

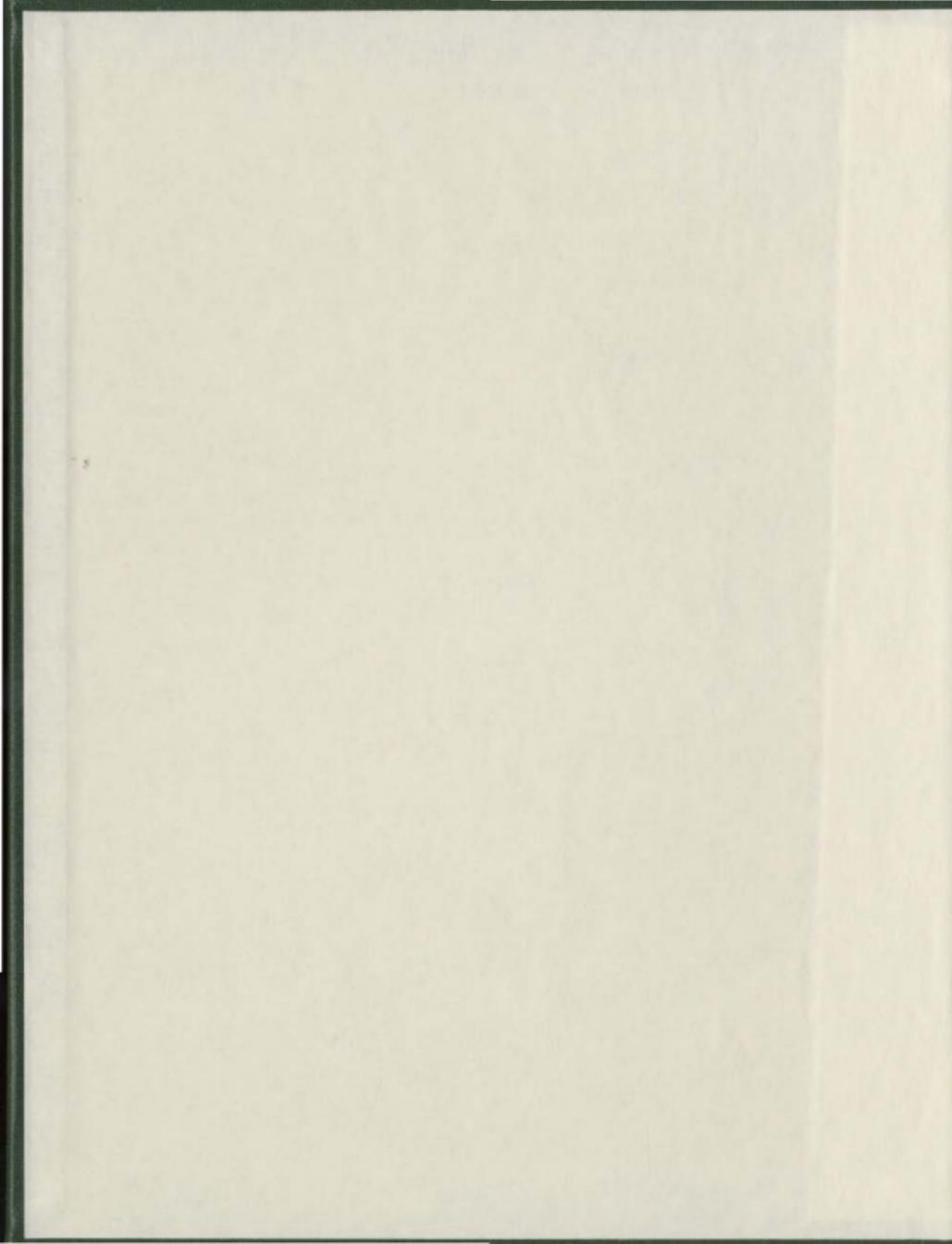
POST-HIGH SCHOOL ASPIRATIONS OF RURAL  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR YOUTH  
YEARS AFTER THE COD MORATORIUM:  
A NEW GENERATION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Running head: FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

Post-High School Aspirations  
of Rural Newfoundland and Labrador Youth  
Years After the Cod Moratorium:  
A New Generation

by

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A thesis submitted to the  
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## Abstract

Rural Newfoundland and Labrador youth who live in communities experiencing economic uncertainty could be the first generation of their families to enroll in post-secondary programs. Literature describes such 'Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students' as less likely to aspire to post-secondary programs and gives eventual risks for attrition. Sixteen high school students from two isolated island communities of Newfoundland and Labrador were surveyed and interviewed to investigate post-high school aspirations of these youth. All participants reported wanting to attend post-secondary education and training programs and feeling that program cost was the greatest barrier to their successful completion. Recommendations are made to encourage the development of practical initiatives for student service departments in support of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students while attending programs.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The objective of this thesis research is to qualitatively investigate the post-high school aspirations of rural Newfoundland and Labrador high school students with parents who have no post-secondary education. These youth, if they pursue a post-secondary education, will become what higher education literature terms “First-Generation Post-Secondary Students”. The research is directed at youth from two island communities with a strong history in the ground fishery. Since the 1992 ground fish moratorium these communities have experienced considerable economic adjustments. The research explores how the current economic climate, specifically the downturn in the ground fishery, has impacted upon the post-high school choices of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students.

#### Historical Context

The ground fishery has been described as the settlement catalyst for Newfoundland and Labrador, and is responsible for shaping the cultural landscape of the island. This has led to a history of strong economic dependence on these and other natural resources. Seasonal work supplied by Newfoundland and Labrador’s natural resources, along with government financial supplement programs, has meant that many young people did not have to pursue an education in order to secure an acceptable quality of life. This situation made it possible for young people to remain in their home communities to pursue seasonal employment rather than post-secondary education. Hence 49% of Newfoundland and Labrador’s adult population does not possess a high school diploma and the illiteracy rate is one of the highest in the country. Also, fewer

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have completed a university degree compared to the rest of the country. (Human Resources and Development Canada, 1996).

Another explanation for Newfoundland and Labrador's limited post-secondary education statistics may also be due to its relatively short history of offering post-secondary programs. Memorial University College began offering transferable two-year university preparation courses in 1925. In 1949, Memorial University became a degree-granting institution (Baker, 1999). The provincial trades and technology college system began offering post-secondary education programs in the early 1960's. This brought post-secondary education into rural areas of the province. In total, the 75-year history of offering post-secondary programs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is considerably shorter than other provinces in Canada.

When we consider these historical facts along with the inability of the current fishery to supply resources necessary to continue inter-generational dependence, we can see an interesting characteristic of Newfoundland and Labrador's rural youth. It can be reasonably hypothesized that many of today's rural Newfoundland and Labrador youth will represent the first-generation of their family to consider post-secondary education programs.

#### Newfoundland and Labrador's Educational Attainment

The 1996 Census data shows that 79% of Newfoundland and Labrador's population aged 15 years and over have schooling levels ranging from less than five years to 13 years. Only 21% of the same group have schooling levels past grade 12. This data shows a majority of Newfoundland and Labrador's population has a high school or less education. The average years of education held by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is 11.2 years, while the average for the entire country is 12.3 years of education (Statistics Canada, 1996).

In 1990 the results of the Southam Literacy Survey showed that 44% of Newfoundland and Labrador adults could be considered as functionally illiterate. 24% of our adult population were at literacy levels of one and two, with level two indicating the lowest levels of reading skills. 39% were at level four, or the level of individuals who can meet every day reading demands. This was statistically lower than the Canadian average of 62% (Department of Education, 1990a).

Post-secondary Indicators '98 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998b) highlights changes within educational attainment statistics for the province. This report highlights improvements in the overall educational attainment levels over the past twenty years, however it should be noted that general education levels are still below the Canadian average. The report states "Estimates of educational attainment from the Canadian census, studies of literacy and numeracy, and until recently, graduation rates from secondary school have all indicated lower levels of education among the citizens of this province when compared to our Canadian counterparts" (p.29).

As stated earlier, there have been significant changes in educational attainment levels over the past twenty years. In 1976, 70 % of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had not completed high school and approximately 40 % of the province's adult population had not achieved a grade nine education. By 1986 the statistics of adults who had not attained a grade nine education had decreased to 26.6 % and through to 1996 it continued to decline to 18.7 %. When we examine the 20-34 year olds in 1976, 54 % had not completed high school; by 1996 this percentage decreased to 20.5 %. During the same period there was also an increase in post-secondary attainment within the 20-34 year old population; by 1996 there was a 67 % increase in post-secondary participation was seen within the same group. The report goes on to state that

Newfoundland and Labrador's improvements in educational attainment from 1976 to 1996 was greater than the rest of Canada during the same period. Within this period Newfoundland and Labrador's post-secondary attainment increased by 143 %, compared to the Canadian average of 119 % (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998b).

Both Shaping Our Future (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990a) and the White Paper (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990b) stress the importance of increasing post-secondary participation rates and basic literacy rates in Newfoundland and Labrador. Both documents focus considerable attention on strategies designed to tackle Newfoundland and Labrador's under-education and literacy problems. One of the goals listed in Shaping Our Future (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990a) was to increase accessibility of post-secondary programs for the students of the province. The intention was to increase the numbers of students with disabilities, native status, social assistance recipients and rural students. Also, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has recognized a need to gain insight into the relationship between parental education levels and educational aspirations of their youth (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998b).

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) (1996) published Issues and Opportunities in the Newfoundland and Labrador Labor Market. The focus of the document was to aid in facilitating provincial labor market adjustments. Here HRDC suggests that Newfoundland and Labrador has complicated barriers to overcome such as "low education levels, limited employment growth and narrow industrial base have become more evident since the collapse of the ground fishery" (p.1)

### Statement of Problem

Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students deserve research attention for a number of reasons. Firstly, sociological research suggests that children of parents with no post-secondary education possess limited capacity for attending post-secondary programs. Secondly, if they do choose to attend post-secondary programs, higher education literature tends to describe these students as attrition risks. Thirdly, it is important to increase information concerning the post-high school transitions of Newfoundland and Labrador's youth, particularly those who have lived in rural communities during the fishery crisis. Genge (1997) studied the aspirations of rural Newfoundland and Labrador youth. This study suggested that the impact of fishery crisis on youth had yet to be studied.

As it has throughout Newfoundland and Labrador's history, the fishery is continuing to mold its culture in new directions. If this new generation of rural high school students is expected to broaden its employment possibilities, post-secondary education will increasingly become part of its post-high school choices. Also, if post-secondary educational settings are to truly offer the "student-centred" services discussed as a strategic goal by the Department of Education, post-secondary administration must understand the special needs of its post-secondary students (The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990a).

Not much is known statistically about this particular group of high school students, however learning more about such topics as their post-secondary aspirations, influencing factors, academic performance and parental support would add to much needed Canadian research.

This thesis research was designed to allow a glimpse into the post-high school decision making process of a small group of rural Newfoundland and Labrador high school students from

two isolated island communities that have been heavily impacted by the collapse of the cod fishery. Information gained through this research included the following:

- (i) motivational factors behind post-high school aspirations;
- (ii) parental influence on student choices;
- (iii) student perception of the their community including the fishery; and
- (iv) barriers identified by participants to successful completion of programs as described by students.

#### Research Questions

The major research question of this study explores how the current economic climate, specifically the downturn in the ground fishery, has impacted upon the post-high school choices of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. The subsidiary questions were designed to examine the factors that have influenced students' post-high school choices, these questions are:

#### *Community Perceptions*

- a) How do participants describe their communities?
- b) How do participants predict their communities will change?
- c) How do participants describe the future employment possibilities of their home community?

#### *Peers Awareness*

- a) What are the perceptions of youth who are not planning to attend post-secondary programs after high school?

- b) What are the perceptions of youth who are planning to enter the fishery after high school?
- c) Do these participants recognize a gender difference in post-high school plans of their peers?

*Parental Influences*

- a) How do these youth perceive the employment choices of their parents?
- b) What types of direct advice have been given by parents to their children about post-secondary education?
- c) What messages are sent to children concerning the fishery, out-migration and career choices?

*School Influences*

- a) Do these participants 'like' or 'dislike' school? How has this influenced their post-high school plans?
- b) How do participants perceive the post-secondary information given to them by their schools?
- c) Are participants involved in extra curricular activities?

*Fishery Influences*

- a) Have these youth ever considered employment in the fishery?
- b) Do these youth see the fishery as a viable career option for youth of their community?

*Post-Secondary Attitude and Post Secondary Plans*

- a) Do these youth see post-secondary education as part of their post-high school plan?

*Barriers to Post-Secondary Education*

- a) Can these youth identify any potential barriers to successful completion of their post-high school plans?

## Limitations of Study

Participants will be volunteering their time to this study, therefore the issue of self-selection may be viewed as a limitation (Seidman, 1991). Any analysis of data will need to consider that the subject group may have different characteristics than students who choose not to take part in the study. Due to the study design, self-selection issues can be anticipated in both the parents and the final selected group of subjects.

Any interpretation of this study must also consider the validity of personal interviews. There is always a possibility of subjects not being consistently honest during the interviewing sessions.

Another limitation of this study would be the potential effect of the interview on the post high school choices of the focus group. It is possible that raising these types of questions may cause the youth to consider options that they may not normally have seen as post high school choices.

It is also important to consider the bias of the researcher. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) highlight that the framing of questions can be seen as an issue for bias. Here the authors argue

that in order to decrease the possibility of misinterpretations the interviewer must ask questions properly. McCracken (1988) suggests the legitimacy of this limitation is based on the fact that the interviewer should be viewed as a major instrument in any qualitative research method. It is therefore natural to consider if these potential biases have been "offset by the use of research method". Strauss & Corbin (1998) suggest that complete objectivity in research methods is impossible.

The researcher must also consider the literature review as a possible limitation (McCracken, 1988). Due to the fact that the interview questions and subject selection have been based on relevant information observed in the literature review it is important to consider that without an accurate literature review this particular study may be flawed (Steward, 1996).

#### Operational Definitions

- 1) Post-Secondary Education: education, which follows high school, or secondary education, usually to obtain a degree, diploma, or certificate in some specialized area.
- 2) First-Generation Post-Secondary Students – A post-secondary student with parents who have no post-secondary learning experiences. These offspring are in attendance at one of the following settings: private college, public community college, university, vocational program or any post-high school training.
- 3) Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students - A high school student with parents who have no post-secondary learning experiences. For the purposes of this research, parental post-secondary education received through training initiatives of The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) will not impact upon the classification of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. This student is considering one of the following post-high school choices: private

college, public community college, university, vocational program, any type of post-high school training or has chosen not to enroll in the post-secondary system.

4) Parents: In addition to biological parents the term 'parent(s)' includes any adult considered to be a parental role model.

5) Community College: a government owned and operated college that is not a degree granting institution.

6) Private college: a privately owned and operated college that is not a degree granting institution.

7) Urban Area - Urban areas have minimum population concentrations of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometer, based on the previous census population counts. All territory outside urban areas is considered Rural Areas. (Statistics Canada)

8) Rural Area – areas that are sparsely populated lands lying outside Urban Areas. (Statistics Canada)

9) The Atlantic Ground Fish Strategy (TAGS) – Implemented in 1994, this four year program was in response to the 1992 cod moratorium. It was designed to provide labour market adjustment, training options and income support for TAGS eligible clients. The program was due to expire in May 1999. (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997)

10) Census Consolidated Subdivisions (CCS) - These are geographical areas defined by Statistics Canada to enable the organization and presentation of data into small geographic regions. The CCS represents the smallest unit of geography in which meaningful and accurate TAGS data can be presented for all areas of Newfoundland and Labrador (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997).

- 11) CCS AB – A fictitious CCS code created by the researcher to ensure anonymity of communities and research participants where research was conducted. CCS AB refers to the geographical area of rural Newfoundland and Labrador where surveying and interviewing of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students were conducted. This geographical area of Newfoundland and Labrador is composed of a number of isolated islands. Within CCS AB there are two distinct island communities, coded as Island A and Island B.
- 12) Island A: The smaller island community where surveying and interviewing of seven Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students was conducted. This code has been selected to ensure the anonymity of the community and its research participants.
- 13) Island B: The larger island community where surveying and interviewing of nine Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students was conducted. This code has been selected to ensure the anonymity of the community and its research participants.
- 14) Full Participation – The level of subject participation that includes the completion of both a survey and an interview.
- 15) Partial Participation - The level of participant participation that was not Full Participation. Partial Participation may have been self selected by the subject or determined by the researcher.

## CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will allow the reader to examine Potential First-Generation Students from a number of perspectives. There is some difficulty in presenting literature relevant to this topic due to the absence of the term ‘Potential First-Generation Student’ within the published literature. Therefore, conducting a review of literature requires the presentation of three academic fields, namely:

- (a) higher education research concerning First-Generation Post-Secondary Students;
- (b) sociology of education research concerning status attainment; and
- (c) a review of studies conducted on Newfoundland and Labrador’s youth to examine their post-high school choices.

These disciplines have been used as a method of organizing and presenting the literature into three major categories.

## Higher Education Literature

Within the field of post-secondary studies or higher education, the emphasis on First-Generation Post-Secondary Students appears to be quite novel. The topic is gaining attention largely based on the fact that these students are often nontraditional or of ethnic and minority status. This focus on minority status of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students is particularly true of American research. Many studies consider Latino, Mexican, American Indian, Asian, and African American status as one of the defining differences between First-Generation and second-generation students in community colleges (Chaffee, 1992; Kiang, 1992; Laura, 1992; Rendon, 1996; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Stein, 1992; Weis, 1992).

The Canadian research base concerning First-Generation Post-Secondary Students is considerably different from the American. The topic appears to have received almost no attention within the discipline of higher education within Canada. However, Canadian publications centered on sociological research have examined how parental education levels impact on the post-secondary aspirations of youth. Topics such as intergeneration social mobility (Harvey, 1984) and the correlation between social origins and school success (Guppy, Mikicich & Pendakur, 1984; Nakhaie & Curtis, 1998) appear to have a history of publication.

Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella & Nora (1996) point out that even though there is considerable literature focused on disadvantaged students, little is yet known about the experiences of the First-Generation Post-Secondary Student. Grayson reported in 1995 that First-Generation Post-Secondary Students had yet to be studied in Canada. Through the literature, whether it is American or Canadian based, there has been a noted need for further research into First-Generation Post-Secondary Students (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998a; Grayson, 1995; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Tinto, 1975; Willett, 1989; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991).

London (1992) and Hsiao (1992) suggest that there is no way to know exactly how many American First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are attending programs. Grayson (1995) reported that similar data is also unavailable in Canada. Without specific data to identify the actual numbers of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, it is generally agreed that their numbers are growing as a post-secondary education becomes an important prerequisite for employment (London, 1992; Hsiao, 1992).

Examination of the higher education literature available on First-Generation Post-Secondary Students can be viewed from a number of perspectives such as, their general characteristics, enrolment choices, family background and its influence on post-secondary education, attrition risks and cultural adjustment issues. Each of these areas will be presented within the following section of the literature review.

#### *General Characteristics of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students*

Terenzini et al (1996) attempted to uncover more details concerning First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. They designed a study to examine first year student experiences and cognitive development. The study analyzed how these students understand college through their pre-college traits, course work, curricular patterns and experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. The study compared 825 First-Generation Post-Secondary Students to 1860 traditional students from 23 different institutions. A pretest was conducted in the fall of 1992 followed by a posttest in spring 1993 upon completion of students' first year of study.

The findings suggest potential learning problems for First-Generation Post-Secondary Students; the authors describe First-Generation Post-Secondary Students as "students at academic risk" (p.17). Lower critical thinking abilities and degree aspirations were observed when First-Generation Post-Secondary Students were compared to traditional students. These students also report receiving less family encouragement, and spend less time socializing with peers and instructors. Grayson (1995) found First-Generation Post-Secondary Students to have lower levels of student involvement. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students tend to be older, female and have more dependent children. These students also anticipate needing extra time to finish their programs (Terenzini et al, 1996).

Terenzini et al (1996) looked at the first year experience of these students. The First-Generation Post-Secondary Students reported working more hours off campus and spending fewer hours studying. They are more likely to complete fewer total hours in their first year of study than their traditional peers; they also report getting less encouragement from friends to continue in their programs. The authors examined student perception of faculty; here these students commented on receiving less feedback from instructors. Also, First-Generation Post-Secondary Students were less likely to see faculty members as being concerned with student development and teaching.

Billson and Terry (1982) reported that First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are more likely to live off campus, not as likely to be involved in campus organizations and least likely to have their best friends attending post-secondary programs. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students who do not complete their programs have interests that often hold priority above college, such as jobs or children. All of these characteristics of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students make it difficult for full integration into the college experience. These authors describe the first-generation students' experience as "low levels of structural integration" (p.17).

#### *Program Enrolment Choices for First-Generation Post-Secondary Students*

The Education Resource Institute (TERI) (1997) considers the categorization of "first-generation" to be a factor that can "hinder access and success to post-secondary education" (p.1) Here issues of access are discussed through data that shows differences in First-Generation and second-generation student application choices. Only 36% of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students aspire to bachelor programs, while 78% of second-generation students pursue degrees. This report shows that 53% of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students choose two-year

programs over four year programs, only 26% apply to four-year programs. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are more likely to attend programs on a part-time rather than full-time basis.

Chapman (1981) designed a model to determine variables that influenced student's institutional choices. One variable considered was socioeconomic status. This study revealed that students from higher socioeconomic status tend to choose four-year programs, while students from lower socioeconomic background tend to choose two-year programs. London (1992) reported that numbers of lower socioeconomic background students are increasing dramatically at community colleges. Guppy et al (1984) suggest that due to failure while attending secondary school, students from blue-collar backgrounds may delay their transition into post-secondary settings or not attend at all.

TERI (1997) considers the timing of post-secondary choices to be an important variable. The report suggests that 73 % of second-generation students will apply for programs directly after high school. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are more likely to delay their enrollment with only 26 % of them applying directly after high school. This report suggests that these students often choose to work directly after high school. The work versus post-secondary school debate is described as an area conflict with parents and other family members. This is especially true if family members believe that work is more important while the student would rather be attending school.

Other barriers discussed by the TERI report are similar to those identified by Terenzini et al (1996). Through a study entitled The Beginning Post-Secondary Students Longitudinal Study (1990-1994), Terenzini et al examined the length of time needed by students in order to complete programs. When First-Generation Post-Secondary Students choose four-year programs,

only 44 % will finish their programs in five years. 56 % of second-generation students attained their degrees within five years.

#### *Family Support Issues*

Several researchers have looked at the issue of family support given to first-generation students (Billson & Terry, 1982; London, 1989; London, 1992; London, 1996; Pardon, 1992; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991). The literature suggests examples of “low family support” that ranges along a continuum, being labeled from “obstructionist” (Padron, 1992, p. 73) in nature to more subtle family barriers.

York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) found significant differences in perceived levels of family support between first and second-generation students. They describe that perceived lower levels of family support found among First-Generation Post-Secondary Students is due more to their parents lack of personal experiences available to pass on to their children than negativity towards post-secondary education. This type of support failure is very different from being obstructive in nature as described by Padron (1992). The question raised by this research may be the perception of lower levels of involvement being viewed as low family support. When in fact these families may not possess resources available to provide higher levels of support.

Billson and Terry (1982) designed a study to look at the hidden barriers created by parents of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. The authors surveyed the leavers and persisters at a private liberal arts college that was seeing an increase in non-traditional First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. The authors measured students’ perceptions of themselves and how students perceived their parents’ thoughts on higher education. The authors concluded that second-generation students describe greater support in areas of financial assistance, transportation and help with assignments and homework. These authors suggest First-Generation

Post-Secondary Students are attempting post-secondary programs “with fewer resources and less support and positive role models from significant others” (Billson and Terry, p.18)

Padron (1992) suggests that siblings can also be non-supportive to their brothers and sisters attending post-secondary programs. Some First-Generation Post-Secondary Students report that siblings and other family members often see them as having access to money that could be used for the family, which is often in need of financial assistance.

### *Balancing Two Different Cultures*

London (1992) points out that all students develop due to their college experiences. The act of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students going to college shows that they are interested in class mobility not previously attained by other family members. “This may take the student into uncharted cultural territory” (p.10). Billson and Terry (1982) describe First-Generation Post-Secondary Students as taking “a longer jump from the social status of their parents than are second-generation students” (p.18).

London (1989; 1992; 1996) presents qualitative results from hundreds of student interviews. This research is focused on “learning more about what is at stake – what is lost, gained, fought for, and given to compromise – when, for the first time in the history of a family, one of its members partakes of higher education” (London, 1989, p.145).

A picture of the daily balancing act that is required of many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students comes to light through London’s (1989) exploration of “the underside of upward mobility” (p.145). These stories tell how students struggle to reconcile the conflicts between family and educational mobility. These are often stories of students who are from lower or working class families with ethnic or minority status. This research often tells of struggles and

constant dilemmas, for example, students who have to continuously defend their choice of attending post-secondary programs rather than working in the family business (London, 1989).

There are stories of orientation problems among many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. London (1989; 1992) discusses the transition of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students while attempting to adopt symbolic elements of their new post-secondary culture, such as choices in food, music, clothes and ways of talking. Such stories help to illustrate that these students face struggles in both of their worlds.

London (1998) points out that there are normal separation issues that occur within the parent - child relationship. London highlights theories from psychologists and sociologists that suggest this separation process may be more troublesome for people who choose to break away from firmly entrenched family roles and expectations, as many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are attempting to do.

#### *Attrition Risks of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students*

Terenzini et al (1996) describe the situation of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students; "Overall, the picture suggests these students come less well prepared and with more nonacademic demands on them, and they enter a world where they are less likely to experience many of the conditions that other research indicates are positively related to persistence, performance, and learning" (p.18).

At the time Billson and Terry (1982) conducted their study of attrition levels and First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, they reported finding 40 years of research to show student persistence links to parental education levels.

Research has been conducted which examines First-Generation Post-Secondary Students and their potential for attrition. Much of this research has been linked with popular post-

secondary attrition theories. Perhaps the most influential studies of attrition and retention have been completed by Tinto (1975). His hallmark theoretical model attempts to predict and explain attrition as the interaction between the individual and the institution. It is based on the idea that institutions have their own social systems with their own values and social structure. This model views a drop out of a post-secondary program as a drop out from a culture or society. According to Tinto (1975), it is important to look carefully at the social and academic systems in post-secondary settings, to help ensure students are successfully integrated into both systems.

Another important element of Tinto's (1975) model is the individual characteristics that students bring to post-secondary settings. An integral part of analyzing these characteristics is reviewing family backgrounds. Tinto points to the work conducted by Jaffe and Adams (1970) and Spady (1970) that suggest college persisters are more likely to come from families whose parents are more educated.

Tinto (1975) also attempts to make a clear distinction between voluntary withdrawal and academic dismissal within post-secondary education. When considering socioeconomic status of students, academic dismissals tend to happen more frequently with students who are from lower socioeconomic status. Students who voluntarily withdraw from programs tend to be from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

Tinto (1975; 1997) discusses that there have been many studies that show an increase in persistence when students are exposed to social integration with the faculty and when full classroom integration occurs. These experiences increase social integration, institutional commitment and academic success. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students do not have the extra time to socialize (Terenzini et al, 1996), tend to live off campus and feel uncomfortable in

the college environment (TERI, 1997) and are less involved in social and academic activities (Grayson, 1995).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1977) show evidence that some students will disassociate and eventually become an attrition statistic in the absence of social interaction. Specifically, they show that contact with faculty members outside of the classroom may be the most important type of interaction that positively impacts upon student persistence. Terenzini et al (1996) suggest that many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students do not hold positive opinions about faculty and their concern for the development of student, possibly making social interaction less likely.

Stanfield (1973) states that research has shown the overrepresentation of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students in attrition statistics, particularly within their first year of schooling. York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) state that "college attrition may be in part, a lack of basic information about college for first-generation college students" (p.121). They also identify that difficulty with family support may be linked to academic problems, voluntary drop out and even academic failure.

Not all studies of attrition present First-Generation Post-Secondary Students as being at greater risk for negative college and university experiences. Within their study, Pratt and Skaggs (1989), considered if first or continuing generation students were more likely to leave post-secondary programs. Using Tinto's model, Pratt and Skaggs considered goal attainment, institutional commitment, academic integration and social interaction of the research participants. While many areas showed little statistical differences between first and continuing generation students, there were some interesting results. First-Generation Post-Secondary Students reported more doubt that they were adequately prepared for college, an understanding of the importance of extra-curricular activities but felt they had little chance of actually joining a

fraternity and they were less likely to aspire to graduate education programs. A substantial difference was seen in the area of importance placed on college attendance by their parents. Within this study the authors described First-Generation Post-Secondary Students as less likely to drop out of college. The authors stated that due to First-Generation Post-Secondary Students strong institutional commitment and lack of parental support their aspirations are “more internalized and therefore more focused” (p.33).

Bean and Metzner (1985) present a lengthy literature review of studies conducted to examine attrition of traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students. Their literature review stated that many variables such as age, stress, hours of employment, finances and parents’ educational levels that are often found to have statistically significant relationships with attrition.

### The Sociology of Education Research

While Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students have not directly examined within studies focusing on status attainment, this population can be recognized within the data. These are the high school students, from limited socioeconomic background, with the desire to attend post-secondary education even though the literature suggests they will face many barriers.

There is an extensive amount of sociological research that has investigated the relationship between parental educational levels and adolescents’ educational aspirations (Bellamy, 1994; Davies & Kendal, 1981; Guppy, Mikicich & Pendakur, 1984; Lareau, 1987; Looker, 1989, 1994 & 1997; Looker & Pineo, 1983; Nakhaie & Curtis, 1998; Stage & Hossler, 1989; Smith, 1982; Van Hook, 1993; Williams, 1972). Much of this literature can be found under the general topic of ‘status attainment’. Each of following sociological topics are part of

the literature: educational inequality stemming from socioeconomic status (Guppy, Mikicich & Pendakur, 1984; Lareau, 1987), cultural and social capital (Bellamy, 1994; Looker, 1997; Nakhaie & Curtis, 1998), social psychological influences in status attainment (Looker, 1983; Pineo, 1983), active capital (Looker, 1994) and adolescent perceptions of parental aspirations (Davies & Kendal, 1981; Smith, 1982) have helped educational sociologists examine systemic barriers present within the educational system.

It is not the intention of this literature review section to supply an in-depth investigation of the status attainment literature. This section is intended to supply a broad focus of the sociological research to help provide an additional perspective on the post-high school decision making process of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students.

#### *Impact of Parental Education Levels on Post-Secondary Education Aspirations*

As stated earlier, there is a vast amount of research which has examined how parental educational levels have impacted upon the educational aspirations and attainment of their children. Much of this literature equates low socioeconomic status with lower levels of parental education (Davies & Kandel, 1981; Lareau, 1987; Looker & Pineo, 1983; Nakhaie & Curtis, 1997; Williams, 1972). Nakhaie and Curtis (1998) present a body of Canadian literature dating back to the 1960's which examines the impact of occupational status of one or both parents on children's educational attainment. Summarizing the literature, Nakhaie and Curtis (1998), state that "regardless of the research approach, with few exceptions, the studies show that the better the occupational status or educational level of the parents the better the offspring's educational attainment" (p.485).

Stage and Hossler (1989) are often quoted in the literature concerning parental education levels effects on post-secondary choices of children. These authors noted that the impact of parental influences on children's aspirations is complex and varied. The results of this study found father's education, mother's education and family income to be statistically significant in influencing parental expectations of children. With Father's education levels having the strongest influence on post-secondary plans of their children. Father's level of education also held significant positive affects on the frequency that parents discussed post-secondary choices with their male children. For female students, the number of children already enrolled in post-secondary programs has a much more negative effect on savings for school. The authors suggest that there might be a subtle difference within families which impact differently upon male and female children from families with lower education levels.

