The varying positions on the direction of education reform serve to starkly

differentiate the "ideological" considerations of the educational elites and government on one side, and of rural residents on the other. Rural residents believe that:

> *Reform efforts should set out to make small schools viable; not to close them. We make them viable because we value them as necessary for the education of rural children and the future of rural communities . . . [T]he government wanted to target for closure any school classified as non-viable; the people [rural residents] suggested that non-viable schools be targeted for extra funding and provision* (Mulcahy, 1997: 9).

However, from the government perspective, providing extra resources to rural schools is fiscally inefficient and unaffordable. In any case, the high academic achievers necessary to transform the economy are *expected* to come from larger and more comprehensive urban schools — not from rural areas . Also, due to fixed budget constraints, indulging rural schools with more resources would mean the deprivation of urban schools — but it is individuals from urban areas who control the allocation of resources.

Education reform geared toward rural needs would also help rural students recognize and enact decent possibilities for rural life, reverse destructive cultural messages about rural life, and highlight the importance of their particular context (DeYoung, Howley and Theobald, 1995). However, education reform related to small rural schools in Newfoundland is not being abstracted from the cure-all of consolidation. "The powerful take what they can, and the weak suffer what they must" (Weaver, 1977: 203). Schools are being removed from communities that can least afford to lose them, and are being placed in communities that are already doing relatively well. Rural residents in Newfoundland recognize and continue to stress the importance of both "the school to the community and the community to the school. The relationship is reciprocal, interdependent and mutually

beneficial. Therefore decisions about closing a school cannot be made with reference only to the school or schooling issues" (Mulcahy, 1997, 6).

The symbiotic link between local communities and small rural schools should not be underestimated. Removing a school from a community deprives rural people of an object that grounds them, and helps them make sense of their lives. School closure means much more than merely being bereft of a "building" (Peshkin, 1982) — "closing a small school is like removing an essential organ from a community" (Howley and Eckman, 1997: 3). The local school is a vital component in the existence of small rural communities.

> *Many people who have lived and worked in small outports in Newfoundland would perhaps describe the school as the centre of the community, the focus of activity, the expression of the feeling of community and the catalyst which promotes harmony within the community" (Riggs, 1987: 50).*

Given these concerns, it is not unexpected that broad public support for the recommendations in the Royal Commission on education has not been forthcoming. A strict rationalization of the education system *may* provide a cost *efficient* system. However, efficiency, per se, is not the prime concern of the public. There is a greater concern with maintaining small school quality, and making compassionate allowances for students in a school system with many small schools (Evening Telegram, 1996). The Newfoundland Minister of Education has been receiving voluminous feedback from the public in support of

> *keeping virtually all schools open — especially those at the primary and elementary level — no matter how few students they have . . . people [have] insisted that the small rural primary schools dotting the provincial landscape remain open. Even if this means a return to the one room schoolhouse* (1996: 10).

Indeed, it has been noted that in the most recent public consultation process the preservation of small community schools was the most important and central issue for rural

participants (Mulcahy, 1997). Consolidating small rural schools and busing students to larger comprehensive schools — which has been presented as a beneficial to rural areas (Roebothan and Warren, 1991; Restructuring the Education System, 1996) — was also not supported by the public. Rural Newfoundland residents want more resources and emphasis placed on maintaining and improving local community schools, not on bussing to remove children from the community.

The Newfoundland public, who would be most affected by educational reforms, have offered "no support for closing so-called non-viable schools and replacing them with long bus runs to the nearest school" (Evening Telegram, 1996: 10). They desire local community schools which will "enable children, especially younger children, to be educated close to home and not have to endure long, tiresome and sometimes dangerous bus rides" (Mulcahy, 1997: 11). These view are consistent with various studies in the past which have noted the adverse effects of busing on achievement, and that increasing bus transportation time represents a "waste of physical and itellectual time" (Fox, 1995-1996: 25; see also Yao-Chi and Tweeten, 1973).

More than any other issue, rural residents have opposed consolidation of their small rural schools when it will result in the closure of the only school in their local community. Rural Newfoundland residents view the Government's reform agenda, with its reduction in the provision of resources and services, "as a way of forcing people to abandon their small rural communities and move to larger "growth centres" " (Mulcahy, 1997: 13). In the past, the government *coerced* many residents of small rural communities to resettle into designated growth areas, while the present day government is utilizing a more subtle form of

suasion by reducing the level of services — especially in education — to rural areas in an attempt to catalyze another round of resettlement (Mulcahy, 1997).

Thus, educational reform and restructuring is continuing unabated, despite the protests of those concerned about the future of small rural schools and rural communities. This concern was forcefully voiced by Lawrence Tarrant of Lawn, Newfoundland:

> *In rural areas our schools are the every heart of our communities. What happens if the provincial government rips the heart out? As with any living entity, it will most assuredly die . . . We are systematically being forced out of our communities to satisfy a government agenda to resettle rural Newfoundland. Our very way of life and culture is now being threatened like no other time in our history. If we neglect to make our voices heard, our silence will spell certain death for our communities. Its time that our government saw the face of our people, not just the statistical value* (1996: 6).

Controlling the Reform Agenda

A substantial component of the education reform movement in Newfoundland has been to provide economic-goal-directed solutions to educational deficiencies in the system as a whole. The direct result of this reform has been the identification of small rural schools as prime inhibitors of educational "excellence." The rationalization and consolidation of small rural schools has been a tangible manifestation of this policy. The *viability* of small rural schools is being redefined based on deterministic enrolment levels that do not correspond with educational effectiveness or efficiency. The pedagogical relevance of reforms that affect the viability of small rural schools is spurious. Considerable evidence exists that small school size, in itself, cannot be equated with low achievement levels or substandard educational effectiveness; that cost efficiencies due to scale economies are not relevant to the educational enterprise, and; that the community disruptions due to school

consolidation have negative repercussions on rural residents and students.

Newfoundland's education reform movement is implicated in the legitimization, production, and reproduction of a "class-based" (proposed as an urban-rural construct), hierarchical economic and social system. Disadvantaged rural students in small schools are berated for their intellectual, cultural, and economic deprivations which preclude them, and all of Newfoundland society, from achieving desired levels of social prestige and economic affluence. Thus, the education reform process has been an ongoing process of economic and cultural (re)production, presented under the guise of positivistic pragmatic recommendations which claim to represent the *only* rational course of action in the context of an a priori defined reality. It is never acknowledged that the manner in which economic and social reality are defined serves to legitimate and advance the interests of the dominant sectors of society (Silver and DeYoung, 1986).

Education reform, with its emphasis on rationalization and consolidation of small rural schools, is presented as a natural, objective policy conclusion based on the "facts" of the benefits of larger comprehensive schools. However, there is increasing evidence that consolidation is a choice among *values*, not simply a choice among objective *facts* (Ward and Rink, 1992). The "facts" related to comprehensive schooling, economies of scale, and achievement levels form an ideological position, which is masqueraded as common sense (Haller, Monk, Spotted Bear, Griffith, and Moss, 1990).

Nevertheless, policy makers and writers of reform documents have traditionally disclaimed the notion that their recommendations are the manifestation of ideology or "politics." The reports are presented as scientifically rational, neutral, and pragmatic

statements. Above all, economic rationality is proposed as both the referent and ideal for change. "Within the context of this rationality, business and education leaders argue for specific forms of knowledge that are deemed important for our schools and the future of society" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985: 200). Thus, their decisions are presented as neutral, and disinterested in possible direct social consequences — as *only* interested in educational consequences.

Critics contend that the narrow instrumental and technocratic rationality of the reports is consistent with the the policy maker's goals to subordinate others and *control* the process of reform (Watson, 1996). This exclusive reliance on "rationality" also circumvents questions related to the effects that the identified research findings and favoured discourse found in the reports will have on political practice (Singh, 1991b). Meanwhile, the implications repercussions of the effects of their control of a change process that mostly affects others (i.e., rural residents) are ignored.

The reform reports only document and report evidence and studies which support their position on issues such as consolidation. Education reform documents try to present a consensus on the recommendations proposed, and thereafter, work toward the acceptance of the positions held. In essence, the reports attempt to literally *sell* their recommendations to a "skeptical and ignorant public" (Haller and Monk, 1988: 475), otherwise known as rural residents.

The policy position in education reform on the necessity of consolidation *does* represent a consensus — that of government, policy makers, and economic interests. However, this is presented as the consensus of *all* society, as the inevitable conclusion of any

rational evaluation of the "facts" which equates consolidation with better pedagogy. Those who would oppose the movement to consolidate are denigrated for holding implacable ideologies; or else personal and practical agendas are clouding their judgements and leading to irrational biases (Wiles, 1994). Rural citizens who reject the rational urban viewpoint on consolidation are labeled "an anachronistic minority who need to be retrained. We are told that rural populations must "evolve." Static , and burdensome (because of heavy subsidization by the rest of society)" (Hautecoeur, 1994: 7), they would benefit educationally and economically by becoming a functioning part of the rational consensus.

However, Singh has noted that the concept of "technocratic rationality, as an ideology, seems to lead to the direction of social change that undermines the notion of community" (1991b: 30). Given the strong links and interrelationships between small rural schools in Newfoundland and their local community, education reform which stresses consolidation cannot be abstracted from the controversial issue of determining *community viability*. Reformers claim that education reform is a means to economic development and prosperity for the entire province. External economic consequences are the rationale for education reform. Yet, it is also simultaneously stated that a central component of education reform — consolidation — must be viewed as an educational issue only. Distracting ideological considerations, such as the impact of school closures on the viability of rural communities themselves, are irrelevant . Thus, education reform that is predicated on the ideological consideration of an expanded urban, industrial economy provides the necessary rationale for the *requirement* of school reorganization (although we are told that these are not really ideological considerations, but are common sense, pragmatic educational

considerations). Meanwhile, concerns related to school-community relationships are disclaimed as being ideological biases which distract from the real educational goals of school reorganization.

This has left not only rural schools in a tenuous position, but also rural communities. The discourse on school reorganization, controlled as it is by the urban educational elites, has negated those in rural areas from defending their schools on rational-technical terms (which are manipulated by reformers to justify their own positions); or on the basis of quality (which is discounted, because *quality* is too abstract or subjective to be usefully measured and quantified by reformers); or on the basis of community needs (which are ideological considerations irrelevant to education reform). Consequently, the voices from rural areas are not being considered. Pronouncements on small rural school viability, based on the principle of "bigger is better," are not far removed from pronouncement on the state of rural *community* viability. And rural residents are not optimistic that education reform will provide any benefit educationally to their school, or economically to their community.

Reform policies related to educational restructuring have been propagated within a functionalist perspective. The reform documents "analyze schools in terms of their roles and functions for our society" (Singh, 1991a: 14). This is apparent in the Newfoundland economic and education reform documents, wherein public education is conceived as an institution by which "to prepare students for their future roles as contributing members of society" (Adjusting the Course, 1994: iii).

This functionalist perspective assumes, or at least desires, that society is fundamentally consensual and homoeostatic. Harmony, stability, and the functional

integration of all members of society are leading toward a consensus and unity of purpose in regards to education. There is an equilibrium in the interaction of societal and educational demands, leading to calls for schools to be restructured (i.e., to be consolidated), and to assume new "functions" in order to meet the rising demands of a post-industrial society. Therefore, the latent and manifest changes that have occurred in society, and changes that will occur in the future, are a direct consequence of new and changing economic functions. From this perspective,

> *education is changed because the needs of modern, industrialized, and urbanized society are not being fulfilled by the existing organization, content, and processes of education. The education system, as part of a larger homoeostatic and consensual social system is seen to evolve as society evolves, or to adapt as functionalist incapabilities or dysfunctions arise* (Ginsberg, Cooper, Raghu, and Zegarra: 1991: 9-10).

McCann has noted that: "The history of Newfoundland education suggests that the economic conditions of society exercise a stronger influence on education than the latter has ever done on the economy" (1994: 253). While levels of education and economic productivity may be correlated, this does not mean that the education system will provide the cure for economic problems. Education reform rhetoric and action "should not be conceived of as a sort of functionalist response to the needs of the world capitalist system. We need to examine the economic, political, and cultural dynamics at the national and local levels" (Ginsberg and Cooper, 1991: 38). Thus, what is needed is a an integrated analysis of the "relation between education, the state, and the economy, in terms of the cost and control of education, [and] the kind of workforce it is designed to produce" (Ginsberg, Cooper, Raghu, and Zegarra, 1991: 11).

The locus of the foundation and rationale for education reform is to be found in the changing political economy of the province. The Newfoundland economy has been in a state of prolonged crisis, and the restraints and contradictions in the economic system are not being successfully mediated by existing ideological and structural arrangements. The resulting "legitimation crisis" in all sectors affected by government policy, including the economy and education, has led the government to extend greater control over various social institutions (such as education): claiming that they require improved management toward productive ends such as capital accumulation (DeYoung and Howley, 1990).

The rationalization of education and the consolidation of small rural schools, which is directed toward increasing productive ends, are consequences of this crisis. DeYoung and Howley (1990: 77) have correctly identified that the relevance of this view lies in the efforts of the state: (a) to extend its control over the realm of education and small rural schools, (b) to appear to reduce expenses that the state, in crisis, can no longer afford, and (c) to emphasize the instrumental connection between schooling and economic prosperity.

The technical-rational discourse on the "benefits" of comprehensive schooling and consolidation serve to conceal the social, political, and economic agenda of government reformers, and is intended to manufacture consent and will among the public — especially the rural populace — to accept the benefits and inevitability of educational restructuring. Education reform has become a process of manufacturing acceptance of government proposals to close small schools and transfer students to centralized, comprehensive schools. It does not reflect public policy enacted on the genuine concern for rural residents or communities most directly affected by reform (Snauwaert, 1990). Reforms are being

imposed which contravene the views and values of the people in rural areas, in spite of their objections.

In order to avoid a direct conflict of values and ideology, it has been necessary for reformers — an urban industrial coalition of government and business interests — to attempt to instill an ideological consciousness in the populace that is consistent with the needs of an urban-industrial society. As Sher (1977a) noted two decades ago, proponents of consolidation have had to continually manipulate the rituals and symbols of education in an attempt to convince the public of these instrumental needs. The government has been complicit in the appropriation, training, and legitimation of policy makers and intellectuals who serve the needs of the macro-economy and the government. These policy makers have been bestowed with the means to produce "objective facts" (as found in the reform documents) and have attempted to control language, repackage thoughts, and corrupt ideologies.

It is evident that in these reform documents ideology is indirectly yet insidiously used by the dominant sectors of society in order to propagate their *own common sense* views, needs, and interests as being beneficial to, and "at one with" those of subordinate groups — such as residents of rural areas. The emergent discourse of education reformers has helped disguise the domination by certain sectors of society — urban, business elites — in re-forming education and obscured their intentions in relation to educational restructuring. Furthermore, as argued earlier, the technical-rational educational policy discourse "never allows the words "hierarchy," "domination," "power" to enter the discussion. The standards of the elite are posed as undebatable, the only language in which to judge the situation a

universal rather than a class specific evaluation" (Singh, 1991a: 13).

The hegemonic position of policy makers and education reformers has been manifested through the legitimization of the interests and values of the dominant classes — favouring consolidation, centralization, comprehensive schooling, and an instrumental education system. Meanwhile, the values, culture, and structures of benefit to the disadvantaged (i.e., rural students), such as the preservation of the small school in the local community, have been delegitimized and marginalized. It must be recognized that those who have the greatest stake in small rural schools have been disenfranchised *from* the construction of educational reform policy as well as *through* the reform process. The value structures found in small rural schools have not been accepted by reformers as being different and equal, but as being different and *inferior*. In conjunction with numerically-based "viability" guidelines, the existence of any small rural schools, that are not prohibitively isolated is questionable. Thus, consolidation and school closures will continue to be the dominant form of "restructuring" for these small rural schools in Newfoundland for the foreseeable future.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was conducted within a framework that proposed that restructuring and reform in the education system is a consequence of the changing economic structure of production (as well as the changing political ideology) of the day. On a surface level, this is consistent with a structural view of society, as is found in the work of Bowles and Gintis, which asserts that "changes in the structure of production have preceded parallel changes in

schooling" (19767: 245). However, care must be taken to ensure that this type of research does not devolve into "economism" or economic determinism. While it is widely accepted that education reform reports have been "self-consciously directed at current economic conditions" (Apple, 1985: 93), and that analysis of these reform documents needs to occur within this context, it would be too deterministic to "make it seem as if everything pertaining to education can be reduced to the division of labor or economic forces outside the school" (Apple and Weis, 1985: 5).

In this study though, education reform is constitutively linked to changes in the economy **and** concomitant changes in the cultural, political, and ideological realms; while the discourse utilized in the reform documents is identified as a formative agent in the creation of the *reality* of educational restructuring and reform. Education reform has *not* been reduced to a merely direct causal outcome of economic restructuring.

However, an understanding of how individuals — human agency — are able to effect the process of education reform has *not* been emphasized, since it was outside the scope and theoretical frame of this study. This area of omission should be addressed in future research on the effect of recent reforms on the functioning of small rural schools. Specifically, there is a need for more grounded examples of ethnographic research and qualitative case studies on the efforts of individuals associated with small rural schools to embrace, adjust to, cope with, and/or resist the changes being implemented through the process of reform. This will complement the findings provided in this study, and hopefully provide a deeper "dialectical" understanding of the effects of structural education reforms on individuals, and of the effects of individuals on how these structures are formed.