*The Possibility that Impact of Parental Educational Levels  
on Educational Attainment has Decreased Over Time*

Research conducted by Guppy et al (1984) also focused on the influence of social origin on educational attainment, however these researchers were particularly interested in determining if the impact of social origin on educational attainment has decreased over time. This research attempted to examine educational inequalities within the Canadian educational system. Guppy et al (1984) provides the reader with literature explaining a debate that exists among researchers, stating that some researchers consider the effects of social background on aspirations of youth as 'constant' over time while others describe them as 'diminishing'.

This investigation by Guppy et al was conducted by drawing on data supplied by the 1973 Canadian Mobility Study, these respondents were broken down into four worker categories: farmers, blue collar, white collar and professionals/ managers. This classification was conducted by considering different social origins, as measured by parental education and father's occupation. The results of the research showed that the prospects of youth finishing secondary school were higher when both parents were also high school graduates. These authors cautiously suggest that the relationship between social origin and educational attainment has weakened over time, but stress that social origin still continues to have a strong influence on youth. Data resulting from this research suggests that while youth from blue collar and farming backgrounds are attaining higher levels of education, the authors remind the reader that "they may still be disproportionately underrepresented in selected educational streams which yield more valuable sets of credentials" (p. 330). The authors also advise that the results did not take into account regional differences that may have contributed to educational aspirations of youth.

Nakhaie and Curtis (1998) also examined if the impact of parental class position on status attainment had diminishing over time. The data source used for this investigation was the 1986 General Social Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. Respondents were divided into Marxist categories of bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, managers, workers or surplus population. The results showed that class and education levels of parents did impact upon children. They suggest that within the dominant classes, regardless of gender of the offspring, they are better situated to reproduce their class. Also members of lower class, such as petty bourgeoisie are not as successful in obtaining educational credentials for their children.

Like Guppy et al (1984), Nakhaie and Curtis (1998) can suggest only a slight diminishing effect of parental educational levels on the next generation. They further state that fathers class position still has significant effects on educational attainment of sons and daughters.

*Increasing Capital (or Resources) Through Parental Support*

Looker (1997) insists that it is not enough that parents hold capital (or resources), it must also be put to use if it is to be beneficial for children. Looker (1994) considers the importance of 'active capital' in increasing post-secondary aspirations of offspring. Active capital is described as encouragement, help with homework or parental participation in ongoing interpersonal processes. For capital to be active parents need more than certain levels of education and aspirations for their children. Parents also need to be active within their child's educational process. Looker further suggests that the use of active capital will create increases in social capital for children; this increase in social capital will make other forms of capital more available.

Looker (1994) examined the impact of active capital on Canadian youths' educational performance and plans. The study showed that parents with a university education are more likely to 'very much encourage' their children to continue beyond high school. Within the research a cross-tabulation of parental encouragement levels with parental education levels was conducted. The data illustrated interesting information concerning parents classified as high school or less education. Within the first data set, gathered between 1975 to 1981, youth report 48% of their mothers and 47% of their fathers 'very much encourage' them to continue their education beyond high school. Within the second data set, gathered in 1989, youth report 73% of their mothers and 64% of their fathers 'very much encourage' them to continue their education

beyond high school. Not only does this data show an increase over time, but it also shows that many children of parents with limited education are encouraging their children to consider post-secondary programs. She suggests that many parents who felt that they were denied an education themselves want better chances for their children, and suggests the need to recognize the potential of active capital, particularly that of parental encouragement as a contributor to post-secondary aspirations of children from families with limited education levels.

#### Newfoundland and Labrador Perspective

The following section will review studies that examine post-secondary aspirations and participation of youth from Newfoundland and Labrador. These studies are important not only for their emphasis on Newfoundland and Labrador youth but also due to the examination of issues specific to rural youth. Transferring of status from one generation to another becomes an area of interest when we consider Newfoundland and Labrador's educational levels compared to the rest of Canada.

##### *Newfoundland and Labrador Youth and Post-secondary Aspirations*

As stated earlier, the actual numbers of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are unknown and there is very little Canadian research on their post-secondary aspirations, participation and success rates. However, we can see examples of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students if we look deeper into the results of studies investigating educational aspirations of Newfoundland and Labrador youth. While there are no local publications that specifically focus on Potential First-Generation or First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, studies have examined students from economically depressed regions that have traditionally lower levels of education.

Sharpe and White (1993) examined the transitions of Newfoundland and Labrador youth into the labor market through a longitudinal study that began in 1987. The authors recognized that rural Newfoundland and Labrador youth were faced with “challenging economic times” (p.11). This study began during the initial stages of the province’s fishery failure. These youth were witnessing plant and store closures along with increasing unemployment. The authors commented on the need for these students to adapt to the economic challenges in their environment by recognizing the need for education to meet changes in job availability.

This study divided their data into two major groups of students, post-secondary Attenders (n=3847) and Non-attenders (n=1130). The education levels of parents were examined through ‘specific vocational preparation’ (SVP) and ‘general educational development’ (GED) levels. The differences in both SVP and GED levels between Attenders and Non-attenders were significant, with Non-attenders parent’s revealing lower levels of SVP and GED. Generally the occupations held by parents of Non-attenders required lesser amount of education and training.

To consider the data of Sharpe and White (1993) as relevant to the topic of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students requires a more in depth look at the data. There is the obvious issue of youth from homes of lower parental education not attending post-secondary programs. However, an interesting follow up, which is not discussed in the study, would be an examination of the program choices and attrition levels of Attenders with lower parental education levels. Within this study, levels of GED are presented on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 showing the use of very basic reasoning, math and language skills and 6 reflecting the highest level of these skills. When we examine the parental GED levels of Attenders there is also interesting data: 43 % of Father’s GED levels were 3 or below and 59.5 % of mother’s GED

levels were 3 or below. A closer examination of the Attenders data would give a clearer picture of the experiences of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students within this particular study.

Using data collected by Sharpe and White (1993) along with series of interviews with school principals, guidance counsellors and twenty post-secondary Non-attenders McGrath (1993) conducted further analysis of post-secondary participation in Newfoundland and Labrador. This research considered student background variables which are most frequently associated with enrollment in post-secondary programs such as: gender, learning styles, family size, value of education in the home, career information, geographical region and social psychological variables. Due to lack of research in this area, McGrath (1993) called his study as "exploratory, aimed towards increasing our understanding of the factors which might influence the decisions made by young people about furthering their education beyond high school" (p.9)

The findings of McGrath's (1993) research suggest that family size had little effect on post-secondary participation. However, the value of education or parental encouragement was found to be the single most important factor in eliminating barriers to post-secondary participation. This was a fact that was also recognized by school principals, who acknowledged family influence as vital to students for completing high school and aspiring to further education. Interview results suggest that a minority of school principals and a majority of school guidance counselors express the opinion that many parents in Newfoundland and Labrador held a low value for education. These respondents suggested that this parental attitude was instrumental in many students not finishing high school and going on to post-secondary programs.

This research conducted by McGrath, suggests that youth from rural communities were equally as likely to continue with their education past high school as youth from urban areas. The

results also suggested that rural students did not want to leave their communities to continue their education, however the results of the quantitative data showed community attachment actually had a minimal effect on youth choosing to leave the area for employment or school opportunities.

McGrath (1993) used the qualitative and quantitative results of this study to develop a status attainment model to unwind the complex system of predicting post-secondary participation. Within the conclusions the author commented on the need for further research that would continue a refinement of the model. A suggestion was to include a measure of socioeconomic status that takes into account the rural nature of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Genge (1997) surveyed 192 level three and four students from the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador. The goals of this thesis research were to: describe career options of these youth, examine any barriers to their post-secondary educational plans and to investigate any changes in youth plans over the past years. Another goal was to gain the perspective of youth on how their family, community, economy and school may have impacted upon their post-high school plans. This study was conducted at a time of economic uncertainty for the fishery in a geographical area described as 'disadvantaged'. Like Sharpe and White (1993), parents were classified into groups based on GED (formal and informal education) and SVP (time required to learn the techniques and skills needed for an occupation). Genge (1997) reported that 66.7 % of fathers and 71.5 % of mothers held GED levels of three or below. Also 64.7 % of fathers and 69.6 % of mothers held a SVP level of four and below. Both the GED and SVP show the limited educational backgrounds for the majority of parents from the research area. The author describes these levels as 'generally low' and a mirror of the fishery related occupations of the area.

In the research conducted by Genge (1997), 67 % of the respondents reported that they had decided to not continue with their education or training into the next year. The largest number of them (29.7 %) thought that they would not have enough money to continue, 18.8 % reported that they were unable to decide on a program and 9.4 % had decided that they wanted to start supporting themselves. The parental education levels of these Non-attenders were not analyzed in this research study.

Genge (1997) also asked 125 respondents to rate problems or possible barriers to post-secondary education as “not a problem”, “somewhat of a problem” or “a serious problem”. Overall it appears that many of these students considered a smaller percentage of these problems as “serious”. The problems most frequently recognized (22 %) as “serious” were “finding the right course that was close to home” and “finding an available course near home”. Respondents appeared to rate a larger percentage of the listed problems as “not a problem” or “somewhat of a problem”. The highest response (70.4 %) within the “somewhat of a problem” category was anticipated “difficulty of the course”. Each of the following problems were rated as ‘not a problem’ by over 50 % of the respondents: “finding time to go to school” (87.2), “reading” (80.8), “getting information about course” (59.2), “having to work to support themselves/family” (59.2), “high school preparation” (57.6), “meeting entrance requirements” (50.4) and “adjusting to the instructor” (50.4).

Genge (1997) commented, that in general these youth were aspiring to higher levels of education and that they had come to accept the inability to find employment within their communities. Only one-tenth of the students indicated that the closure of the cod fishery had a large influence on their immediate career plans. However, these respondents did recognize that

the closure of the fishery had affected their parents' financial situations and could possibly impact upon families' ability to pay for post-secondary education programs.

Tucker (1999) also investigated the aspirations and expectations of grade twelve students from a rural Newfoundland and Labrador community by examining the GED and SPV levels of parents. The findings of this research suggested that a majority of the participants planned to continue their education past high school and few had planned to work in the fishery. Tucker's work also suggested that there is little relationship between parents' education levels and aspirations and expectations of their children.

Canning, Wyse & Strong (1999) examined children and families in communities with high levels of economic uncertainty. These authors considered the educational achievements, educational aspirations and expectations, and psychological and social development of children and adolescents. The 32 high school students that were involved in the research project were also interviewed about community and educational issues.

Generally these teens intended to pursue post-secondary education, had definite plans for post-secondary education, planned to attend programs in Newfoundland and Labrador and expected to gain employment in their chosen careers. It should be noted that 85 % of parents who took part in this study had some post-secondary education and had been in some type of educational program within the past few years. The authors comment that they were 'somewhat confident' that these findings would reflect the majority of the families in the area, even though the respondents had self-selected themselves for the research.

On the road to success: The report of the follow-up of 1995 and 1996 high school graduates. (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998a) asked questions concerning the relationship between parental education levels and post-secondary aspirations. There is no

specific data given to show parental education levels of Attenders and Non-attenders, but the issue of how parental education levels may be relevant to post-secondary aspirations is discussed at points in the document. In the discussion section of the report, parental education levels are considered to be a “barrier to higher education” (p.37). Stating that most of the students with no plans to attend post-secondary programs had parents with no post-secondary experiences. This data shows obvious concerns that this particular group might never attend post-secondary programs, however there is an indication that there are students who have plans to attend post-secondary programs whose parents have no post-secondary education.

#### Summary – Linking the Literature

Perhaps the sociological literature, which discusses various types of capital creation strategies, can explain why some First-Generation Post-Secondary Students experience little difficulty in the transition into post-secondary settings, this is unlike the literature presented in earlier sections of this literature review, which highlighted the difficulties experienced by many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. London (1996) discusses a type of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students who do not find college or university to be ‘particularly unsettling’ (p.10). London comments that these students may be recipients of what sociologists call ‘structural mobility’. London describes that there are many First-Generation Post-Secondary Students and families who have realized that due to changes in the workforce it is necessary to have some type of post-secondary program. Here families are aware that a high school education will no longer give a person an entry-level blue-collar position. London suggests that these students do not suffer the difficulty of students who are attempting to bridge the lifestyles of two very different cultures (London, 1996).

Pratt and Skaggs (1989) approached first-generation participation in a comparable context to the philosophy of structural mobility. They correctly point out that the importance of obtaining a post-secondary education has publicly increased during the last three decades. They also note this to be particularly true of rural areas.

If we are to consider Newfoundland and Labrador's current economic situation in rural areas linked with low formal education levels interesting questions arise. It is valid to consider if these First-Generation Post-Secondary Students will suffer the difficulties described by authors such as Billson and Terry (1982), Hsiao (1992), London (1989; 1992), Pardon (1992) and Terenzini et al (1996) or will they become beneficiaries of the growing emphasis and socially accepted need for a post-secondary education and achieve their educational aspirations.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter will describe the actual process used to conduct the thesis research. This description will explain the selection of a geographical research area and participants. It will also present the methods of data collection and analysis.

#### Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods are used to describe and interpret a human phenomenon in the words of the subjects being studied (Heath 1997; McCracken, 1988; Seidman, 1991). McCracken (1988) states that qualitative research can produce precise visions of a broader picture, allowing the reader an opportunity to glimpse into a particular culture based on how the respondents see the world. McCracken (1988) also makes comparisons between qualitative and quantitative research methods by stating: "Without these understandings (qualitative), our vision of social scientific data is monocular when it should be binocular. Without a qualitative understanding of how culture mediates human action, we can know only what the numbers tell us" (p.9).

It is the opinion of this researcher that qualitative methods are a natural choice for data collection when considering how to answer the central question of this particular study. That is, how has the current economic climate within CCS AB, particularly the downturn in the ground fishery, impacted upon the post-high school choices of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from the area?

## Research Design

### *Selection of CCS AB as a Research Area*

At the onset of the research study it was decided to approach high school students from all areas of Newfoundland and Labrador. Upon receiving various levels of interest from students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, it was decided that narrowing the research focus to one particular geographical area was necessary. Focusing the research project in this way would:

- (i) make comparisons among participants more meaningful,
- (ii) eliminate difficulties in data analysis when trying to compare participants from various rural communities,
- (iii) allow the researcher to gain a more enlightened perspective of any environmental influences on the post-high school choices of research participants and
- (iv) decrease the cost of travel by allowing for all interviews to be conducted during one trip to the area.

The final selection of CCS AB over other areas in Newfoundland and Labrador was based on a number of determining factors: (i) the excellent cooperation of the school board and principals to support the research; (ii) the high level of interest in Full Participation displayed by students of the area; (iii) the strong history of fishery dependence and the consequential impact of the 1992 fishery crisis; and (iv) the governmental designation of a CCS code for the area that included only the two island communities.

Through the CCS code system, data specific to the area coded as CCS AB is available. This data allowed the researcher to examine the impact of the fishery crisis within Newfoundland

and Labrador. The government of Newfoundland and Labrador published a report entitled The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy – An Analysis of the Program on a Regional Basis (1997). This report provided a statistical account of TAGS clients throughout Newfoundland and Labrador by presenting the 'relative reliance' of TAGS and/or the fisheries clientele by three methods. The first method was to report relative reliance by provincial Census Consolidated Subdivisions (CCS). The second method was to quantify provincial TAGS clients by reporting the number designated to each regional Human Resource Centre. The final method examined Newfoundland and Labrador's regional economic zones. While all of the methods provide useful information, the CCS method gives the reader a more regionalized and therefore more finite picture of TAGS clients within communities of Newfoundland and Labrador. Through the CCS method the reader is supplied with data that highlight the communities within Newfoundland and Labrador which displayed the highest levels of participants within TAGS programming.

The report showed that within CCS AB's boundaries, 910 residents were eligible for TAGS funding. Further examination of the data shows that between 22 to 28 % of CCS AB's population, who were 15 years of age and over, were TAGS eligible clients. Provincially, only four other CCS zones fell into this category. Within Newfoundland and Labrador only one CCS zone showed a higher relative reliance on TAGS, with between 29 to 30 % of its population as being TAGS clients. This data demonstrates a number of noteworthy characteristics of CCS AB. First is the area's relatively high reliance on the fishery when compared to other areas of the province. Also, the placement of CCS AB into the second highest category of relative reliance can be used to illustrate it as one of the areas of Newfoundland and Labrador most impacted by the fishery crisis.

*Selection of Participants*

In order to meet the study criteria, participants were required to be high school students attending either grade 10, 11 or 12 within a rural Newfoundland and Labrador community.

Parental educational levels of each prospective participant were also considered. In order to be considered Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, parental education levels must have been high school or below. However, it was decided that prospective participants would not be excluded if one or both parents had participated in or completed a post-secondary program through TAGS. The researcher made this exception based on a number of reasons. The first was the likelihood that without the cod fishery crisis many of these parents may not have attended a post-secondary program (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998b). The second reason is related to the high probability that many people living within rural Newfoundland and Labrador fishing communities had taken part in some level of TAGS sponsored training. The exclusion of these families might have considerably lowered the pool of possible participants. Therefore, for the purpose of this research project the definition of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students was designed to include high school students with parents who may have had a history of post-secondary training through TAGS programming.

The selection of participants began by requesting permission from provincial school boards (see Appendix A), specifically boards governing rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. In total, written approval was obtained from eight provincial school boards. This permission permitted the researcher to approach schools and discuss with principals possible levels of school support and student interest. Schools within these boards were mailed or faxed packages containing descriptions of research goals and necessary ethical considerations. The

package also contained an introductory letter to parents (see Appendix B), copies of parental permission forms (see Appendix C), the survey (see Appendix D) and a list of potential interview questions (see Appendix E). The research package also contained an advertising poster, which was designed to publicize the research within each school and inform students of the research study. The poster described the research goals, participant requirements and contact information.

Students received introductory research information by way of school administration through school announcements, specially scheduled meetings or by the advertising poster. Students were then given an opportunity to inform the school administration of their interest by placing their names on a contact list. This list was then given to the researcher. Afterwards research packages were distributed to prospective participants by two possible methods; (i) the school distributing the package to the potential participant on behalf of the researcher; or (ii) the researcher directly mailing the package to the subject's home.

#### *Participant Self-Selection*

While the research was supported by school administration, the student's participation within the research was self-selected. Upon learning of the research study, either through announcements, meetings or the poster, there were two main methods of participant self-selection. The prospective participants may have informed the school of their interest that in turn advised the researcher or by contacting the researcher directly through collect phone calls or e-mail. It was not until the student initiated one of these self-selection processes was the respondent considered for participation.

The goal was to encourage as much full participation as possible. Full Participation in the research required four stages of student commitment levels: (i) volunteering to fill out a survey;

(ii) physically completing the survey; (iii) sending back the survey; and (iv) participating in an interview.

Student's participation, either full participation or partial, was self-selected. Only one exception to the self-selection of full participation occurred when one student expressed the willingness to be interviewed, but due to time restraints the interview did not take place.

#### Data Collection

In this research project, a two page qualitative survey and a personal interview were used as data collection instruments. The data collection process began by first asking interested high school students to complete the survey. Next, upon indication by the student and selection by the researcher personal interviews were conducted. A goal of the research design was to conduct face-to-face personal interviews with the subjects. However, there was a concern that face-to-face interviewing could be difficult to conduct due to potential travel costs. To ensure that interviews could be conducted, even if travel appeared to be unlikely, all subjects were informed that interviews may be conducted in person or by telephone.

The research design of coupling surveys and personal interviews was chosen for a number of reasons. The main function of the survey was data collection. However, the survey also helped the researcher maintain some administrative control over the project. The survey was designed to ascertain subject criteria and suitability for full participation. Also, the initial response to the survey allowed the researcher to consider levels of research interest geographically, which in turn helped to lead to a more defined research location. This defining of geographical location made personal interviews more likely.

At the end of the survey participants were provided with an opportunity to indicate their interest in participating in an interview. This research design also provided each subject with a

variety of project commitment levels. For example, a subject could choose to complete a survey but not take part in an interview. In this instance, with the permission of the subject, information provided through the survey could be used in the final data analysis, even if the subject choose not to fully participate in the research project.

It was anticipated that a large percentage of useful data would stem from the personal interviews. Therefore, securing personal interviews with an acceptable number of participants was a data collection priority. The focus on personal interviews was chosen for a number of reasons. Seidman (1991), states that interviewing creates a greater understanding of people's experiences and of their own understanding of events. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) describe interviewing as a "search-and-discovery mission" (p.2) used to uncover information already within each respondent. Uncovering this information will aid in learning as much as possible about the participant; if participants were filling in quantitative survey the depth of this type of information is unlikely.

Interviewing also provides the context within which experiences take place. Without the context, we will lose our understanding of the behavior being studied (Seidman, 1991). The environmental context of CCS AB was considered to be an essential area of analysis. Without considering the environment it would be impossible to answer the main research question, which is, to consider how the current economic climate within CCS AB, particularly the downturn in the ground fishery, has impacted upon the post-high school choices of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from the area.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted during a weeklong research trip to CCS AB. During this trip, six face-to-face interviews were conducted with students from Island A and eight from Island B. Twenty-one students (nine from Island A and twelve from Island B)

expressed interest in participating within the research project prior to arriving to CCS AB. In the final analysis a total of sixteen Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students participated in the research project, making the total response rate of the research project 76 %.

Nine students on Island A expressed interest in participating in the research project; eventually seven of these nine became research participants. The response rate on Island A was 77 %, with five incidences of Full Participation and two of Partial Participation. One participant participated in an interview who choose to not return a survey, while another participant completed a survey but did not participate in an interview.

Twelve students on Island B expressed interest in participating within the research project, eventually nine of these twelve became research participants. The final response rate on Island B was 75 %, with eight incidences of Full Participation and one of partial participation.

#### *The Survey*

The survey was divided into two major sections and was designed primarily in an open-ended fashion. Part A of the survey was designed to provide the researcher with personal demographics, academic average, parental education levels, sibling education levels and family history in the fishery.

Part B of the survey was designed to encourage written communication concerning possible influences on post-high school plans such as school, their parents and the fishery. Part B also investigated participants' opinions on employment possibilities in their community, post high-school interests, employment goals and self identified barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program. Based on information seen in the completed survey, the researcher was able to determine if the subjects met the research criteria and was a candidate for a personal interview.

### *The Interview*

Interview questions were designed in a primarily open-ended fashion. This practice helps the interviewer establish the "territory" (Seidman, 1991, p.62) of questioning topics while allowing the subject to take the direction they would like. This may also provide the researcher with themes that were not anticipated by asking close-ended questions (McCracken, 1988; Seidman, 1991).

Each interview contained a degree of purposeful structure. The researcher asked each subject similar questions in a designed order. McCracken (1988) suggests several functions of using an organized interview. He states that it helps to ensure that the interviewer has covered all intended topics with each of the respondents. In other words, interview questions help to ensure consistency in question asking. A structured interview can also help in providing direction to the respondents' dialogue. Also a structured interview can help to "protect the larger structure and objective(s) of the interview" (p.25).

All of the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribe line-by-line by the researcher. The recording ensured that the analysis of the interview was from the actual words of the subject. The researcher agrees with McCracken (1988) and Seidman (1991) who both state that relying on paraphrasing may not communicate the intended information stated by the subject.

### *The Survey and Interview Structure*

Both the survey and interview design is based on the information seen in the literature review of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, social capital and status attainment. The literature review helped the researcher approach the topics to be explored during

the interview. Understanding the literature also helped the researcher be a better listener by highlighting relevant comments that should be further analyzed (McCracken, 1988).

Prior to the final selection of CCS AB as the research focus, there was an opportunity to evaluate the original survey and interview structure through test trials. Based on the results of these trials there were some adjustments in the original 'Part B' of the survey. Initially 'Part B' of the interview was a single open-ended question that asked students to comment, in writing, on anything they wished to discuss concerning their post-high school plans. The question provided some examples of topics they might like to share with the researcher. Based on lack of response to this question, it was decided that rewriting this section was necessary. The single open-ended question was broken down into a number of smaller open-ended questions. This adjustment resulted in a noticeable increase in the survey data.

Prior to the selection of area CCS AB as a research focus adjustments were also made to the interview questions. The researcher was able to conduct three trials of the personal interview. These interviews were conducted with students from other areas of Newfoundland and Labrador who had completed the survey and indicated interest in participating in a personal interview. All of these trials were conducted over the phone and tape recorded and transcribed line by line.

#### Data Analysis

One of the goals of qualitative research is to isolate and define themes and categories in order to examine patterns of interrelationship between these categories (Carney, Joiner & Tragou, 1997; McCracken, 1988). As Carney, Joiner and Tragou (1997) states, "the relationships we are looking for are not statistical, but descriptive" (p.2). McCracken (1988) compares this process to the act of "rummaging" (p.19), stating that it can be messy and very time consuming.

Data analysis is the interaction between researchers and their collected data. Quality data analysis allows the respondents to speak in their own voices. It is important that the researcher does not speak for the respondents (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The recorded interviews were transcribed to text for the main of microanalysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) or "line-by-line" analysis that results in comparing, categorizing and coding of themes commonly seen in the interviews (Carney, Joiner, & Tragou 1997; McCracken, 1988; Seidman, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Transcription included more than the actual dialogue elements of the interview. It also considered interview elements such as laughter, long pauses, sighs, outside noises, telephone rings and any interruptions (Seidman, 1991). Analysis of field notes was used to accompany the interview data. Themes were highlighted through the analysis of the transcribed interviews. Each of the themes were saved as individual files (Seidman, 1991).

## CHAPTER 4

## THE RESEARCH AREA AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

## Description of CCS AB

This geographical area of Newfoundland is composed of a number of isolated islands. Within CCS AB there are two distinct island communities, coded as Island A and Island B to protect the anonymity of the participants and the communities.

Travel to CCS AB and between Island A and Island B require ferry services. CCS AB is located approximately 100 kilometers away from the nearest urban area and approximately 400 kilometers away from the provincial capital city of St. John's. CCS AB is located in 'broad bay' of Newfoundland's north east coast.

In the 1700's French and English fishermen settled in the bay to fish cod and hunt seals. Frozen fish plants have been operational in CCA AB since the 1960s. Within CCS AB developments in the inshore/near shore fishery have included the introduction of longliners and the development of a fishery for alternate species such as capelin, squid and lumpfish. By 1990 it was apparent that bay stocks of cod and other species were almost exhausted (Poole & Cuff, 1993).

As discussed in Chapter three, CCS AB was heavily impacted by the groundfish moratorium. The latest Canadian census data shows that between 1991 and 1996 there was a 9.1 % decline in population within the CCS AB area, while the population decline for Newfoundland and Labrador was only 2.9 % during the same time period.

*Island A*

Island A is located within CCS AB. It is a group of islands including two large islands, connected by a causeway, with several smaller islands. The entire area of islands measures 7.98 square kilometers. The main community of Island A, incorporated in 1951, is located along the narrow tickle separating the two main islands (Smallwood & Pitt, 1981).

In the later half of the eighteenth century Island A began to be settled by English merchants. In 1845 the population was 316, 96. By 1874, Island A was one of the focal points of the winter seal hunt. At the beginning of the twentieth century Island A was a prosperous settlement of over 1,000 people. After the depression of the 1930s, the settlement declined and during the 1950s over 100 people left in search of better education for their children and better employment opportunities. In 1965 the causeway between the two large islands was built and motor vehicles arrived for the first time on Island A (Smallwood & Pitt, 1981). In the same year Island A received electricity and telephone services (Peckford & Committee, 2000). In 1979 an improved ferry service was established, reducing travel time to the mainland of Newfoundland from one hour to twenty minutes. (Peckford & Committee, 2000).

In 1980, the majority of the population fished from longliners and small boats. The community's fish plant was built in the 1950s. After being operated by a number of companies it was eventually was run by a local co-op, which failed after a few years. By 1980 the plant did not have the capacity to freeze fish. Catches were stored packed in ice until shipped out of Island A to be processed in another community (Smallwood & Pitt, 1981).

In a publication titled Gatherin on the Rocks, written by community members, the cod moratorium was described as the "greatest blow to the town and the people". The authors commented on the community and its citizens by stating " Always a proud, independent, hard

working people, now forced to take government hand outs, not knowing when or if they would again use their boats and fishing gear” (p.8). By this time the number of fishermen on Island A had decreased by approximately 60 %. Many sold their licenses, many others who chose to remain in the fishery moved from operating 19 foot open boats to longliners in an attempt to ensure their survival in the fishery of the future. This move to bigger boats required hundreds of thousands of dollars of investments on the part of the fishermen (Peckford & Committee, 2000).

Within the community of Island A there is an integrated school, a medical clinic, a number of small stores, two bed and breakfasts, a restaurant and a number of churches. The medical centre employs a nurse and provides a location for the visiting doctor. Many businesses are operated seasonally to provide services to summer tourists.

The newest school opened 1980 with 150 students; since then the school population has decreased by one-third. In the 2001 school year there were a total of 51 students enrolled at the school. This decrease in population is predicted to continue. It is expected that in five years there will be an approximately twenty-one students attending the school. This prediction does not take into account community member out-migration (personal communication with school principal). Many of the advanced high school courses are not taught at the school. Students choosing to enroll in advanced math, physics and chemistry must participate in distance education.

Currently the town council of Island A, through its economic development office, is initiating a textiles program designed to help create employment. They hope to market locally made medical uniforms. If successful it would employ up to forty-five community members. There is also a focus on tourism with the operation of a tourist home, a bed and breakfast, boat tours and hiking trails.

According to most recent Canadian Census data, in 1996 the population of Island A was 460. This population is down 12.9 % from 1991. Within the same period, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador decreased by only 2.9 %.

The 1996 educational statistics for Island A showed the highest level of schooling for the population fifteen years and over. they are: no high school – 60 %, with high school – 19 %, some post-secondary – 5 %, a post-secondary certificate or trade – 10 % and 6 % were university graduates (Statistics Canada, 1996).

### *Island B*

Island B is located within CCS AB. It is Newfoundland' largest offshore Island measuring 182 square kilometers. The prosperous fishing grounds located around the Island made it an attractive fishing community for the Europeans hence the first permanent settlement was established in 1728. Eventually the Island also became a centre for the seal hunt. Approximately 1000 people lived on the island in 1800, by 1836 the number had risen to almost 1500. By 1911 the population had grown past 3500. (Smallwood, Horan, Pitt & Riggs, 1994). The island was titled 'The Capital of the North' due to it's growth and prosperous future in the fishery and tourism (Best & Godwin, 1977).

The development of a Shipbuilding and Producers Co-operative in the 1960's helped the Island elevate the impact of declining cod stocks. Soon a shipyard made it possible for the community to create employment as boat builders and helped to expand the fishery into different species with it's production of bigger and faster boats. Eventually the Co-operative began operating various fish plants on the island and by 1976 was the largest employer on the island (Best & Godwin, 1977).

Today the island consists of eleven distinct communities which operate a number of business such as: convenience and grocery stores, local fast food establishments, gas stations and hardware stores. The community operates a Community Development Association, an ice rink, a tourism association and a local newspaper. Within the centre of the island is the school complex which offers education to all communities on the island. Currently, the Newfoundland Government is building a new hospital on the island.

According to most recent Canadian Census data, in 1996 the population of Island B was 3915, while in 1991 the population was 3573. Census information for island B divided into five distinct geographical areas. Between the years of 1991 and 1996 all of these areas experienced a population decrease, these ranged from 4.7 % to 11.7 %. Within the same period, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador decreased by only 2.9 %.

The 1996 educational statistics for Island B showed the highest level of schooling for the population fifteen years and over, they are: no high school – 62.8 %, with high school – 10.3 %, some post-secondary – 6.4 %, a post-secondary certificate or trade – 14.8 % and 5.5 % were university graduates (Statistics Canada, 1996).