Furthermore, more longitudinal research needs to be conducted in the area of how education reforms is having a real impact — negative and positive — on other "subordinated" groups in the Newfoundland context. Also, given that education reform has become an international and pan-Canadian phenomena, comparative studies in education reform in other jurisdictions and provinces should be conducted. This will provide a greater understanding of the possible repercussions that similar reforms in Newfoundland may possibly have on this province's subordinated groups — such as those attending small rural schools. Or alternatively, empirical research could be conducted on whether the positive outcomes attributed to educational reforms are coming to fruition; or if there have not been any significant causative effects — either to educational achievement or to economic development — as a result of the education reform process.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education. (1984). Small School / Large School. Comparative Analysis. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Altbach, P.G. (1985). The great education "crisis". In Excellence in Education: Perspectives on Policy and Practice, P.G. Altbach, G.P. Kelly, and L. Weis (Eds.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, pp. 13-48.

Angus, L. (1991). Equality, democracy and educational reform. In Power and Politics in Education, D. Dawkins (Ed.). New York, NY: The Falmer Press, pp. 233-274.

Antonio, R.J. (1981). The political economy of education. In Political Economy: A Critique of American Society, S.G. McNall (Ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, pp. 46-71.

Apelt, L., and Lingard, B. (1993). Public school reform in Australia: In whose interest?. Journal of Educational Administration, 31(3): 59-71.

Appalachia Education Laboratory (1988). Status of Rural Education in the AEL Region. AEL Interim Report. Charleston, WV: Author.

Apple, M.W. (1985). Educational reports and economic realities. In Excellence in Education: Perspectives on Policy and Practice, P.G. Altbach, G.P. Kelly, and L. Weis (Eds.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, pp. 91-104.

Apple, M.W. (1987). Producing inequality: Ideology and economy in the national reports on education (AESA R. Freeman Butts Lecture - 1986). Educational Studies: A Journal in the Foundations of Education, Summer, 18(2); 195-220.

Apple, M.W. (1988a). Economics and inequality in schools. Theory into Practice, Fall, 27(4): 282-287.

Apple, M.W. (1988b). How does ideology become popular? A sympathetic rejoinder to Burbules and Kantor. Teachers College Record, Winter, 90(2): 193-195.

Apple, M.W. (1988c). Redefining equality: Authoritarian populism and conservative restoration. Teachers College Record, Winter, 90(2): 167-184.

Apple, M.W. (1988d). What reform talk does: Creating new inequalities in education. Educational Administration Quarterly, August, 24(3): 272-281.

Apple, M.W. (1990). The politics of official knowledge in the United States. Curriculum Studies, 22(4): 377-383.

Apple, M.W. (1992a). Do the standards go far enough? Power, policy and practice in mathematics education. Journal of Research in Mathematics Education, 23(5): 412-431.

Apple, M.W. (1992b). Education reform and educational crisis. Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 29(8): 779-789.

Apple, M. W. (1993). Democratic Education in the Conservative Age. New York, NY: Routledge.

Apple, M.W., and Weis, L. (1983). Ideology and practice in schooling: A political and conceptual introduction. In Ideology and Practice in Schooling, M.W. Apple and L. Weis (Eds.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 3-34.

Aronowitz, S., and Giroux, H. (1985). Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate over Schooling. Cambridge, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Aronowitz, S., and Giroux, H.A. (1993). Education Still Under Siege (Second Edition). Westport, CN: Bergin and Garvey.

Ayalon, A. (1995). Does multicultural education belong in rural white America? Rural Educator, 16(3): 1-6.

Badiuk, B., and Cook, R. (1976). Education in Rural Manitoba - What future? Some Notes on the Future of Rural Manitoba and its Implications for Education. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba.

Bacharach, S.B. (1988). Four themes of reform: An editorial essay. Educational Administration Quarterly, November, 24(4): 484-496.

Ball, S.J. (1990). Management as moral technology: A Luddite analysis. In Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge, S.J. Ball (Ed.). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 153-166.

Ball, S.J. (1994). Some reflections on policy theory: A brief response to Hatcher and Troyna. Journal of Education Policy. 9(2): 171-182.

Bastion, A., Fruchter, N., Gitell, M., Greer, C., and Haskins, K. (1986). Choosing Equality: The Case of Democratic Schooling. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Bates, J.T. (1990) . Portrait of a successful rural alternative school. Rural Educator, 14(3):

20-24.

Beare, H., and Boyd, W.L. (1993). Introduction. In Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools, H. Beare and W.L. Boyd (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, pp. 2-11.

Becker, M.L. (1990). Business-education partnerships: The West German experience. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 8.

Behn, R.D. (1978). How to terminate a public policy: A dozen hints for the would-be terminator. Policy Analysis, Summer, 4(3): 393-413.

Bell, A., and Sigsworth, A. (1987). The Small Primary Rural School. New York, NY: The Falmer Press.

Berlin, B.M. and Cienkus, R.C. (1989). Size: The ultimate education issue?. Education and Urban Society, February, 21(2): 228-231.

Berlin, B.M., Cienkus, R.C., and Jensen, K. (1989). Organizational Size and Learning. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Palatine, Illinois. As in Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467-506.

Bhaerman, R.D. (1994). Implications for systemic education — and societal — reform: A discussion of McGranahan, Hobbs, Nachtigal, and Stephens. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 10 (3): 179-182.

Biddle, W.W., and Biddle, L. (1965). The Community Development Process. Toronto, ON: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Blackmore, J. (1991). Corporatism, democracy, and teacher unions in Victorian education. In Power and Politics in Education, D. Dawkins (Ed.). New York, NY: The Falmer Press, pp. 53-86.

Bognar, C.J., and Martin, B.W. (1980). The School Size Question: A Research Note. St. Johns, NF: Memorial University - Institute for Research in Human Abilities.

Bolaria, B.S. (1991). Social Issues and Contradictions in Canadian Society. Toronto, ON:

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada.

Bowles, S., and Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in Capitalist America. New York: Basic Books.

Boyd, W.L. (1988). How to reform schools without half trying: Secrets of the Reagan administration. Educational Administration Quarterly, August, 24(30): 299-309.

Bray, M. (1988). School size and unit costs: International evidence and its usefulness. Research in Rural Education, 5(1): 7-11.

Brown, J. (1996). Grandy's River Collegiate: A rural school in an urban landscape - Can it survive?. Paper submitted to Alberta Journal of Educational Research.

Brown, J.H.V., and Camola, J. (1991). Educating for Excellence: Improving Quality and Productivity in the 90's. Westport, CT: Auburn House.

Brown, L. (1992). Mandate of schools: A position paper. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 21- 28.

Bryant, M.T. and Grady, M.L. (1990). Community factors threatening rural school district stability. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 6(3): 21-27.

Bulcock, J.W. (1992). Public attitudes on educational change in Newfoundland. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 641-659.

Bulcock, J.W., and Dawe, R. (1996). Equality of educational attainment in Newfoundland (1993). The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, Winter, 23(2-3): 2-20.

Burbules, N.C., and Kantor, H. (1988). "Redefining Equality" reconsidered. Teachers College Record, Wint r, 90(2): 185-191.

Business News. (1990a). French sets mandate. St. John's, NF: February, pp. 6-7.

Business News. (1990b). Board anxious to see provincial education review. St. John's, NF: September, pp. 26-27.

Business News. (1991a). "Make better use of education dollars" - Board presents brief to Royal Commission. St. John's, NF: March, pp. 6-7.

Business News. (1991b). Science and technology must underpin our education and training endeavors. St. John's, NF: March, p. 26.

Business News. (1992a). Royal Commission on Education: Math and sciences must be emphasized. St. John's, NF: May, p. 4.

Business News. (1992b). Commission on Education Report released: Lets (sic) do it now". St. John's, NF: June, p. 4.

Business News. (1993). Job creation: The role of the private sector. St. John's, NF: May, p. 4.

Business News. (1994a). Enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in our classroom. St. John's, NF: January, p. 5.

Business News. (1994b). Properity starts in the classroom. St. John's, NF: January, p. 5.

Butler, R.J., and Monk, D.H. (1985). The cost of public schooling in New York state: The role of scale and efficiency in 1978-79. The Journal of Human Resources, 23(3): 361-379.

Canning, S. (1986). The Institutional and Policy Framework of Rural Development Planning in Scotland and Newfoundland: Historical Experience and Future Directions - Background Report. St. John's, NF: Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Canning, P. (1993). Faculty of Education preliminary response to Change and Challenge and Our Children/Our Future reports. The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, Winter, 20(3): 34-37.

Capper, C.A. (1993). Rural community influences on effective school practices. Journal of Educational Administration, 31(3): 20-38.

Carnegie Forum on Education and Economy. (1986). A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Washington, D.C.: The Forum.

Carnoy, M. (1982). Education, economy and the state. In Cultural and Economic reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology, and the State, M.W. Apple (Ed.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 79-126.

Carnoy, M. (1988). Analyzing School District Reorganization: A Qualified Success. Ithaca, NY: State University of New York.