### The Research Participants

#### *Island A Participants*

On Island A, school administration elected to inform all high school students of the research project. This resulted in a total of seven participants, five from grade 11 and two from grade 12. The following is a brief description of the Island A participants:

*Thomas* - is male, in grade 11 and has a 70 % academic average. He is very active in extra curricular sports. There is a family history in the fishery; his father was a fisherman until the cod moratorium. Thomas often went fishing with his father and had hoped to also become a fisherman. He realizes that there is no future in the fishery, but if the fishery was still 'holding on' by the time he is finished his Armed Forces training he would like to own his own longliner. He wished he didn't have to go to school, but understands that it is important for a future. He also talks of his academic limitations. Thomas has strong memories of the ground fishery closure and talks about how difficult the crisis was on the community. There is a strong feeling of community attachment expressed by Thomas. He hopes to come back to live on Island A when he has completed his training in the Armed Forces. Thomas identifies unsuccessful completion of physics as a potential barrier to his acceptance into the Forces, and thinks that he may also try a program at College of the North Atlantic.

*Nathan*- is male and in grade 11. His academic average was not provided. He is very involved in extracurricular sports. Nathan's family has lived on Island A for generations. There is a strong family history in the fishery; his father is a fisherman and his mother works in the fish plant. He helps his father fish on the weekends. In the past his father has asked Nathan if he would like to become a fisherman, while at the same time advising that the fishery is 'not a good thing to be at'. He has plans to attend university, but is still unsure of the school or program. He is looking for the best scholarship opportunity before he decides on which post-secondary school to attend. He has never considered the fishery as a post-high school option. Nathan believes some of his peers will 'end up' working in the fishery, but thinks this would happen only out of default. He recognizes that students with the best marks in high school have the best chances at a successful

future. Nathan thinks that lack of money may be a possible post-secondary barrier. Currently his brother is attending university and they talk about what it is like to be away at school. He would like to live in Newfoundland when finished his post-secondary education.

*Randy* - is a male, in grade 11 with an 82 % academic average. He is very active in extracurricular sports. Randy's family has lived on Island A for generations. Both his parents fished together for years. He has worked in the fish plant as summer employment. His father has advised him against working in the fishery and has never considered the fishery as a means of future employment. Speaking of the differences in his community before and after the cod moratorium, Randy describes his community as 'alive' before the ground fishery closure and calls the out-migration 'sad'. He sees fishing as an option for students who are not doing well in school and recognizes that high school grades are important for a successful future. Randy identifies cost and choosing the best location as a possible barrier to post-secondary school. He would like to live in Newfoundland when finished his post-secondary program.

*Alice* - is a female, in grade 11 with an 80 % academic average. She is very active in extracurricular sports and student council. She plans on attending post-secondary after high school but unsure of which school or program. Alice's family has lived in the Island A area for generations. There is a strong family history in the fishery; her father owns his own longliner and her mother used to work in the fish plant. Her father talks about the hard times in the fishery and is advising Alice to attend a post-secondary program. She has never considered the fishery as a means of employment, but foresees some of her peers working in the fishery. Alice sees the fishery as an option for those students who are not doing well in school, especially the boys. She

identifies cost and choice of roommates as a possible barrier to successful post-secondary completion. When she moves on to a post-secondary program she thinks her mother will leave Island A to find better employment opportunities. Alice would like to live in Newfoundland when finished and does not want to live in Toronto.

*Donna* - is a female, in grade 12 with between an 85 to 90 % academic average. She is very involved in extracurricular sports. Donna's family has lived in the Island A area for generations. There is a strong family history in the fishery; her father owns his own longliner and her mother used to work in the fish plant. Donna has never considered the fishery as a means of employment and sees the fishery as an option for those students who are not doing well in school. She describes herself as 'confused and tired of school'. Originally, she had planned on enrolling in a nursing program out of the province but now is considering taking a year off to work. She does not think that she will have the necessary science marks to be accepted into the program. Donna is thinking of working for a year in Toronto, then investigating the possibilities of getting funding for university tuition. She would like to live in Newfoundland when finished but does not see that as a realistic option.

*Maggie* - This subject was not interviewed. Maggie is a female, in grade 12 with a 79 % academic average. There is a family history in the fishery. She is planning on enrolling in a nursing program after high school. She identifies the transition of living in the city and community attachment as a post-secondary barrier.

*Frank* - is a male, in grade 11 with an approximately 93 % academic average. He is very involved in extracurricular sports and student council. There is a strong family history in the fishery; for generations Frank's family has fished from Island A. His father owns a longliner and has family members working for him, his mother works in the fish plant during the summer. He had never considered the fishery as a means of employment, and is planning to attend university but unsure of which program. Frank has a brother who is away at school and they often talk about what it is like to be away and how much work is involved. He would like to live in Newfoundland when finished but will travel if necessary. He sees family attachment as a possible barrier to post-secondary.

#### *Island B Participants*

On Island B, school administration preferred to recruit participants specifically from the grade 12 population. The following is a brief description of the Island A subjects:

*Martha* - is a female with a 72 % academic average. She was once involved with extracurricular activities but has decided not to take part this year except for helping in graduation planning. Martha's family has lived on Island B for generations. There is a family history in the fishery; her dad is a fisherman and her mother used to work in the fish plant. Her father was involved in a TAGS program, but she is unsure if he participated in a training program. She has never considered the fishery as a means of employment, but thinks that it is fine for some people, if it interests them. Martha states that there is no longer enough fish for everyone and predicts that everyone will have to move from Island B in ten years. She plans on attending The College of the North Atlantic directly out of high school, but thinks she may have to stay an extra year to complete the necessary credits. She thinks she will live outside of Newfoundland when she has

finished a post-secondary program. Martha lists costs, transportation, high school marks, and finding appropriate living accommodations as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Elizabeth* - This participant was not interviewed. Elizabeth is a female with a 70 % academic average. There is family history in the fishery; her father is part owner of a long liner. She plans on attending The College of the North Atlantic directly out of high school. Elizabeth would like to live in Newfoundland when finished her program but sees no benefit in returning to Island B to work. She has two siblings who are also attending programs at The College of the North Atlantic. She identifies costs and accommodations as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*William* - is a male with a 74 % academic average. He is involved in extracurricular sports. William's family has lived on Island B for generations. There is strong family history in the fishery: both parents work in the fish plant along with extended family members. Both of his parents participated in Adult Basic Education through TAGS. He has thought about the fishery being a career option but it is not in his post-high school plans. He does know some peers who are planning to work in the fishery after high school. His parents are encouraging him to go to post-secondary after high school. William plans on working outside of Newfoundland to make some money and then return to attend The College of the North Atlantic. There is some suggestion that he is unsure about attending his selected program. He hopes to live in Newfoundland when he is finished his program and work close to Island B. William thinks that people should know what they want to do before they go away to post-secondary school. He

identifies costs and high school marks as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Amanda* - is a female with an 87 % academic average. She is involved in extracurricular activities such as the school spirit committee and the career fair. There is no parental history in the fishery and she has never considered the fishery as a means of employment. Amanda feels that the fishery is a bad career choice for young people and thinks that her generation will not stay on Island B. She describes her parents as 'stuck' due to their lack of education. Amanda has two siblings who went to post-secondary, but are not working in fields related to their academic focus. She does not want this to also happen to her. She plans on attending university directly out of high school but is late in applying and is unsure of the academic area of focus. She describes herself as 'confused' about her areas of interest, stating that there are so many things she would like to do that she is having difficulty focusing on one. Amanda would like to live in Newfoundland when finished her program but not on Island B. This subject lists costs, transition to city living, ability to get a student loan and family attachment as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Nancey* - is a female with between a 70 to 75 % academic average. She is involved in extracurricular sports and in planning the career fair. There is no parental history in the fishery and she has never considered the fishery as a means of employment. Nancey's mother is encouraging her to pursue an accounting program so she can return to work in the family business. While she is interested in business, she is interested in opening her own business in St. John's. She plans on attending The College of the North Atlantic but is thinking about taking a

year off to make some money to avoid a large student loan repayment. Many of her peers are advising her against taking a year off. Nancey would like to live in Newfoundland or Island B after finishing a post-secondary program, does not want to live outside of Newfoundland, and sees costs as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Kevin* - is a male with a 78 % academic average. He is actively involved in the student council. He describes Island B as 'just a fishing community'. Kevin's family has a long history of living on Island B and working in the fishery. Both his parents worked in the fishery and were participants in TAGS retraining. He has never considered the fishery as a means of employment and advises his peers against it as well. Kevin thinks that the cod stocks are gone and that crab is soon to follow. He plans on attending university but is considering the Armed Forces first to secure post-secondary funding. This is the first year he has taken school seriously. Kevin said that when he decided that he wanted to go to university he began work harder at school. He would like to live in Newfoundland or Island B when finished a program. He identifies costs and high school marks as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Hilda* - is a female with a 73 % academic average. She is involved in extracurricular activities such as peer tutoring, planning the career fair. She used to play on the sports teams but has decided not to be involved this year. There is a strong family history in the fishery; her father is a fisherman and her mother is a dock-side worker. Hilda has never considered the fishery as a means of employment. She had observed students who are not doing well in school and thinks this is connected to their parents, in that these parents are less educated and do not have the skills to help or encourage their children. Hilda plans on attending a post-secondary program but

unsure if at Memorial University or The College of the North Atlantic. She plans to leave Island B when finished a post-secondary program. She would like to open her own business or work in the hospital. She identifies family attachment as possible barriers to successful completion of a post-secondary program.

*Brenda* - is a female with an 82 % academic average. She states that the fishery is the only thing that is keeping the community going and that 'all of the young crowd are leaving'. Brenda describes a time when sons would go fishing with their fathers but now there are bigger crab and shrimp boats. There is a strong family history in the fishery; her father owns his own longliner and her mother does the accounting for the fishing business. She has never considered the fishery as a means of employment and has been accepted to The College of the North Atlantic for September. She would like to live in Newfoundland when finished post-secondary but knows there is no chance of employment on Island B in her field of interest. Brenda thinks costs will be a problem while at school due to the anticipated difficulty in getting a student loan.

*Hanna* - is a female with an 80 % academic average. She is involved in extracurricular sports and cheerleading. Hanna's family has lived on Island B for generations. There is a strong family history in the fishery; her parents own and fish from their long liner. She has never considered the fishery as a means of employment but is fishing with her father for summer employment. Hanna is planning on attending a post-secondary program through Transport Canada and then plans on living in the North West Territories when finished her program. She would like to eventually live in Newfoundland. She identifies passing the entrance exam to Transport Canada

as a barrier. If she is unsuccessful in the exam she will attend university to focus on sciences, possibility medicine.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS

Research data were collected by surveying and then interviewing high school students from the geographical area coded CCS AB. The survey resulted in limited information. However, the interviews contained rich details illustrating participants' thoughts, feelings and fears about their post-high school plans and home communities.

To examine the post-high school aspirations of CCS AB youth, which was the goal of this research, it was necessary to consider possible influences in the lives of participants. Therefore interview questions were designed to explore many areas of the participants' lives, such as: their community, parents, peers, school and the fishery.

As listed in Chapter 1, there are seven major categories of research questions that guided each interview. These categories of questions are with reference to: community perceptions, peer awareness, parental influences, school influences, fishery influences, post-secondary attitude and barriers to post-secondary education.

The following sections of data analysis are organized according to each category of interview questions. The results of both the survey and interview questions are presented together according to the category of question being analyzed. Seven themes were uncovered in the data analysis, which helps the reader to glimpse deeper into the post-high school aspirations of these youth. These themes will be identified under the appropriate categories and elaborated upon at that point in the chapter. For example Theme I entitled 'The Language of Movement' arises under the category of How Participants Perceive their Community.

Due to the large amount of data collected, specific quotations have been selected and presented within the sections of data analysis. The selected quotations are used to demonstrate the opinions of a larger group in response to research questions. Also, within the interview quotations each participant has been given a fictitious name. The letter 'L' represents the interviewer.

### Community Perceptions

The impact of living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador during the latest cod fishery crisis was considered a major point of interest for this study. This research goal made community analysis essential. When exploring the post-high school plans of CCS AB youth, it was necessary to consider more than basic statistics and community demographics. It required a deeper examination of how these youth interpret messages from their community and how their environment motivates them. Therefore each interview began by asking participants to describe their home community. The beginning of each interview was designed to meet two purposes. The first was to set a comfortable interviewing environment by presenting a topic that participants could easily discuss. The second goal was to allow participants to freely describe aspects of their home communities.

The presentation of the following sub-sections and the identification of Theme I help to answer the research questions designed to examine environmental characteristics and their possible influences on the post-high school aspirations of participants.

#### *General Descriptions, Likes and Dislikes of their Home Communities*

Participants were asked to imagine speaking with a person who knew nothing of their home community and to describe community aspects participants felt were important for this

person to know. Without asking any probing questions the following types of descriptions were given about Island A:

Alice: Well, it's a small town, with about 350 people living here. Everybody knows everybody, everybody is friends with everybody. Ahmm..there's more older people here than younger people..and..(laughs).

Donna: Well, it's a beautiful place, everyone here seems friendly. Whenever, like tourist come here, that's what they always say, the people are really, really friendly. Small. Everyone knows everybody.

Thomas: Well it is not a very fun place. There is not much to do here..so..

Frank: Well it's small, not too many people. Everybody here is like close, everybody has to work together. And school is fairly small, it's not a lot of people. Not a lot to do here, for the younger crowd anyway.

Randy: That's the thing about this place like.. everybody knows each other. A lot of people gets along with each other.

Without asking any probing questions the following types of descriptions were given about Island B:

Martha: It's a small community, ahhh you don't live very far away from your friends. You hang out at the post office when it is closed. Ahmm..here are a lot of family members are like living in Island B. There's not much work in Island B, only in the fish plant and the post office. (pauses) Houses like there like not many people like in the family as there was before.

William: Ahhh..well it's in a nice place, there's a fish plant and there's like stores and clubs and that there. Well, there is nothing much here. Like well other than the fishery.

Rachel: We have our own plant, fish plant. It does pretty much herring and cod, like when the food fishery and stuff happens. There's usually probably about 20 long liners tied up there (pause) ahhh..there's two convenience stores around, a couple of restaurants, small restaurants. Mostly everybody there is well they own their own shop or *most (emphasis)* of them are fishermen.

Hilda: Well it's tied to the traditional economy, mainly fishing, not very much, there's not a lot to do (laughs).

Kevin: Ahhh.. Island B is basically a fishing community, that all it is. Various people has stores and stuff around right. Ahmm..basically, well basically it is just a fishing community. Most of the people rely on the fishing industry right. A lot of people crab, other people work in the plant and stuff like that right, rely on the Co-op and stuff like that.

Later participants were asked to discuss aspects of their communities they liked and disliked. When asked to comment on community aspects they disliked, students were quick to point out examples of difficulty in accessing medical care, limited social possibilities and lack of employment opportunities. Positive community aspects were expressed while describing feelings of physical safety and social inclusion. The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants from Island A:

L: Is there anything that you really hate about living here?

Frank: The isolation I guess. It's a nice bit isolated so you got to go by ferry. I don't like that as well. Especially in the wintertime and sometimes you don't get to go. You could get stuck in the ice.

Alice: I don't know, there's not much to do here like for a teenager. I know they just goes up the roads and hangs out. like there is not special hang out or nothing like that. There is no place to go.

Thomas: It's a quiet place, you can do almost anything you want here. You know...everybody is friends here, nobody argues or that kind of stuff.

L: What do you not like about being here?

Thomas: Nothing.

Randy: Isolation (no hesitation) *it's bad* (emphasis).It's hard to get off the island, if you can. then you got to get the ferry. Sometimes you're trapped.

The following quotations are representative of the types of comments made by participants from Island B about community aspects they liked or disliked:

Donna: Ahmm.. it's private, like you get to know everybody. You don't have to worry about any danger or anything bad happening. Like most things that happen around here might be like the glass door in Riffs might get beat out, that's about it.

L: Are there things that you love about living in this community?

Kevin: The quietness, it's very peaceful right. You can go out all hours of the night and go, no worries. You feel so safe right. You can just sit there on the bridge. Every time you walk down the road there's not one person who don't say hello or wave their hand to yeah right. Even if they don't know ya. They just day hi, so.