Carspecken, P.F. and Apple, M. (1992). Critical qualitative research: Theory, methodology, and

practice. In The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education, M.D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy, and J. Preissle (Eds.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press, pp. 507-554.

Case, Barbara. (1992). Community Education - Background Report for the Rural Economic Development Project. St Johns, NF: Economic Recovery Commission.

Clark, B. (1991). Political Economy: A Comparative Approach. New York, NY: Praeger.

Clarke, V.B. (1993). Waves of education reform. The Canadian School Executive, December, 13(6): 7-11.

Cohn, E. (1968). Economies of scale in Iowa high school operations. Journal of Human Resources, Fall, 3: 422-434.

Coleman, J., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfield, F., and York, R. (1966). Equality of Educational Opportunity. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.

Coleman, P. (1986). School districts and student achievement in British Columbia: A preliminary analysis. Canadian Journal of Education. 11: 509-521.

Collins, R. (1977). Functional and conflict theories of educational stratification. In Power and Ideology in Education, J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (Eds.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 118-134.

Conant, J. B. (1959). The American High School Today: A First Report to Interested Citizens. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Conant, J.B. (1967). The Comprehensive High School: A Second Report to Interested Citizens. Toronto, ON: McGraw Hill.

Cooper, B.S., and Associates. (1994). Making money matter in education: A micro-financial model for determining school-level allocations, efficiency, and productivity. Journal of Education Finance, 20: 66-87.

Cooze, J. (1991). The elusive concept of efficiency in education. The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, Fall, 19(1-2): 7-10.

Corbett, H.D., and Wilson, B.L. (1990). Unintended and Unwelcome: The local Impact of State Testing. Philadelphia, PA: Research for Better Schools.

Corbett, H.D., and Wilson, B.L. (1991). Testing, Reform, and Rebellion. Norwood, NJ.: Ablex.

Crocker, R. (1989). Achievement in Mathematics and Science. Background paper for the Newfoundland Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education. St. John's, NF: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Crocker, R. (1992). Performance indicators and system accountability. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 199-253.

Crosby, E.A. (1993). The 'at-risk' decade. Phi Delta Kappan, April, 74(8): 598-604.

Cuban, L. (1995). Book review: The Life and Death of a Rural American High School: Farewell Little Kanaswha, by A.J. DeYoung. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Fall, 11(2): 121-124.

Dale, R. (1994). Applied education politics or political sociology of education?: Contrasting approaches to the study of recent education reform in England and Wales. In Researching Education Policy: Ethical and Methodological Issues. Halpin, D. and Troyna, B. (Eds.). London: The Falmer Press. pp. 31-42.

Dawkins, D. (1991). Introduction. In Power and Politics in Education, D. Dawkins (Ed.). New York, NY: The Falmer Press, pp. 1-8.

Day, G.W. (1975). An Analysis of General and Academic High School Students in Newfoundland on Family Background, Area of Residence, School Size and School Type Factors. (Master's Thesis: Faculty of Education - Memorial University of Newfoundland).

DeYoung, A.J. (1991). Economic underdevelopment and its effect on formal schooling in southern Appalachia. American Educational Research Journal, Summer, 28(2): 297-315.

DeYoung, A.J., and Boyd, T. (1986). Urban school reform for a rural district: A case study of school/community relations in Jackson County, Kentucky, 1899-1986. Journal of Thought, 21(4): 25-41.

DeYoung A.J., and Howley, C.B. (1990). The political economy of rural school consolidation. Peabody Journal of Education, 67(40): 63-89.

DeYoung, A.J., Howley, C., and Theobald, P. (1995). Revisiting and extending the argument: A rejoinder to Wiles and Lipsitz. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Fall, 11(2): 130-133.

DeYoung, A.J., and Lawrence, B.K. (1995). On Hoosiers, Yankees, and Mountaineers. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 105-112.

DeYoung, A.J., and Theobald, P. (1991). Community schools in the national context: The social and cultural impact of educational reform movements on American rural schools. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Summer, 7(3): 3-14.

Dobson, R.L. and Dobson, J.E. (1990). Toward an alternative research paradigm for small/rural schools: Beyond an approximated reality. Research in Rural Education, 6(3): 27-31.

Downer, D., and Downer, W. (1993). Equalizing educational opportunity for students in small schools in Newfoundland. In Understanding Change in Education: Rural and Remote Regions of Canada, E. Newton and D. Knight (Eds.). Calgary Alberta: Detselig, pp. 181-210.

Downey, J. (1990). Business and education in the nineties: Charting a new course. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 5.

Doyle, D.E. (1987). Business-led school reform: The second wave. Across the Board, November, 24(11): 24-32.

Dunne, F. (1977). Policy and paradox. In Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, J.P. Sher (Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 81-124.

Economic Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (1990). Education and Labour Market Training: Prerequisites to Economic Development in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1992). New Opportunities for Growth. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1991-1992). The Strategic Economic Plan and Regional Development in Newfoundland and Labrador - Third Yearly Report of the Economic Recovery Commission Newfoundland and Labrador: September 1, 1991 - August 31, 1992. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission (1992-93). Towards a New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador: Annual Report. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1993). Towards a New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador - Third Yearly Report of the Economic Recovery Commission Newfoundland

and Labrador: September 1, 1992 - August 31, 1993. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1994a). A Report on Job Creation in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1994b). At the Crossroads: The New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economic Recovery Commission. (1996). The Integrated Approach - Making it Work: Sixth Annual Report: September 1, 1994 - February 29, 1996. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Economics and Statistics Section - Department of Finance. (1996). The Economy. St. Johns, NF: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Edington, E.D., and Gardener, C.E. (1984). The relationship of school size to scores in the affective domain from the Montana testing service examination. Education, Fall, 105(1): 40-45.

Edington, E.D., and Koehlar, L. (1987). Rural student achievement: Elements for consideration. ERIC Digest, (ED289658).

Edington, E.D., and Martellero, H.C. (1984). Variables Affecting Academic Achievement in New Mexico Schools. Las Cruces, NM: Center for Rural Education.

Elliott, B., and MacLennan, D. (1994). Education, modernity, and neo-conservative school reform in Canada, Britain, and the US. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 15(2): 165-185.

Elliott, J. (1994). Book review. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 10(2): 129-130.

Evening Telegram, (The). (1996). Editorial: One-room Schoolhouses. Saturday, November 23. St. John's, NF: Author.

Falk, W.W., and Lyson, T.A. (1991). Rural America and the industrial policy debate. In Rural Policies for the 1990's, C.B Flora, and J.A. Christenson (Eds.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 8-21.

Fagan, L.P. (1985). High School Standards Testing Report, 1985. St. John's, NF: Department of Education: Testing Section.

Fanning, J. (1995). Rural School Consolidation and Student Learning. Paper abstract in ERIC (ED384484).

Finn, C.E. Jr. (1991). We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future. New York: The Free Press.

Finn, C.E. Jr. (1992). Introduction. In Education Reform in the 90s, C.E. Finn and T. Rebarber (Eds.). New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, pp. xi-xx.

Finn, C.E. Jr., and Rebarber, T. (1992). The Changing politics of education reform. In Education Reform in the 90s, C.E. Finn and T. Rebarber (Eds.). New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, pp.175-194.

Fisher, D., and Gilgoff, B. (1987). The crisis in B.C. public education: The state and the public interest. In The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling, T. Wotherspoon (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Methuen, pp. 69-96.

Fizzard, G. (1992). Distance education. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 87-116.

Fortis Education Foundation. (1996). Leadership in Learning - Fortis Education Foundation: A New Direction for a New Economy. St. John's, NF: Author.

Foucault, M. (1974). The Archaeology of Knowledge. London: Tavistock.

Fowler, W.J. (1989). School Size, School Characteristics and School Outcomes. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Fox, M. (1995-1996). Rural school transportation as a daily constraint in students' lives. Rural Educator. 17 (2), 22-27.

Fox, W.F. (1981). Reviewing economies of size in education. Journal of Education Finance, Winter, 6: 273-296.

Friedkin, N.E., and Necochea, J. (1988). School system size and performance: A contingency perspective. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Fall, 10(3): 237-249.

Fullan, M.G. (1991). The New Meaning of Educational Change, 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Galgay, F.J. (1987). Presentation of School Board Staff to the Catholic Education Council Boundary Committee, Mobile, Mexico. As in Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children, Our

Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467-506.

Gamradt, J.A., and Avery, P.G. (1992). Country kids, city kids: Community context and geopolitical identity. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 8(1): 61-74.

Gaskell, J. (1987). Education and the labour market: The logic of vocationalism. In The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling, T. Wotherspoon (Ed.). Toronto,ON: Methuen, pp. 257-274.

Ginsberg, M.B., and Cooper, S. (1991). Educational reform, the state and the world economy: Understanding and engaging in ideological and other struggles. In Understanding Educational Reform in a Global Context: Economy, Ideology and the State. M.B. Ginsberg (Ed.). New York, NY: Garland Publishing, pp. 369-396.