Hanna: Ahh..well it's close knit, like everybody is together, like I mean there is more freedom where as if you were living in the city. *A lot (emphasis)* more freedom. A lot of people knows each other, it's not so much conflict among people. I know in town there is a lot of difference between like, you hang around with this group, and that's it. But out here it's where everybody knows everybody there is none of that. You know, you just be yourself and that's it.

Within the community descriptions, 2 students from Island A and 3 from Island B reveal an emotional conflict. Aspects of their communities for which they express fondness, were also elements they describe as disliking. Participants discussed the difficulties of living in a small community, particularly the conflict created by the 'close knit' characteristic of their communities. The term 'close knit' was used to describe both the physical and emotional closeness of community members. The following quotes by Nathan and Rachel help to highlight this conflict felt by these students:

Nathan: I like how, kind of like everybody knows each other. It's a small community. But then again that's the kind of thing you don't like. It's kind of isolated.

L: So is that the thing that you don't like the most?

Nathan: The thing that I don't like about the isolation is that you only got so many people, like you can only go with the same people, like right.

Rachel: It's quiet, there's no crime, nothing like that. It's small and the disadvantage is knowing everybody really, but, it can be an advantage I guess.

L: Are there things that you really hate?

Rachel: *Rumors (laughs)* there's *a lot (emphasis)* of that. Everybody talks about everybody. 50 year old men talk about like my age girls. It's crazy like that.

#### *Employment Opportunities*

When asked to discuss the types of employment seen within their communities the responses were similar for both islands. The participants describe their home communities as places offering limited employment opportunities. These youth list longliner fishing, fish plant

work, home-care, the school and various types of self-employment as the major sources of labor for these islands. Through their comments, students describe an environment unable to support year round employment. These descriptions suggest employment as 'seasonal' for a large number of people and government funded projects in the winter. The following quotations are representative of the types of comments made by participants from Island A about current employment trends:

Alice: Most of the people work in stores or home care and in the summer time people work in the fish plant and there's project (government funded work) here sometimes in the fall for people that haven't got work.

Randy: Well, like some of them. I don't know what they are doing. A lot of fellas just move off of the island. A lot of people got to go to the mainland or go to the oil wells off of the island, to Alberta. A lot of people goes, then come home in the summer.

L: Some people are still fishing?

Randy: Yeah, crab and turbot. Mostly just that in the summer.

Thomas: Yeah..there's not many jobs, only a scattered one in the summer time.

Students of Island B made the following types of statements when asked to discuss current employment in their community:

Hanna: Oh well, in the summer time, the fishery, plant workers and you know your own enterprise opens up (long liner fishing). There's shops, there's like two jobs at the post office and there is not much more than that.

William: Well, fishing during the summer and nothing much during the winter, go into the woods or what ever.

Hilda: I guess trying to maintain their own business mostly. Some are working with the fishery, a lot still.

L: And what kinds of stuff are they doing?

Hilda: Ahh..fish for crab in the summer and well in the winter comes they will just draw unemployment and then probably shrimp, but I think that's not going ahead this year so I don't know.

*Recognition of Community Changes*

The researcher presented two questions designed to examine how the groundfish moratorium was viewed by the participants. It was determined that the opinions of these youth, who were approximately 7 to 8 years of age at the initiation of TAGS programming, may present a deeper understanding of this period of economic downturn. Particularly how observed changes in the fishery may have impacted any of their post-high school plans.

First, participants were asked to discuss their memories of the fishery closure. Second, they were asked to comment on changes they have detected within their communities since the moratorium. Also of interest were feelings expressed towards these memories and community changes.

Students from Island A and B reported different experiences while discussing memories of the cod fishery closure. Six students of Island B commented that they did not remember many details of the fishery closure. Quotations by Kevin, Hilda and Rachel are examples of the types of comments made by these six Island B students:

Kevin: Ahh..not really. I can't remember much about it (in a very soft voice).

Hilda: Ahh..that was a *long (emphasis)* time ago

Rachel: I do (remember) a little bit. not a lot about it.

In comparison, students from Island A appeared to have stronger memories of the closure of the fishery. The following quotations are examples of responses given by Island A students when asked if they could recall the closure of the ground fishery:

Randy: Yeah, it is nothing like it was before.

L: And what was it like before?

Randy: Well..it was alive..more people.

L: How do you think that affected the community?

Thomas: A lot of people, everybody was involved in the fishery, everyone was. It affected a lot of people here in the community.

L: So what happened when the fishery closed? How did it effect people? What did they do?

Thomas: Nobody.. they all stayed in the house, nobody went out doors or nothing. Nobody was involved in anything. Everybody used to be at it all the time. But after it closed Island A was like it was dead. Like you know what I mean.

While both groups had different memories of the actual closure of the cod fishery,

responses to more in-depth questions concerning adjustments in their communities were similar.

When asked to describe how their communities have changed both groups provide examples of declining school populations, fishery adjustments and the relocation of family and friends.

Students from both islands voiced their concerns of the obviously decreasing numbers of students that begin school each year in their community.

Participants from Island A made the following types of comments about their school:

Donna: Ahh..yeah..It was pretty hard. (the closure of the fishery) A lot of people have moved since then. The school went down a lot.. it's down to like 50 something people here (school) now.

Donna later went on to say:

Donna: I don't know (how the community has changed)..I guess there was just more people and more stuff to do I guess. But now it's like there is hardly anybody..there are only 4 of us in grade twelve. It has went down a lot.

Randy: I don't know...just sad because so many people are moving away and this place is like dying. The school has only fifty students now.

L: Do you remember when there were more people here?

Randy: I remember it yeah. the biggest graduating class was sixteen, this year it is three or four. There used to be 175 students in the school. now there are 50 something.

Participants from Island B made the following types of comments about their school:

Hanna: But I just noticed like lately the number of children in school is a *lot* (emphasis) smaller now in elementary and junior high than when I was in school. Like there used to be 3 classes of grade 8 and 9 and then grade 7. Now they are down to 2. And there used to be 2 kindergarten classes when I went to school there and now they are down to 1. So you can tell the difference there.

L: Why do you think that is? Why do you think the numbers are lower?

Hanna: Maybe because there's a lot of people moving around and the young families now will *not(emphasis)* stay here because there nothing to offer them. They'll have to go and their kids will have to be raised somewhere else.

Hilda: Class size are anywhere to 26 to..(announcement over the P.A. system) Okay. We are the last class, the last level of 3 classes of grade twelves. The rest coming up are 2 classes, so they are getting limited.

L: I see what you mean, so you have 3 classes of grade twelves right now. How many grade elevens will there be they graduate?

Hilda: Well there are 69 of us..grade elevens I'd say between 50 to 60.

L: And then are the groups getting smaller?

Hilda: Yeah there is only 1 kindergarten class this year. I think it consists of about fourteen to twenty kids and that's not a lot compared to what it used to be.

A second area of change recognized by participants was recent adjustments in the fishery.

Students observed such aspects as declining cod fish stocks, increased utilization of crab and turbot, along with the increased use of long liners. Quotations by Thomas and Frank are representative of participants' observations:

Thomas: Most of the people goes on long liners and stuff like that. And well..there is not much fishing from land that's all gone. All pretty well long liners here on Island A.

L: So tell me about long liners? What's the difference?

Thomas: long silence.

L: I guess there was a time when everyone owned their own boat?

Thomas: Oh yeah, but now everyone is coming together, instead of having their own boat, one person owns the boat - the skipper - he takes care of everything. He is in charge.

Frank: Ahh.. Well mainly the thing is that is going in here (the fishery)..my father is a fisherman. He has a long liner. Long liners are becoming a big thing here. A lot of people has invested in that in the last few years.

The following quotations are representative of many comments made by participants from Island B:

Martha: Yes there's a lot of difference. Like people made a lot of money back then and now like you got to the fish plant and you are only making probably 5 dollars an hour. And there's not much fish for people to go fishing. My dad fishes and he don't make much, like gets much out of it, not like in the old times, like everybody, plenty of fish for everybody.

Rachel: With the fishery I see..like Dad used to fish with his father and they used to fish cod. A lot of boats did, I think. Now all you see is crab and shrimp, that's all there are.

William: Yeah, but now it's ahhh changed (the fishery)

L: Yeah? In what kind of way?

William: Cause of the cod fishery and that, now the crab is cut, now and that.

The final area of community change discussed during the interviews was increased out-migration of people to other provinces in Canada, particularly since the initiation of the cod moratorium. While the participants recognized how movement has impacted upon their schools, they also described how out-migration has affected the community as a whole. When asked about out-migration, participants from Island A made the following types of observations:

L: Do you think it has changed very much in the last little while, since the fishery shut down?

Alice: A lot of people like a lot of people has to sell out. A lot. It effected some people, some people had to move off the island because of it.

L: Do you see a difference in your community now as opposed to before?

Nathan: Oh yeah, I can see a difference.

L: What's the biggest difference?

Nathan: Well..like a lot of people moved away to like the mainland. There used to be a lot of like everything going on like boats going around, a lot of people around.

The following quotations are representative of many comments made by participants from Island B:

Rachel: Everybody's leaving, like all the young crowd. Well the young crowd, they are all going to post-secondary and they wants to do something with their lives or what ever instead of fishing because they knows it's probably not going to last.

Kevin: Yeah, there is yeah (less people living here). A lot of people are going away, you know up to the mainland, up to Alberta. I got lots of family after the last couple of years just left, went off for work right.

Martha: There's less people living here cause most of them moved up to Alberta to get better work then down here. Lots of people.

One student from Island B, whose family is not directly involved in the fishery, commented that the recent movement of people out of the community was not simply due to the decline in the fishery.

L: Have you noticed people moving from here in the past little while?

Amanda: Ahh..yeah..well not basically because of the fishery, but I mean a lot of people have moved because there's no opportunity here and in like *every* (emphasis) aspect, because (sighs) there's just, there's no.. place to have opportunity here. There's no (pause) there's nothing.

#### *Predicted Future of Their Home Communities*

Through these observations, students were able to formulate predictions for the future of their home communities. These predictions do not suggest a time of population or economic upturn. When asked how they feel about the changes they have witnessed, participants from both Islands made the following types of remarks:

Donna: I don't know.. I guess a lot of people are moving and it is making it worse for here. I'd say in a few years probably a lot more people will be gone and then there won't be any need for keeping the school open. Everybody will have to leave I'd say.

Randy: I don't know.. just sad because so many people are moving away and this place is like dying. The school has only 50 students now.

Martha: Pause..Oh well. it's different now. cause like most of my family, like younger crowd are moved on, like moved up there (Alberta), like most of my friends and stuff are like gone away. To find better places whether it's universities, like there are no universities on the island to do anything. So basically, you got to go away to do anything now.

L: So with all of these people leaving, what do you think is going to happen to Island B?

Martha: Oh I think there's like not going to be many people, only the old people living on the island. I think mostly all the families and stuff are going to be moved away and stuff in 10 years, I'd say.

L: What do you think about that? How does that make you feel?

Martha: Oh it makes me feel sad because like this is where I grew up to. This is where I knows everybody and to just move away is going to be really difficult.

Hanna: I think that in another 20 years there will be like very few people here. I would say there will not be very many in school, since probably like older seniors.

Hilda: Yeah. I thought about it and it's like I wrote in my survey, it's going to be a ghost town if things don't pick up here. Ahh, I don't think there's a lot of people going to stay around.

*Recognition of Community Limitations for  
Supporting Future Employment Opportunities of Youth*

Data analysis revealed the opinion of participants from CCS AB that their home communities offer very little employment opportunity. Consequently, participants discussed post-high school options that necessitated movement from their home communities. These remarks surfaced while posing the question of possible benefits seen by staying within their home communities. Similar comments were made while discussing 'likes' and 'dislikes' of their home communities. Many of the comments also reinforce the predictions of continued community changes. The following types of comments were made by participants from Island A concerning limited employment of their home communities:

Maggie (From Survey, Not Interviewed): Besides that (long liner work) there is no future for young adults just getting out of high school. Only about 1 in every 20 people around our community stays home looking for work, but most of our friends are moving away and it may be a hard thing to do but the best thing.

L: What about when you are all done, would you come back to Island A again?

Frank: Not to live I don't think. so. I would come back and visit sort of thing, but. It's like there is nothing, like if I am doing computers there is nothing here for me.

Participants from Island B made the following types of comments concerning limited employment of their home communities:

Amanda: But like there's not much opportunity here, just someplace that you would come back to retire or something.

Elizabeth (From Survey, Not Interviewed): No, (benefits to coming back to Island B) there is nothing on Island B for us young people, but there is a lot in N.F.

L: Is there anything here that you hate?

Nancey: (pauses) pretty much there's no future here at all.

*Theme 1 - The Language of Movement:  
Going Leads to Something while Staying Leads to Nothing.*

Closer scrutiny of the entire collection of data exposed an interesting, but not surprising, use of language concerning the impact of 'movement' or 'lack of movement' from their home communities on youth. Participants provided statements where variations of two dominant opinions could be seen. The first is - physical movement is important because it leads to 'something' or success. The second message is - staying in your home community is a mistake and could lead to 'nothing' or an unsuccessful future.

Some students display this attitude by presenting circumstances, which in their opinions, cannot happen within their communities. Here students advise that 'success', 'better places', 'better opportunity' and a 'future' require physical movement. Messages of 'movement' and its connection to better opportunity are scattered throughout these examples:

Nathan: They (parents) want me to **move away** so I can get something that gives me a **future**.

Maggie: Most of our friends are **moving away** and it may be a hard thing to do but the **best thing**.

Donna: There is **nothing to do** (on Island A), I am just going to **go away**. I think that's why most of the young crowd leaves.

Martha: most of my friends and stuff are **gone away**, to find **better places**. Whether it's universities, like there are no universities on the island to do anything. So basically you **got to go away to do anything now**.

Amanda: I *have (emphasis)* **to go** to school (laughs) I think they (parents) wants me to have a **better opportunity** then what they had, because they're basically stuck.

Amanda: I wants to **go somewhere**, I wants to **get a job** that's like you know.. I'm **not on social services** or anything like that.

William: Well you should **go** and like you will have like **good stuff**, like to **find work easier** and stuff. (message from parents)

Hilda: She (mother) wants me **to go** and she wants me **to be successful**.

Amanda: A lot of people (classmates) wants to **get somewhere**. So a lot of people are **moving and just pursuing something**. I don't know what for sure.

Kevin: Well, I got **high expectations for myself**. If I .. I have always wanted to **go places**, do stuff different, right. I can see that he (a friend) always wanted **to stay home**. all he wanted to do was just make money and **fishing was** a good way to get money.

Rachel: All of **our crowd**, well the young crowd, they are all **going** to post-secondary and they wants **to do something** with their lives or what ever **instead of fishing** because they knows it's probably not going to last.

Others chose to present these lessons from a more cautionary perspective. Here students present the forewarnings of parents and observations of their peers. These students communicate the concept of lack of movement, which can be equated with depending on the fishery, as leading to 'nowhere', no hopes' and 'problems'. For example:

Randy: Then you haven't got **no hopes**, you will **just stay** and bum around **here**.

Hanna: They (parents) never **went nowhere**, they depended on the **fishery**. That wasn't much good.

Kevin: Well they (parents) always says you know **you can't stay here**, this place has **nothing for anybody**, you **have to go** on and do what you want **to do**. That's what they always says.

Rachel: They (parents) don't want me **to stay** around here and **do nothing**. So, they are not forcing me to go. Dad don't want to see me **leave**, but he knows that's the only way I'm going **to get anywhere in life**.

When examining these statements concerning movement or lack of movement, an increased level of complexity can be seen. A simple phrase such as 'to get anywhere in life' begins to take on more than one meaning. Within this phrase the term 'anywhere' is often equated with success in life. For these rural youth 'to get anywhere' is not simply a figurative term. The geographical importance to 'anywhere' is difficult to ignore. For many urban youth, unlike rural youth, success has a greater likelihood of happening closer to home. For many

participants there appears to be a geographical awareness that 'nowhere' is too close to home. Making movement a given part of their post-high school plans.