Ginsberg, M.B., Cooper, S. Raghu, R., and Zegarra, H. (1991). Educational reform: Social struggle, the state and the world economic system. In Understanding Educational Reform in the Global Context: Economy, Ideology and the State, M.B. Ginsberg (Ed). New York, NY: Garland Publishing.

Giroux, H.A. (1981). Hegemony, resistance, and the paradox of educational reform. Interchange, 12(2-3): 3-27.

Goodlad, J.I (1984). A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Goodlad, J.I. (1992). On taking school reform seriously. Phi Delta Kappan, November, 74(3): 232-238.

Government of Alberta. (1979). Assessment of School Mathematics: Condensed Report. Edmonton, AB: Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1992). Change and Challenge - A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1992-1993). Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1993). Adjusting the Course: Restructuring the School System for Educational Excellence (Part I). November 25. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1993). Profile '92 - Educational Indicators (Primary, Elementary, Secondary). Department of Education, Division of Evaluation, Research and Finance. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1994). Adjusting the Course: Improving the Conditions for Learning (Part II). February. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1995). Directions for Change: Curriculum. (St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1995b). Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary 1994-1995. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1995). Ensuring Quality in Education: School Assessment. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1995). Ensuring Quality in Education: School Assessment Manual for External Teams. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1995). Status Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). 1996 Budget - Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Adjusting the Course: A Status Report from the Royal Commission Implementation Secretariat. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Education Reform in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Brief by the Newfoundland Minister of Education to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs - July 11, 1996). St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Proposed Bill: An Act to Revise the Law Respecting the Operation of Schools in the Province. January 3. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Statement on the Consolidation of School Boards. (News conference statement issued by Education Minister Roger Grimes - July 30, 1996). St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's, NF: Author.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1997). Profile '96 - Educational Indicators (Primary, Elementary, Secondary). Department of education, Division of Evaluation, Research and Finance. St. John's, NF.

Graesser, M. (1988). Public opinion on denominational education: Does the majority rule? In The Vexed Question: Denominational Education in a Secular Age. W. McKim (Ed.). St. John's, NF: Breakwater, pp. 195-220.

Graesser, M. (1992). Attitudes toward denominational education in Newfoundland. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 593-637.

Greenwood, R. (1992). Building on Our Strengths: Regional Production Systems in Peripheral Localities. St. Johns, NF: Economic Recovery Commission.

Griffin, B.L., Richardson, M.D., and Lane, K.E. (1994-5). Student perceptions of an alternative school: Implications for rural educators. Rural Educator, 16(1): 21-24.

Guthrie, J.W. (1979). Organizational scale and school success. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1(1): 17-27.

Guthrie, J.W., and Koppich, J.E. (1993). Ready, A.I.M., reform: Building a model of education reform and 'higher politics'. In Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools, H. Beare and W.L. Boyd (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, pp. 12-29.

Haas, T. (1990). Leaving Home: Circumstances afflicting rural America during the last decade and their impact on public education. Peabody Journal of Education, Summer, 67(4): 7-29.

Haas, T. (1991). Why doesn't' reform apply: Creating a new story about education in rural America. In Rural Education: Issues and Practices, A.J. DeYoung (Ed.). New York, NY: Garland Publishing, pp. 87-105.

Haas, T., and Lambert, R. (1995). To establish the bonds of common purpose and mutual enjoyment. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 136-142.

Hale, S.M. (1990). Controversies in Sociology: A Canadian Introduction. Toronto, ON: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd.

Halfacree, K.H. (1993). Locality and social representation: Space, discourse and alternative definitions of the rural. Journal of Rural Studies, 9(1): 23-37.

Haller, E. et al. (1992). Small schools and higher order thinking skills. ERIC Digest (ED348184).

Haller, E.J., and Monk, D.H. (1988). New reforms, old reforms, and the consolidation of small rural school. Educational Administration Quarterly, November, 24(4): 470-483.

Haller, E.J., Monk, D.H., Spotted Bear, A., Griffith, J. and Moss, P. (1990). School size and program comprehensiveness: Evidence from high school and beyond. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Summer, 12(2): 109-120.

Haller, E.J., Monk, D.H., Tien, L.T. (1993). Small schools and higher order thinking skills. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Fall, 9(2): 66-73.

Haller, E.J., and Virkler, S.J. (1993). Another look at rural-nonrural differences in students' educational aspirations. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 9(3): 170-178.

Hanrahan, A., and Montgomery, M. (1986). Youth Unemployment in Newfoundland: Background Report. St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hanushek, E.A. (1981a). Throwing money at schools. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 1 (1), 17-21.

Hanushek, E.A. (1981b). Educational policy research: An industry perspective. Economics of Education Review, 1(2), 193-223

Hatcher, R. and Troyna, B. (1994). The 'policy cycle': A Ball by Ball account. Journal of Education Policy, 9, 155-170.

Hautecoeur, J.P.(Ed.). (1994). Alpha 94: Literacy and Cultural Development Strategies in Rural Areas. Toronto, ON: Culture Concepts Inc. and UNESCO Institute for Education.

Hay, D.A., and Basran, G.S. (1992), The future of rural Canada in an industrial society. In Rural Sociology in Canada, D.H. Hay and G.S. Basran (Eds.). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, pp. 267-272.

Herzog, M.J.R., and Pittman, R.B. (1995). Home, family, and community: Ingredients in the Rural education Equation. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 113-118.

Hillman, A. (1994). The problems of rural education. In Educational Innovation: An Agenda to Frame the Future, C.E. Greenawalt (Ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America, pp. 309-330.

Hind, I.W. (1977). Estimates of cost functions for primary schools in rural areas. Australian Journal of Agricultural Education, April, 21(1): 13-25.

Hobbs, D. (1991). Rural education. In Rural Policies for the 1990s, C.B. Flora and J.A. Christenson (Eds.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc. pp. 151-165.

Hobbs, D. (1992). The rural context for education: Adjusting the images. In Education in the Rural American Community: A Lifelong Process, M.W. Galbraith (Ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, pp. 21-41.

Hobbs, D. (1994). Demographic trends in nonmetropolitan America. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 10(3): 149-160.

Hodder, I. (1994). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In Handbook of Qualitative Research. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 393-402.

Holmes, M. (1992). Educational Policy for the Pluralist Democracy: The Common School, Choice and Diversity. Washington, D.C.: The Falher Press.

Honig, B. (1988). The key to reform: Sustaining and expanding upon initial success. Educational Administration Quarterly, August, 24(3): 257-274.

Horn, J.G. (1991). Rural/Small school effectiveness as perceived by stakeholders. Rural Educator, 12(3): 21-26.

Howley, C.B. (1989a). Efficiency and the characteristics of school districts: A study of 178 school districts in Kentucky. Research in Rural Education, 6(1): 33-42.

Howley, C.B. (1989b). What is the effect of small-scale schooling on student achievement? ERIC Clearinghouse, (ED308052).

Howley, C.B. (1991). The rural education dilemma. In Rural Education - Issues and Practices. A.J. DeYoung (Ed.). New York: Garland Publishing Inc., pp. 245-289

Howley, C. (1994). The academic effectiveness of small scale schooling (An update). ERIC Digest, (ED372897).

Howley, C.B., and Eckman, J.M. (1997). Sustainable Small Schools: A Handbook for Rural Communities. Charleston, WV: ERIC - Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Howley, C.B. and Howley, A. (1995). The power of babble: Technology and rural education.

Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 126-131.

Huang, G., And Howley, C. (1993). Mitigating disadvantage: Effects of small scale schooling on student achievement in Alaska. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 9(3): 137-149.

Hunt, J.B. (1991). Education for economic growth. In Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Educational Issues, J.W. Noll (Ed.). Baltimore, MD; The Duskin Publishing Group, pp. 116-122.

Hutto, N. (1990). Rural schools can be effective schools, too! Rural Educator, 11(3): 6-9.

Jencks, C. (1972). Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effects of Family and Schooling in America. New York: Basic Books.

Jess, J.D. (1988). Rural education: A different kind of politics. A local school perspective. Rural Education: The Search for Solutions. Des Moines, IW.

Jewell, R.W. (1989). School size and school district size relationship: Costs, results, minorities, and private school enrolments. Education and Urban Society, February, 21(2): 140-153.

Karabel, J., and Halsey, A.H. (1977). Educational research: A review and an interpretation. In Power and Ideology in Education, J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (Eds.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 1 - 78.

Kennedy, R.L. (1989). Size, Expenditure, MAT6 Scores, and Dropout Rates: A Correlation Study of Arkansas School Districts. University of Central Arkansas, Centre for Academic Excellence.

Kenway, J. (1990). Education and the Right's discursive politics: Private versus state schooling. In Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge, S.J. Ball (Ed.). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 167-206.

Kirst, M.W. (1987). Curricular leadership at the state level: What is the new focus?. NASSP Bulletin, April, 71(498): 8-14.

Kirst, M.W. (1988). Recent state education reform in the United Sates: Looking backward and foreword. Educational Administration Quarterly, August, 24(3): 319-328.