#### Peer Awareness

A number of interview questions were designed to reveal Participant perceptions and opinions of peer groups. After participants disclosed their post-high school plans and attitudes toward post-secondary education, each was then asked to consider how he or she might be different from other peers. For example, an interview participant who suggested any type of post-secondary plan was asked to consider how he or she might be different from peers who had not chosen to continue their education past high school. While the researcher recognizes that these opinions can not be used to document other groups of youth within CCS AB, it does however provide an interesting perspective of how participants perceive youth that have no post-secondary aspirations. Also, asking these comparative questions provides the reader with deeper insight into participants' overall value of secondary and post-secondary education.

Within their interview responses, participants provided opinions to explain reasons for different post-high school aspirations among peers. Participants highlighted influences upon the plans of 'non post-secondary bound' peers such as: gender, school success, the fishery, out migration and passivity of parents. All of these topics will be explored further within the following section of data analysis and then highlighted through Theme II.

#### *Post-High School Plans of Peers*

During the interviews, participants were asked to consider the possible plans of their classmates. The predictions of their peers included advancing into some form of post-secondary

education, taking a year off to work then going to post-secondary school, graduating from high school and then moving to find work or not finishing school and moving to find work.

Predicting that their peers will advance to some form of post-secondary education after high school was widespread throughout the data. The following quotes are representative of comments made by participants from Island A:

L: So do you think most of the people in your class – people who will graduate with you – where do you think they will go?

Alice: (pauses) The majority of them will go to university or college.

Thomas: A lot of people in grade eleven and twelve, they talk about going into the university and that kind of stuff, a lot of people.

Participants from Island B made the following comments concerning peers attending post-secondary school.

Nancey: I think just about everybody graduating is going to St. John's. Most of them are going to MUN or College of the North Atlantic.

Amanda: I heard some people might be staying home for a year and then working and then going out, so they won't need a loan.

L: Anyone talking about going away?

Hanna: Yeah. I heard a couple of students who are my friends say that one person got a. her brother in up in the North West Territories and he has his own business and she plans on going up there for a year working and the come back and go to school.

#### *Peers Moving to Seek Employment*

The possibility of peers moving away from home to find work, likely off the island of Newfoundland, was another post-high school plan of peers discussed by interview participants. As previously discussed on page 70-71, interview participants described young people as moving from the CCS AB area to seek employment opportunities. The following quotes continue with the same observations, except that the population of youth leaving to find work is defined more clearly. Students from both Island A and B made the following comments:

L: Do you have friends of yours who have graduated before you? What types of stuff are they doing now?

Randy: One of my buddies, I was just talking to, he is just waiting for the summer to come. He has one more credit to do. But a lot of people just goes to the mainland.

L: What kinds of stuff do they go to the mainland to do?

Randy: Working at like putting down lines on the roads and that kinds of stuff. I wouldn't want it.

L: The people who may not go to school where will they go?

Rachel: Ahhh, probably up on the mainland working with their relatives or any contacts like that. That's what they will be doing.

Kevin: Usually...usually it is Fort Mc Murray or somewhere like that right. Like I knows a fella...ahh...not too long ago, just a couple of months ago, he just left to go up and work on the oil rigs. Cause you know he felt that fishing wasn't no good for him right. So he just got up and left.

### *Gender Differences*

Questions concerning gender differences among peers were asked during the interviews.

Participants were asked to consider any difference between the post-high school plans of male and female students. Some commented on classical gender differences such as male students being attracted to mechanical fields while others suggested an increase in female students being interested in traditionally male dominated fields. Some participants reported little differences between the post-high school plans of male and female students. Pointed out within a number of these discussions was the perception that female students possess more positive school attitudes than males and are more likely to include university as part of their post-high school plans.

On Island A, when the participants were asked to consider gender differences, the following types of comments were made:

L: Do you have friends of yours who would have gone right into the fishery as well? (if the stocks were still there)

Thomas: Oh yeah – mostly guys.

L: What about the girls, would they work in the fish plant?

Thomas: No

L: Why?

Thomas: I don't know why, they just don't.

L: And what do you think is the biggest difference?(between peers who choose to stay and fish compared to those who go to school)

Alice: Education, how well they do while they are in school.

L: Anything else?

Alice: (pause) Well.. girls from guys I guess.

L: Yeah maybe

Alice: There are a few guys here who would probably like to go fishing when they get out of school, but girls would never (emphasis). Neither girl here wants to.

L: Do you think there are girls here who would like to stay to go to work in the fish plant?

Alice: No.. I don't think so.

When asked about any gender differences, participants from Island B made the following types of comments:

L: Do you think there's any difference in your class about what the guys want to do compared to what the girls want to do?

Rachel: Yeah.

L: And how so?

Rachel: All the girls want to go away and do like what they want to do, what they want to do and they want to be successful. All of the guys just seem like they, most of them, I can't say all the ones, there are a few of them that want to go away to do something.

L: In your class do you think there is a difference in what girls are choosing to do when they finish school, compared to guys?

Hilda: Yeah. Boys are more into their hands, mechanical engineering stuff like that. And I think girls will go to the scientific, the science, the medicine fields, the nurses, the doctors.. so..

L: Why do you think that's the case?

Hilda: I don't know.

L: So you think girls will go to university and guys will go to like trades school?

Hilda: Yep, I do. Mostly girls will do, I think guys are more afraid of what's going to come in university – here anyway.

L: do you think there is a difference between what guys are thinking about doing as opposed to what girls are thinking about doing?

Martha: A big difference, I would say (pauses)

L: Yeah what kind of stuff?

Martha: Boys like mechanics work and that and some girls mighten like it. But in a way it's not different because the girls might like it as much as the guys like it.

*Peers with Limited Academic Ability*

One clear consistency enounced by participants linked limited school success to limited future possibilities. Again, within these descriptions, male students are viewed differently from female students. The participants suggested that academic limitations would result in peers not attending post-secondary school, out-migrating to other areas of the country or remaining at home to work in the fishery. Many of these comments were made when participants were considering if peers might be interested in employment within the fishery. On Island A, participants described the future of some community adolescents in the following ways:

Donna: I think the guys that's going to stick to try to get on longliners is the ones not doing so good in school. That's probably the best bet for them.

Randy: A lot of the girls are doing better than the guys.. some are, not all of the boys got their heads on their shoulders.. some of them do.. but some just don't care.

L: Do you think there are people in this community who are your age, who would think that they would go to work in the fishery?

Alice: Yeah.. well in the summer times here like some students from high school will get on at the fish plant for the summer time.

L: And do you think they would stay doing fishing when they are finished high school?

Alice: I'd say a couple would probably like to, but a lot of them wouldn't.

L: What do you think makes the difference between somebody from this community who decides to go to work in the fish plant when they finish high school compared to somebody like you who decides to go on to school.

Alice: Education, how they do while they are in school.

On Island B, participants described the futures of some community adolescents in the following ways:

L: Do you think there are people in your class who won't go on to post-secondary?

Hanna: Yeah

L: What do you think they will do when they are done?

Hanna: Try to get a berth fishing or on at the fish plant or something.

L: Do you think there are people in your class who might not go to post-secondary who might go and do something else?

Rachel: Oh yes definitely (emphasis on definitely). There's a few fellers who are going fishing with their parents or with their uncles, whatever. And they are going to continue at it, they don't...I guess they see a future in it or what ever...but..

*Theme II - Peers and Passage:*

*'Passivity' in Some Peers will Result in Limited Success and Mobility.*

Not all of the participant's classmates have plans to enter post-secondary programs. An interesting use of language is seen when participants explain how they might be different from these non post-secondary bound peers. Within the following quotations many participants describe levels of inactivity in post-high school plans and apathy towards education within the lives of these non post-secondary bound peers. There appears to be a basic comparison of 'activity verses passivity or apathy'. Phrases such as 'not doing', 'end up doing' 'just staying', 'quitting school' and 'too lazy' are used in the descriptions of these peers. The opinions of these participants suggest that being concerning about school success requires actions such as 'doing well', 'push' or 'encouragement'.

There are some peers who, participants predict, will remain in their home communities to 'rely on fishing'. Participants suggest that this post-high school choice is more passive in nature than plans of peers who will move to seek employment or attend post-secondary programs.

Hanna: A lot of people thinks.. that guys got a tendency to **slack off** and **not do** as much as girls. But I think that if they were **pushed** ahead that they would. And I know a lot of people who **could be doing** a lot (emphasis on a lot) better than what they do. And it's not because they can't and I think where they are not getting the high school marks – putting the extra work and effort into it and they are thinking 'well you know, I won't be able to do this because I am not smart enough'. I think that's the attitude they got where as they could **if they put their minds to it, if they studied.**

Donna: I guess if you are with the crowd that's **not doing** so well.. there is **no good** for them to go to school if they are **not doing** any good here.

L: Do you think that people who are not doing good now know that it will effect them afterwards?

Donna: I don't know.. I guess they **don't have any push** to make them want to go.

L: And is that what they (boys who work on the longliners in the summer) will do when they are finished?

Randy: No.. I would say some people will, the ones that are **not doing** so good in school. For some it is just for the summer time, but there are some who will go to MUN next year.

L: So you see a difference in how people are doing in school and what their plans are to do when they are done?

Randy: There is a big difference. If you are **not doing** good in school, then you haven't got **no hopes**, you will **just stay** and bum around here.

Rachel: A lot (emphasis of a lot) of them (boys) just want to **stay here** and go fishing or just straight on to work. **School doesn't interest them**.

L: What do you think makes you different from them? (peers who might work in the fishery)

Randy: A lot of it is people **not doing** so good in school and thinks that the only way to do it – and they **don't want to try**.

L: Do you think there are people who go to school here with you who will go to work here in the fishery?

Nathan: I really don't know what to say to that cause there are some people.. I know that **nobody is planning** (emphasis on planning) on going **fishing**, but there's some there that might **end up doing it**.

Hanna: The crowd up by the bus stop are the one's **not doing** so well – or **they won't go** as far as I will. I minds **doing my work** and I **wants to do it** and I think that's better.

Kevin: A lot of people **won't come back**, they won't get all of their credits..so that's basically **quitting** if you are not getting all of your credits.

L: And what do you think they will do?

Kevin: I don't know, they will probably **rely on the fishing** and if not I don't know what they'll do.

L: And are they gone to work? (students who have quit school)

Amanda: **Not gone** to work, **just** living off their parents.

Nancey: Yeah most of them **dropped out** (youth remaining in the community after high school) they just **can't do** anything else.

L: Do you think there will be people who will stay and work in the shrimp plant and not go to school?

Hilda: (pauses) Yeah I think like the people who I said before, who are just **too lazy to get an education**, who will probably go to the shrimp plant and **stay there forever**. It's not a good life to have.

Thomas: I suppose he don't want to do **nothing**. He **don't want to leave** home.

Hanna: Well it's their own **problem** (peers who are not doing well in school) and they are **not going** to get **nowhere** out of it, so.

L: And where do you think that group will go, the group that **doesn't care**?

Randy: Walk up and down the roads. (meaning - nothing)

Kevin: Yeah, there's a lot of people in my class who are like that. They ahh.. just sit down and you know torment and pick and talk right. I mean other people just can't do it, some people, a lot of people in my grade rely on fishing. I knows one feller he, says he is **not coming back** next year he is **just going to rely on fishing**, go fishing for the rest of his life and he got a class one captain's license for a boat and thinks he is going to rely on that for the rest of his life. I keeps telling him 'you know you can't rely on that', but still he still believes that fishing is going to be there forever.

Hilda: There has been talks, two students in my class, two guys (of quitting school). They talked about it, but I can't really see them doing it. You know it's all talk and **no action**.

A closer look at the following quotes suggest that some participants feel that moving out of their home community to seek employment requires some level of activity, energy or a plan. While this plan is often not seen as positive as entering into post-secondary, it is implied to be better than remaining in the home community. However, there are hints of uncertainty about these peers within these descriptions.

L: Do you think there are people who will graduate with you who if they could will stay here and fish?

Frank: I don't know about that - they could **probably work** for awhile with their parents, but they will **probably just go** to the mainland and **look for work**.

L: And what do you think he will do? (friend who has quit school)

Nathan: Well he is **probably going to try to go** up to Alberta or somewhere.

Frank: No, well there was someone **who quit** this year, I don't know what his plans are. But, he is **still here** on the island.

L: What do you think he will do?

Frank: I **would say** he will go to Alberta or something like that. **Perhaps** the summer like his uncle owns a longliner so he **will probably go** with him.

Amanda: I mean there's this feller named (\*\*\*\*) who, he was a year younger than me, he **quit** last year, he went to Calgary with his brother, he is **working up there**. So he hasn't even finished high school. So there are a lot of people like that, a lot of people who have already quit - *a lot* (emphasis).

Donna: We had a guy in grade eleven **quit** there not too long ago. One of my best friends actually. He is **going to** Port-aux-Basques now and **working** on a longliner until he gets his unemployment.

L: What kinds of stuff do you think they (students who do not go to post-secondary) will do when they are finished high school?

Thomas: **Probably** go up to Toronto, **probably doing** construction and carpentry work, that kind of stuff.

When asked to consider differences among peers, three participants from Island B

continued to comment on poor school attitude and added how this might be related not only to the passivity of peers, but also to the passivity of particular parents.

L: What do you think make you different from a person in your class who has no plans to go away to school?

Hanna: I think it's (pauses) I think it comes from your parents like you know if you're taught something constantly that like 'you needs to **do something** with your life' like 'you're **not going to be nobody**' and 'you're **not going to do nothing**', '**staying home** here when there is **better things out there** for you', 'I wants better for you because that's probably what I was growing up doing', 'You know **you can do something** better with you life cause when you gets out you'll realize that you should have'. And I think some parents just **don't think about it** that way or just **don't give the incentive** or some parents **they don't even care**.

L: Do you see that in some people in your class?

Hanna: Ahhh..not in my class exactly but down the levels I do. I know parents who got the attitude where they **just don't care** or what ever – out of sight out of mind.

L: Do you think there are people who will graduate from school this year and not go away to go to school?

Hilda: Yeah I do. People are **lazy**, parents are just not educated and they have no one to help them out with their studies. And they just have **no interest in education** what so ever. So they're **going to stay**. I know a few who's **not going anywhere**.

L: And will they stay on Island B?

Hilda: I think.

L: So where do you think some of the graduates will go? To Alberta or somewhere like that?

Hilda: Yeah a limited amount might go – 2 or 3.

L: What do you think makes somebody like you, somebody who has all of these plans made, like applying to 2 schools, your parents didn't go. What makes you different?

Hilda: I thinks it's the upbringing. Ahmmm, if you grow up **doing your studies**, you grow up thinking 'this is **the way to do it**'. You know, 'you **got to do this**'. But some people just they **don't push** their child to study, they don't (pauses) It's stupid.

L: What do you think makes you different then someone who decides to not go at all?

Amanda: I think it's the parents, the way you are brought up. If you are brought up to appreciate education and **be encouraged to go somewhere** and do good, I think that you are **going** to want to. Because you are going to see.. what.. I mean.. you look at some of these people and you are thinking – why would they what that? Right? And they are just.. they don't have that, like a lot of **people who have quit, don't have parents who really force.. well not force them, but encourage them to do something** and they don't usually have education themselves, like that.

### Parental Influences

As presented in the literature review, there is considerable sociological research designed to examine parental influence on the aspirations of children. Therefore, any direct or indirect parental influences on post-high school aspirations of the participants were considered important areas of investigation. Questions were asked within the survey and interview to investigate how these youth perceive parental influence in general, to record specific advice given by parents and the extent of parental impact upon post-high school choices. This section of analysis focuses on the messages sent by parents to children concerning the future of the fishery, out-migration, career choices and continuing a post-secondary education. Theme III & IV suggest that many of these parents have taken an active role in the lives of their children.

It is important to point out that the following analysis is based on the perceptions of participants. The reader is reminded that no parents were interviewed during this research. However, through the interview and survey results, participants made it possible for the researcher to better understand the participants' perceptions of their parents.