Kissick, W.M. (1990). A CEO's view of partnerships. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 6.

Knight, D. (1993). Understanding change in education in rural and remote regions of Canada. In Understanding Change in Education: Rural and Remote Regions of Canada. E. Newton and D. Knight (Eds). Calgary, AB: Detselig, pp. 299-315.

Kogan, M. (1985). Education policy and values. In Policy-Making in Education: The Breakdown of Consensus. I. McNay and J. Ozga (Eds.). Toronto: Pergamon, pp. 1-23.

Koppich, J.E., and Guthrie, J.W. (1993). Examining contemporary education reform efforts in the United States. In Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools, H. Beare and W.L. Boyd (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, pp. 51-68.

Krathwohl. D.R. (1985). Social and Behavioral Science Research: A New Framework for Conceptualizing, Implementing, and Evaluating Research Studies. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lawton, S.B. (1993) A decade of educational reform in Canada: Encounters with the octopus, the elephant, and the five dragons. In Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools, H. Beare and W.L. Boyd (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, pp. 86-105.

Leo-Nyguist, D. (1994). The critical role of rural teachers in the educational reform movement. Country Teacher: A Journal of Ideas and Resources for Rural Teachers, Spring/Summer, 19: 4-5.

Levin, B., and Young, J. (1994). Understanding Canadian Schools. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada.

Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1996). Ready for a Better Tomorrow. Platform of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's, NF: Author.

Lingard, B., O'Brien, P., and Knight, J. (1993). Strengthening Australia's schools through corporate federation? Australian Journal of Education, 37(3): 231-247.

Lucas, B.G. (1982). A rural perspective: School closure and community protest. McGill Journal of Education, Fall, 17(3): 251-262.

MacBrayne, P.S. (1987). Educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth: A review of the literature. Research in Rural Education, 4(3): 135-139.

MacGregor, D. (1989). State and politics. In Introductory to Sociology: A Canadian Focus (Third Edition), J.J. Teevan (Ed.). Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, pp. 323-355.

Machlup, F. (1970). Education and Economic Growth. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Manahan, J. (1989). Student Achievement and Size of District in North Texas. Baldwin City, KA: Baker University.

Marchak, M.P. (1988). Ideological Perspectives on Canada (Third Edition). Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Martin, D. T. (1991). The political economy of school reform in the United Sates. In Understanding Educational Reform in a Global Context: Economy, Ideology and the State. M.B. Ginsberg (Ed.). New York, NY: Garland Publishing, pp. 341-368.

Martin, W.B., and Spain, W.H. (1986). A Comparative Analysis of Student Views on Schooling: A Question of School Size. (Background Report No. 2). St. John's, NF: Small Schools Project.

Maxwell, T.W. (1996). Accountability: The case of accreditation of British Columbia's public schools. Canadian Journal of Education, 21(1): 18-34.

May, D. (1993). Barriers to Economic Adjustment and Growth: The Educational Attainments of Income Security Recipients. St. Johns, NF: Economic Recovery Commission.

May, D., and Hollett, A. (1986). The Causes of Unemployment in Newfoundland -Background Report. St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, Newfoundland and Labrador.

McCann, P. (1994). Schooling in a Fishing Society: Education and Economic Conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador 1836-1986. St. John's, NF: Memorial University.

McCann, P. (1995). Job training for the global marketplace? Education and the "new economy". The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, Winter, 22(3-4): 13-21.

McCracken J.D., and Barcinas J.D.T. (1991). Differences between rural and urban schools, student characteristics, and student aspirations in Ohio. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 7(2): 29-40.

McDougall, B.J. (1990). National commitment to education: New policies and initiatives. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 4.

McGranahan, D.A. (1994). Rural America in the global economy: Socioeconomic trends.

Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 10 (3): 139-148.

McGuire, J. (1990). Visionary democratic leaders of very small districts: Getting the job done right. Rural Educator, 16(1): 30-35.

McLaren, P. (1993). Schooling as a Ritual Performance (Second Edition). New York, NY: Routledge.

McLaren, P. (1994). Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education. New York, NY: Longman Press.

McLean, L.D. (1985). The Craft of Student Evaluation in Canada. Toronto, ON: Canadian Education Association.

McLean, L.D. (1989). The structure and influence of public examinations. In Public Examinations: Comparative Analysis and Critique - Research Report #6. Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education. St. Johns, NF: Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education.

Meaney, L.J. (1977). A Study of Small Central High Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Masters Thesis: Faculty of Education - Memorial University of Newfoundland).

Melnick, S.A. (1986). A Comparative Study of the Relationship between School District Size and Selected Indicators of Educational Quality. Paper presented for the Connecticut Association of School Administrators: Small / Rural Schools Committee. As in Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children, Our Future: Commissoioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467-506.

Melnick, S.A., Shibles, M.R. and Gable, R.K. (1987). School district size: Student achievement and high school course offerings in Connecticut. Research in Rural Education, 4(3): 119-123.

Monk, D.H. (1987). Secondary school size and curriculum comprehensiveness. Economics of Education Review, 6(2): 137-150.

Monk, P.H. (1991). The organization and reorganization of small rural schools. In Rural Education: Issues and Practices. A.J. DeYoung (Ed.). New York, NY: Garland Publishing.

Moreau, R. (1987). District size, teacher qualifications, and pupil performance in Maine School Districts. Research in Rural Education, 4(2): 95-99.

Mulcahy, D.M. (1993). Learning and Teaching in Multi-Grade Classrooms: A Small Schools Curriculum Project - Research Report. St. Johns, NF: Faculty of Education - Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Mulcahy, D. (1997). Rural Education Reform: The Consultation Process. Paper for the National Rural Education Association 89th Annual Convention and Research Forum. September 23-27. Tucson, AZ.

Mulkey, D. (1993). Schools in rural community development: Some practical suggestions. Rural Educator, 14(1): 14-18.

Murphy, J. (1992). Restructuring American schools: An overview. In Education Reform in the 90s, C.E. Finn and T. Rebarber (Eds.). New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, pp. 3-22.

Nachtigal, P.M. (1982). Education in rural America: An overview. In Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way, P.M. Nachtigal (Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 3-15.

Nachtigal, P.M. (1992a). Rural schooling: Obsolete or harbinger of the future. Educational Horizons, Winter, 70(2): 66-70.

Nachtigal, P.M. (1992b). Secondary education. In Education in Rural American Community: A Lifelong Process. M.W. Galbraith (Ed.). Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing, pp. 73-89.

Nachtigal, P.M. (1994). Political trends affecting nonmetropolitan America. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 10(3): 161-166.

Nagy, P., Drost, D., Banfield, H. (1982). The Influence of Community Isolation on Student Achievement: Technical Report. St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland - Institute for Educational Research and Development.

National Centre for Education Statistics (1991). Trends in Academic Progress. Washington, D.C.: Author.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students. (1985). Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk. Boston, MA: Author.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (The). (1983). A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Washington, D.C.: Author.

National Education Association. (1983). A Guide for Teachers to A Nation at Risk and Other Studies. Washington, D.C.: Author.

National Governor's Association. (1986). Time for results: The Governors' 1991 Report on

Education. Washington, D.C.: Center for Policy Research and Analysis.

Nelson, S. (1994). Implications of recent changes in nonmetropolitan America: A discussion of McGranahan, Hobbs, Nachtigal, and Stephens. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Winter, 10(3): 183-184.

Newfoundland Teachers' Association. (1986). Exploring New Pathways (A Brief Presented to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador by the Newfoundland Teachers' Association). St. John's, NF: Author.

Newton, E. (1993). Capitalizing on context. In Understanding Change in Education: Rural and Remote Regions of Canada, E. Newton and D. Knight (Eds.). Calgary, AB: Detselig, pp. 9-17.

Newton, E., and Newton, P. (1992). Voices, Vision and Vitality - Redesigning Small Schools. Calgary, AB: Detselig.

Norris, S.P., Philips, L.M., Bulcock, J.W. (1992a). Demographic Causes of Reading Literacy Levels in Newfoundland and Labrador. Report Number 1. Summary Reports of Paths to Literacy and Illiteracy in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Norris, S.P., Philips, L.M., Bulcock, J.W. (1992b). The Effects of Demography and Values on Literacy Attainment; and the Effects of Literacy Attainment on Literacy Practices, Economic Benefits, and Perceptions of Quality of Life. Report Number 2. Summary Reports of Paths to Literacy and Illiteracy in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. Johns, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland.

O'Brien, T.V. (1994). Education reform movements among the states in the last ten years. In Educational Innovation: An Agenda to Frame the Future, C.E. Greenawalt (Ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America, pp. 31-58.

O'Neil, L., and Beckner, W. (1980). A Review of Literature on Rural and/or Small Schools. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University.

Ozga, J., and Gewirtz, S. (1994). Sex , lies, and audiotape: Interviewing the educational policy elite. In Researching Educational Policy: Ethical and Methodological Issues, D. Halpin and B. Troyna (Eds.). London: The Falmer Press, pp. 121-135.

Parks, G.A., Ross, P.J., and Just, A.E. (1982). Education. In Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980s, D.A. Dillman and D.J. Hobbs (Eds.). Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 185-195.

Parsons, L. (1978). Education and Unemployment in Newfoundland. A paper presented to the Faculty of Education Seminar. Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF.

Parsons, T. (1961). The school class as a social system: Some functions in American society. In Education, Economy, and Society, A.H. Halsey, J. Floud, and A. Anderson (Eds.). Toronto, ON: Collier-Macmillan Canada, pp. 434-455.

Peshkin, A. (1978). Growing up American: Schooling and the Survival of Community. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Peshkin, A. (1982). The Imperfect Union: School Consolidation and Community Conflict. Chicago, IL: the University of Chicago Press.

Peters, M., and Marshall, J. (1993). Educational policy analysis and the politics of interpretation: The search for a well-defined problem. Evaluation Review. 17, 310-330.

Peterson, T.K. (1992). Designing accountability to help reform. In Education Reform for the 90s, C.E. Finn and T. Rebarber (Eds.). New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, pp. 109-132.

Popham, W.J. (1991). The merits of measurement-driven instruction. In Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Educational Issues, J.W. Noll (Ed.). Baltimore, MD; The Duskin Publishing Group, pp. 226-232.

Popkewitz, T.S. (1991). A Political Sociology of Educational Reform - Power Knowledge in Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research. New York, NY: Teachers' College Press.

Power, S. (1992). Researching the impact of education policy: Difficulties and discontinuities. Journal of Education Policy, 7: 493-500.

Prakash, M.S. (1994). What are people for? Wendell Berry on education, ecology and culture. Educational Theory, Spring, 44(2): 135-157.

Press, H. (1990). Toward 2000 - Trends Report II: Elementary-Secondary Projections. St. Johns, NF: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador: Department of Education - Division of Evaluation and Research.

Press, H. (1992). Costs and consequences: An estimation of the potential for consolidation within the education system and associated costs. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 509 - 590.

Quantz, R.A. (1992). On critical ethnography (With some postmodern considerations). The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education, M.D. Lecompte, W.L. Millroy, and J. Preissle (Eds.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press, pp. 447-506.

Raab, C.D. (1994). Where we are now: Reflections on the sociology of education policy. In Researching Education Policy: Ethical and Methodological Issues. D. Halpin and B. Troyna (Eds.). London: The Falmer Press, pp. 17-30.

Randhawa, B.S. (1992). Rural Education: Opportunities and Issues. In Rural Sociology in Canada, D.H. Hay and G.S. Basran (Eds.). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, pp. 101-112.

Reck, C. (1987). Small Catholic Elementary Schools: An endangered species? ERIC Digest (ED296815).

Rideout, F.D. (1996). School Based Management for Small Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Doctoral Thesis: Graduate Department of Education - University of Toronto).

Riew, J. (1986). Scale economies, capacity utilization, and school costs: A comparative analysis of secondary and elementary schools. Journal of Education Finance, Spring, 11: 433-446.

Riggs, F.T. (1986). Summary of Submissions. Background Report No. 3. St. John's, NF: Small Schools Project.

Riggs, F.T. (1987). Report of the Small Schools Study Project. St. John's, NF: Small Schools Project.

Robertson, H.-J. (1991). Canadian Teachers Federation, 15 (4).

Robertson, S.L., and Woock, R.R. (1993). Political economy of educational "reform" in Australia. In Understanding Educational Reform in a Global Context: Economy, Ideology and the State. M.B. Ginsberg (Ed.). New York, NY: Garland Publishing, pp. 85-114.

Rodriguez, F. (1990). Equity in Education: Issues and Strategies. Dubuque, IA: Kendall / Hunt Publishing.

Roebothan, C. (1987). School District Boundaries Revisited. Report of the Task Force on Integrated School District Boundaries, St. John's, NF.

Roebothan, C. and Warren, P. (1991). School district boundaries revisited: Report of the task force on Integrated School District bundaries. In Dimensions of Newfoundland Society and Education, A. Singh and I.J. Baksh (Eds). St. Johns, NF: Memorial University of

Newfoundland, pp. 49-54.

Rogers, R.G. (1986). Is School District Reorganization Necessary? A Study of 34 Small Illinois School Districts. Technical report prepared for Bluffs Community Unit #2. Bluffs, Illinois. As in Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467-506.

Rosenfeld, S. (1977). Centralization versus decentralization: A case study of rural education in Vermont. In Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, J.P. Sher (Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 205-270.

Rosenfeld, S.A. and Sher, J.P. (1977). The urbanization of rural schools, 1840-1970. In Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, J.P. Sher (Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 11-42.

Ross, A.K. (1990). Defining a vision for education. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 13.

Ross, D.R. (1977). A Comparative Study of Urban and Rural Students Attending Two Urban Schools on Selected Attitudinal Variables and Academic Achievement. (Masters Thesis: Department of Educational Psychology - Memorial University of Newfoundland).

Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, (The). (1992). Our Children, Our Future. St. John's, NF: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment: Newfoundland, (The). (1986a). Building on our Strengths: Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. St. Johns, NF: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment: Newfoundland, (The). (1986b). Building Our Strengths: Summary Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment: Newfoundland, (The). (1986c). Education for Self-Reliance: A Report on Education and Training in Newfoundland. St. John's, NF: Author.

St. John's Board of Trade. (1991). Submission to: The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the

Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary & Secondary Education. St. John's, NF: Author.

St. John's Board of Trade. (1993). Discussion Paper with Provincial Government Cabinet. St. John's, NF: Author.

St. John's Board of Trade. (1994). Pre-Budget Submission to President of Treasury Board, Ministry of Finance. St. John's, NF: Author.

Salamon, L.M. (1991). Overview: Why human capital? Why now?. In Human capital and America's Future, D.W. Hornbeck and L.M. Salamon (Eds.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1-39.

Salganik, L.H. (1985). Why testing reforms are so popular and how they are changing education. Phi Delta Kappan, 66: 607-610.

Satterfield, C., and Barker, B.O. (1989). Applied economics: The junior achievement rural expansion project. Rural Educator, 12(3): 12-18.

Scheurich, J.J. (1994). Policy archaeology: A new policy studies methodology. Journal of Education Policy. 9, 297-316.

Schultz, T.W. (1961). Investment in human capital. American Economic Review, March, 51: 1-17.

Schumacher, E.F. (1974). Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered. London: Abacus.

Scott, D. and Usher, R. (Eds.). (1996). Understanding Education Research. New York: Routledge.

Seal, K.R., and Harmon, H.L. (1995). Realities of rural school reform. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 119-124.

Segars, J.E. (1993). From rags to riches: A plan to improve education in a small rural school. Rural Educator, 14(1): 19-21.

Sergiovanni, T. (1995). Small schools, great expectations. Educational Leadership, 53(3): 48-52.

Shafer, R.J. (1980). A Guide to Historical Method. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.

Sher, J.P. (ed.) (1977a). Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom.

Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sher, J.P. (1977b). Rethinking school district reorganization. Compact, Summer, 11(3): 13-15.

Sher, J.P. (1978). A proposal to end federal neglect of rural schools. Phi Delta Kappan, December, 60(4): 280-282.

Sher, J.P. (1986). Heavy Meddle: A Critique of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Plan to Mandate School District Mergers Throughout the State. Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina's School Board Association. As in Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467-506.

Sher, J.P. (1995). The battle for the soul of rural school reform. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 143-148.

Sher, J.P., and Tompkins, R.B. (1977). Economy, efficiency, and equality: The myths of rural school and district consolidation. In Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, J.P. Sher (Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 213-249.

Shor, Ira. (1992). Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Silver, R. And DeYoung, A.J. (1986). The ideology of rural/Appalachian education, 1895-1935: The Appalachian educational problem as part of the Appalachian life problem. Educational Theory, Winter, 36 (1): 51-65.

Simms, D. (1986). Rural Development in Newfoundland: "A Legitimation Crisis" - Background Report. St. John's, NF: Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment in Newfoundland.

Sinclair, P.S. (1992). Atlantic Canada's fishing communities: The impact of change. In Rural Sociology in Canada, D.H. Hay and G.S. Basran (Eds.). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, pp. 21-44.

Singh, A. (1990a). How to manage or make sense of recent reports and documents on the quality of schooling. The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, Winter, 17(3-4): 21-37.

Singh, A. (1991b). Social theory, political practice and experts: Making sense of the reports on the quality of schooling (Part 2). In Dimensions of Newfoundland Society and

Education, A Singh and I.J. Baksh (Eds.). St. Johns, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, pp. 24-34.

Slater, R.O. (1989). Education scale. Education and Urban Society, February, 21(2): 207-217.

Slaughter, S. (1985). Main-traveled road or fast track: The liberal and technical in higher education reform. In Excellence in Education: Perspectives on Policy and Practice, P.G. Altbach, G.P. Kelly, and L. Weis (Eds.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, pp. 107-128.

Smith, D. E. (1990). Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling. New York, NY: Routledge.

Smith, D.T., and DeYoung, A.J. (1988). Big school vs. small school: Conceptual, empirical, and political perspectives on the re-emerging debate. Journal of Rural and Small schools, 2: 2-11.

Smitheram, V. (1982). Support or confront? Organizing public participation. McGill Journal of Education, Fall, 17(3): 213-226.

Snauwaert, D. T. (1990). Wendell Berry, liberalism, and democratic theory: Implications for the rural school. Peabody Journal of Education, Summer, 67(4): 118-131.

Spring, J. (1980). Educating the Worker Citizen: The Social, Economic, and Political Foundations of Education. New York, NY: Longman.

Spring, J. (1985). Political and economic analysis. In Excellence in Education: Perspectives on Policy and Practice, P.G. Altbach, G.P. Kelly, and L. Weis (Eds.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, pp. 75-90.

Spring, J. (1991). American Education: An Introduction to Social and Political Aspects (Fifth Edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Spring, J. (1993). Conflict of Interest: The Politics of American Education (Second Edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Stephens, E.R. (1987). Resisting the obvious: State policy initiatives for rural school improvement should not mean just another round of massive school reorganization. Research in Rural Education, 4(1): 29-34.

Stephens, E.R. and Bhaerman, R.D. (1992). Analyzing educational initiatives with rural eyes. Educational Horizons, Winter, 70(2): 92-96.

Stevens, N.G., and Peltier, G.L. (1994). A review of research on small school student

participation in extracurricular activities. Journal of Research in Rural Education, Fall, 10(2): 116-120.

Stevenson, K.R., and Pellicer, L.O. (1998). Is bigger really better? School Business Affairs, January, 64(1): 18-23.

Streifel, J.S.. Foldsey, G., Holman, D.M. (1991). The financial effects of consolidation. Journal of Research in Rural education, 7(2): 13-20.

Strong, C. (1992). Equalizing educational opportunity. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 119 - 144.

Sullivan, D.S. (1996). Consolidation, closures will mark '97 school year: Grimes. The Evening Telegram, St. John's, NF, Wednesday, April 24: p. 3.

Summer, R., and Warburton, F.W. (1972). Achievement in Secondary School. London: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Swanson, A.D. (1988). The matter of size: A review of the research on relationships between school and district size, pupil achievement and cost. Research in Rural Education, 5(2): 1-8.

Sykes, G. and Elmore, R. (1989). Making schools manageable. In J. Hannaway and R. Crowson (Eds.). The Politics of Reforming School Administration. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer.

Tarrant, M. (1996). Towns die without schools. (Letter to the Editor). Evening Telegram. St. John's, NF, .January 29, 1996.

Task Force on Educational Finance (1989). Financing Greater Equality and Excellence in the Newfoundland School System. St. Johns, NF: Author.

Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education (1989). Towards an Achieving Society, St. John's, NF: Government of Newfoundland.

Theobald, P. (1990). Introduction. Peabody Journal of Education, Summer, 67(4): 1-7.

Theobald, P. (1992). Rural philosophy for education: Wendell Berry's tradition. ERIC Digest, (ED345930).

Theobald, P. (1994). Forces supporting consolidation and some alternatives. ERIC Digest, (ED377996).

Theobald, P., and Nachtigal, P. (1995). Culture, community, and the promise of rural education. Phi Delta Kappan, October, 77(2): 132-135.

Tholkes, R.J., and Sederberg, C.H. (1990). Economies of scale and rural schools. Research in Rural Education, Fall, 7(1): 9-15.

Thomas, H. (1992). School governance and the limits of self-interest. Educational Review, 44(3): 327-334.

Thomas, S.B. (1993). The education-reform movement in England and Wales. In Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools, H. Beare and W.L. Boyd (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, pp. 30-50.

Thompson, J.A. (1994), Scale economies and student performance in Hawaii. Journal of Education Finance, 19: 279-291.

Thurow, L.C. (1977). Education and economic equality. In Power and Ideology in Education, J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (Eds.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 325 - 335.

Timar, T.B., and Kirp, D.L. (1988). Managing Educational Excellence. New York, NY: The Falmer Press.

Timpane, P.M. (1990). The impact of business involvement in the development of children and youth in the United States. In Reaching for Success: Business and Education Working Together - First National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships, M. Bloom (Ed.). Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, p. 7.

Towers, J.M. (1990). Assimilating smaller school districts: Promotion and pitfalls. Rural Educator, 12(1): 21-22.

Townsend, R. (1982). Footnotes to decline and protest: A professor's joys and sorrows. McGill Journal of Education, 17 (3): 285-300.

Treslan, D.L. (1988). Educational District Boundaries: A Framework for the Future. Report of the Committee to Study Roman Catholic School District Boundaries, St. John's, NF.

Treslan, D. (1992). An examination of critical factors in the establishment of effective school districts. In Our Children Our Future: Commissioned Studies, L. Williams and H. Press (Eds.). St John's, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, pp. 467 - 506.

Troyna, B. (1994). Critical social research and education policy. British Journal of Educational Studies. 1: 70-84.

Tyack, D. (1974). The One Best System - A History of American Urban Education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

United States Department of Education. (1984). The Nation Responds: Recent Efforts to Improve Education. Washington, D.C.: Author.

United States Department of Education. (1994). The Condition of Education in Rural Schools. Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement - Programs for the Improvement of Practice.

Unks, G. (1989). Differences in Curriculum within a school setting. Education and Urban Society, 21(2): 175-191.

Usher, R. (1996). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In Understanding Education Research, D. Scott and R. Usher. (Eds.). New York: Routledge, pp. 9-32.

Verstegen, D. (1991). Funding rural, small schools: Strategies at the Statehouse. ERIC Digest, (ED335205).

Veyne, P. (1984). Writing History: Essays on Epistemology. Translated by M. Moore-Rinvolucri. Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press.

Vincent, C. (1994). From Small School to Large School: Students Perceptions of their Experience. (Masters Thesis: Faculty of Education - Memorial University of Newfoundland).

Walberg, H.J. (1989). District size and student learning. Education and Urban Society, February, 21(2): 154-163.

Walberg, H.J., and Fowler, W.J. Jr. (1987). Expenditure and size efficiencies of public school districts. Educational Researcher, October, 16(7): 5-13.

Ward, J.G., and Rink, F.J. (1992). Analysis of local stakeholder opposition to school district consolidation: An application of interpretative theory to public policy making. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 8(2): 11-19.

Warren, P.J. (1982). Trends in non-urban school systems. In Society and Education in Newfoundland, A. Singh and I.J. Baksh (Eds.). St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, pp. 219-229.

Warren, P.J. (1983). Public Attitudes Towards Education in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Watson, L. (1996). Public accountability or fiscal Control? Benchmarks of performance in Australian schooling. Australian Journal of Education, 40(1): 104-123.

Weaver, T. (1977). Class conflict in rural education: A Case study of Preston County, West Virginia. In Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, J.P. Sher (Ed..), Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 159-204.

Webb, F.R. (1989). A district of a certain size: An exploration of the debate on school district size. Education and Urban Society, February, 21(2): 125-139.

Weisbrod, B.A. (1975). Education and investment in human capital. In The "Inequality" Controversy: Schooling and Distributive Justice, D.M. Levine and M.J. Bane (Eds.). New York, NY: Basic Books, pp. 123-146.

Wendling, W., and Cohen, J. (1981). Education resources and student achievement: Good news for schools. Journal of Education Finance, Summer, 7: 44-63.

White, F., and Tweeten, L. (1973). Optimal school district size emphasizing rural areas. American Journal of Agricultural Economics, 55(1): 45-53.

White, K.R. (1982). The relation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. Psychological Bulletin, 91 (3): 461-481.

Wiles, D.K. (1994). What is useful policy information in school consolidation debates? Journal of Education Finance, Winter, 19: 292-318.

Wiles, J. (1995). Logic gone wrong; A reply to DeYoung, Howley, & Theobald (1995). Journal of Research in Rural Education, Fall, 11(2): 128.

Wilkinson, B.W. (1966). Studies in the Economics of Education. Ottawa, ON: Queens Printer and Comptroller of Stationary.

Wilkinson, K.P. (1991). The Community in Rural America. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Williams, L. and. Press, H. (Eds.). (1992). Our Children, Our Future: Commissioned Studies. St. Johns, NF: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education.

Wilson, S.M. (1985). Differences in elementary math instruction and achievement among districts of varying size in the State of Washington. Research in Rural Education. 3: 51-55.

Wotherspoon, T. (1987). Introduction: Conflict and crisis in Canadian education. In The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling, T. Wotherspoon (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Methuen, pp. 1-18.

Yao-Chi, T., and Tweeten, L. (1973). The impact of bussing and student achievement. Growth and Change. 4(4).