### *Parental Education Levels*

According to the research design of this thesis study, parents must have had an educational level of high school or below. Within the resulting research group, the lowest level of parental education was grade six, the highest was grade twelve. Some of these parents had completed grade eleven or twelve through adult basic education, which suggests a period of

absence from schooling and re-entry later in life. Within this group of parents, educational levels appeared to be higher on Island B than on Island A. The lowest educational level on Island B was grade eight and the highest level on Island A was grade eleven. A number of parents completed educational programs through TAGS funding such as aquaculture, hair design, welding and adult basic education. The exact number of TAGS clients is unknown due to the fact that many research participants did not know or could not remember if their parents took part in any educational programming during the closure of the fishery. Fourteen of the sixteen sets of parents had been or currently are employed in the fishery in some capacity. Therefore, this analysis of parental influences also includes some analysis of the fishery and its impact on CCS AB youth.

*Direct Advice From Parents Concerning Post-High School Plans*

Participants on both islands presented scenarios where one or both of their parents extended direct advice concerning post-high school options. The following statements suggest this group of parents are concerned for the future of their children and are active in helping them to make post-high school choices. Here parents suggested strategies designed to avoid difficulties later in life, such as, encouraging children to get good grades, continue with their schooling and emphasize the importance of moving away from their home community. Participants also acknowledge examples given by their parents cautioning against such things as working in the fishery, accumulating large amounts of future debt, early marriage and poor roommate choices.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants

on Island A:

L: So what kinds of stuff does he (father) say to you about going to the military or what you might want to do (when finished high school)?

Randy: I don't know...he has always told me, since I was a baby not to be a fisherman (laughs).

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants

on Island B:

Kenny: 'Just make sure you are doing the right choice. Pick out, you know if you have good room mates, 'cause if not.. you can't be stuck with a room mate that's not going to pay the rent on time.

L: What kinds of stuff do they say to you (parents)?

Hanna: 'Well you got to do your homework and if you don't get them you are not going to get nothing'. Like you know, 'you are going to be working for minimum wage and that's going to get you nowhere' and 'you'll always be in debt' or 'you will never be able to afford to do anything you wants to'. And stuff like 'you know you don't stay home here cause there's nothing here - you gotta go away'.

L: Is that something that they have said to you all the way through?

Hanna: Ever since I can remember (said quickly). School is really important. It is like the biggest thing.

#### *Observations of Parent's Struggles*

Many participants discussed the struggles experienced by their parents and the impact of witnessing these struggles. Many participants informed the interviewer that they have set goals to avoid the same situation from happening to them. Basically many participants see their parents as having worked very hard for little financial return. Some of their observations include the physical discomfort of the fishery and fish plant work.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by Participants on Island A to describe how they have learned from their parent's career choices:

L: So if you think about the jobs your parents had while you were growing up - do you think they influenced you in any kind of way?

Randy: No – I would never want to fish.

L: Did you ever think at any time that you might want to fish?

Randy: Never! (quickly)

L: Why not?

Randy: cause I see the way Dad and them work and the way they used to come home..nah.

L: Do you think the jobs your parents do have influenced what you might want to do?

Nathan: Yeah, I think it's kind of like, it's kind of difficult (the fishery). Like there's a lot of work to it. And like it's a lot of work and not a lot of money coming in through it. Like I want to do a job that I guess gives me money, like that I enjoy doing. But I don't want to something that I have to work too hard or not to get a lot of money from.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by Participants on Island

B to describe how they have learned from their parent's career choices:

L: Do you think that the jobs that they (parents) have been doing in the past few years have influenced what you may want to do?

Kenny: Yeah..a bit..ah.. Well like you knows how fishing is *hard* (emphasis on hard) job right. It wears you out, right to the end of you right. You are at it until you die. You know construction working all day trying to fix stuff, that's a hard job too, you cut yourself up right. There's a lot of times father sat down and he is all bruised up from working. You know, it's a *hard* (emphasis on hard) job.

L: Has the jobs that your parents are doing influenced what you think you might want to do?

William: Yeah cause..ah..somelike, they works during the night from eight o'clock in the night until seven am and it's hard. Well it's hard work what they are doing.

L: And you have decided you don't want that?

William: Yeah.

L: So where do you think you got the idea, the notion that it is important for you to go away and go to school.

Rachel: Just seeing dad struggle with the fishery and stuff. It's just I don't think it's worth it. Like it's just..I don't know.

Rachel: She (mom) went to work in the fish plant. She was only up there for probably a few days and she *hated* (emphasis on hated) it. She would come home with her fingers bleeding and that, cut up and everything. She didn't like it at all. I didn't even think about it after that.

*Recognizing Limited Career Choices for Parents*

Asking Participants to consider why they think their parents chose particular career paths uncovered the perception that as youth their parents did not have the same level of freedom in career choices available to the youth of today. These quotes suggest the realization, that for their parents' generation, working in the fishery was part of a natural process. Fishery work was readily available, provided income and also enabled people to remain in their home communities.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by Participants on Island A:

L: Why do you think your parents choose the jobs they are doing now?

Donna: Well I guess Dad - that was the only life he knew. Especially growing up, especially cause everybody done it and I guess he was into it. I don't know..I guess he went on and got his own longliner and that's his life now I guess.

L: So why do you think your parents choose to do what they did?

Randy: Money (sighs) Back then probably..and I guess dad just loves it (fishing).

L: Did his father fish?

Randy: All of our family did.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island B:

L: Why do you think your parents decided to work in the fish plant?

William: I don't know, well there was nothing else for them to do but help their families and that.

L: Why do you think they decided to work in the fishery?

Martha: That's where the money came from at that time and that's where they went to get most of their money and stuff to live. Everybody always worked in the fishery.

Kenny: She (mother) never has much choice about going to school or not. Dad grew up he was always fishing with his father, ever since he was nine or ten years old. He used to work on the big boats, I guess he was away from his family and stuff, so he just took over pop's business. As for father, I don't know, father well grew up in a fishing community right, his father used to fish and he went fishing.

*Theme III – Parents:  
Encouraging the Next Generation - Generating Choice and Mobility.*

All of the participants painted a picture of a home environment where post-high school and post-secondary planning is currently ongoing. The following quotations suggest that participants view their parents as supporters of post-secondary education. Participants use such terms as 'supportive', 'encouraging', 'like me to go' and 'want me to go' when discussing parents attitude and steps taken towards post-secondary education of their children. Within these quotations exists a strong message that participants have a strong feeling of freedom in selecting post-secondary programs and that parents will be supportive of any program choice. Participants use phrases such as 'leaves it up to me', 'behind me' and 'do what ever' to illustrate this freedom of choice.

Frank: **They support me in whatever** I want to do. They want me to go to university.

L: So what things do they say to you?

Frank: We just **talks about university** and that every now and again. **It's always what I wants**. It's not like they are saying to me to take something or do something. **They want me to do something**, no one knows yet – that's all.

From Survey - Frank: Yes my family has influenced my after high school plans. They have always said it is **my choice** for what I am to do, but they **have always encouraged me** to do something.

Amanda: My parent's **lack of further education** has pushed them to **encourage me to succeed**. I think because of what they taught me through their ideas, I find education important as well.

From Survey - Donna: My parents are **behind me** all the way – **no matter what I plan to do**. Even through neither of my parents attended post-secondary, they are very proud of me and would very much **like me to attend post-secondary** of some sort after high school.

Donna: Yeah, **we talks** about it a lot. They just **leaves it up to me to go to school**. I know they would *like* (emphasis on like) me to **go to school** and do something with my life, but they just **leaves it up to me**. Whatever I think I would be more happy with.

L: What kinds of stuff do your parents say to you about moving away or finishing up school?

Nathan: Well they are kind of like, well **it's my decision**, whatever I decide.

L: Do your parents talk to you about going to school?

Martha: **All the time!**

L: What kinds of stuff do they say to you?

Martha: Ohh, I told my mom and dad that I wanted to do business administration, they said 'go for it, **do what ever makes you happy**, not what no one else wants'.

L: What kinds of things do your parents say to you about going on and going to school?

Hilda: Ahmm..**they want me to go**..they do want the **best for me**.

L: And you feel that? (encouragement)

Amanda: Yeah definitely. They **support me in whatever** I want to do.

Amanda 'You **have to go** on and **do what you want** to do', that's what they (parents) always say.

Nancey: Well he (father) doesn't really say what he wants me to do, but he wants me to go to school.

L: And what kinds of things does he say? Does he give you any reasons why?

Nancey: Well, how it is now, I'm the one in the family getting the highest marks – the brainy one – and he just **wants me to go** and **do whatever**, whatever I can.

L: When you talk about going away to university with your parents what kinds of stuff do they say to you?

Kenny: Nothing really. Mostly they say, '**it's your decision**'.

Elizabeth (survey results, did not interview): Yes, they have because **they tell me** what I'm good at and where the most money is.

From Survey - Hanna: My parents have **encouraged me all throughout my schooling** years to do the best I can, so that I would be able to go to a **university and successfully** get a career.

From Survey - Rachel: My parents **encouraged me to further my education**.

From Survey - Martha: Yes they gave me some choices and ideas in what career jobs I should do.

While many of the participants recognize 'freedom of choice' and state experiencing no pressure to pursue particular types of programs, there is a strong message from parents that a plan past high school is important. Nowhere did participants suggest that their parents would be content if children choose to do nothing after high school. There appears to be some boundaries

to these choices, which is understood to include something past high school. Nowhere within the interviews is there a suggestion that these parents ‘don’t care’ about the post-high school choices of their children, regardless of how ‘free’ their children may in fact feel. When asked to share in writing ways that their family had influenced their post-high school plans Nancey simply stated:

Nancey: It’s an influence that makes you feel that you have to succeed. Not one that makes you feel pressured, but that you have to go further in your education than your parents did. I think that the lower a person’s parent education is, the harder the child tries to succeed and make their parents proud.

*Theme IV – Different Choices for a New Generation:  
For Youth Something Different Equals Something Better.*

The consistent message from parents to their children, with varying levels of emphasis among participants, is the importance of children choosing ‘something better’ or something different’ than they have chosen for themselves. In these messages ‘something better’ and ‘something different’ can be used interchangeably. With these messages to children are suggestions of furthering education, increasing choices by movement from home community, not fishing, not getting ‘stuck’ and not struggling.

Alice: Yeah, dad is really strong about that (going to school)

L: Does he say why? What kinds of stuff does he say to you?

Alice: (using a tone to imitate her father) ‘Well you know you got to go, to stay in school, get good grades. Go and do whatever in school. Make sure if you want to go to **university or college** or what ever. **These rough times in the fishery, just look at us, you don’t want to live like us.**’

L: What kinds of stuff do they say about that?(school)

Hilda: Well, they say ..they tell me.. ‘don’t get married before you get your education’ (laughs). So yeah, education is really important in my household because where **she didn’t have the opportunity to go to school, she wants me to go and she wants me to be successful.**

L: And why do you think he would say that? (not to go into the fishery)

Randy: I think it is because **fishermen gets pushed around** a lot – especially the small boat fishermen and **he wants something better for me.**

L: Why do you think your parents have that opinion? (the importance of continuing on in school)

Hanna: Cause they realize...like they know **they had it hard** over the years. They **never went nowhere**, they depended on the fishery. That wasn't much good. And I mean it's **harder to get things** and when you know you buy something you really have a value for it because **you struggled so hard** to get it.

L: And they are passing that on to all of you (sisters also).

Hanna: Yeah, she found it **really hard** with us. And she realizes that it was **not the best life** really. They would have done a lot more if they were pointed in the right direction when they were growing up. And they **didn't want** to end up – **your kid at the same time they want them to go on and better** themselves.

L: Do you think that what your parents work at have influenced you in any way?

Amanda: I think that...because **they never had an education**, like I think mom, she wanted to become a nurse but well pop used to own a store and well in his later years he got like, he need help and she was the one that helped him with the store, so that means she **couldn't have went to school**. And like she regrets that now because like I mean she is only part-time and she's not doing what she wanted to do. So that kind of **encouraged me to do something** that I *wanted* (emphasis) to do so **I won't get stuck** in that...so..

L: Do you think the jobs your parents do may influence what you want to do?

Donna: (Pauses) Well mainly I guess where **mom ended up quitting school** and stuff. I think **that's what pushes me to do better**. And knowing what she is working at now...like home care and stuff. **I know that I can do a whole lot better** than a lot of it.

From Survey - William: Yes both of my parents have been involved in the fish plant and I see that **they would rather do something else**. I don't want my life to be surrounded by the fish plant. **I want a better in my life.**

Amy (survey results, did not interview): My family has influences me in many ways, **in pushing me to succeed** even if it's a much **larger town** than Island A, and **going to be different** than high school.

Nathan: Oh yeah, they (parents) kind of **encourage me** too. I know, they know there's not a lot, **there's no real future in the fishery right.**

L: And they say those kinds of things to you?

Nathan: Well they don't really just how I say it, 'like there in no future' but they tells me like...**they tries to encourage me.**

From Survey - Amanda: They have always **encouraged me to attend university or college** so I could have a **better chance** at succeeding at a job that I choose whereas they **didn't really have a choice.**

L: And why do you think he would say that? (not to go into the fishery)

Randy: I think it is because fishermen gets pushed around a lot – especially the small boat fishermen and **he wants something better for me.**

Amanda: I *have* (emphasis on have) to go to school (laughs). I think they wants me to have a better opportunity then what they had, because **they're basically stuck.** They wants me to have something that I don't have that hassle. So they are really **encouraging me to do good in school and go away.**

Hanna: Dad finished high school but they (parents) **never went on to do anything.** And well father is fisherman and my mother fishes with him – they got their own longliner. And she **realizes that it was not the best life really.** They would have done a lot more if they were pointed in the right direction when they were growing up. **And they didn't want to end up – your kid at the same thing they want them to go on and better themselves.**

### School Influences

An investigation of possible school influences on post-high school plans was conducted by questioning participants about school likes, dislikes and instances of school viewed as an overall positive or negative experience. As discussed in the literature review, due to lack of post-secondary exposure, it is unlikely that many parents could pass on specific information about post-secondary settings. Therefore research questions were asked about the post-secondary information given to participants by their schools.

The answers to these questions provided a glimpse into the school environment and how participants feel that school has impacted upon their post-high school choices. Analysis of these responses revealed motivational forces behind participants' future aspirations and their over all attitude towards school. Theme V highlights the relationships they have developed with their teachers.

Before discussing the analysis of this data, first it is necessary to consider the differences between school environments seen on Island A and B.

*Differences in Island A and Island B Schools*

While visiting CCS AB, it was possible to make school comparisons. The most obvious difference was that of school size. On Island B, the school 'complex' is large enough to contain a public library, community access centre, cafeteria, literacy resource rooms, and numerous classrooms. The school on Island A contains considerably less classrooms. It has a library and community access center which is physically much smaller than the school on Island B. When the school 'complex' on Island B opened in 1987, there were over 1000 students in attendance. In comparison, the school on Island A opened in 1980 to 150 students. This year the school on Island B will graduate approximately seventy students while Island A will graduate approximately three.

Due to school size, students from Island A experience a type of learning environment different from students on Island B. On Island B students have access to a full-time guidance counselor, exposure to more teachers and an expanded group of peers. In contrast, due to smaller school size and limited number of teachers, Island A students wishing to enroll in advanced classes in math and major sciences must participate in distance education. The school on Island A was the first in Newfoundland and Labrador to offer distance education to students. This non-traditional method of instruction continues today, with some suggestion of it's curriculum expanding. On Island B, students can still access all advanced courses within the school.

*Extra-Curricular Involvement of Participants*

One of the most noticeable similarities among all of the interview participants, which were not controlled by the researcher, was involvement in extra-curricular activities. On Island A, all of the interview participants discussed their involvement in extracurricular activities, such as: tutoring, participating on student council as president and members, and participating on the

volleyball and basketball teams as players and captain. Interview participants from Island B were also active in extra-curricular activities. On Island B there was a slightly expanded list of extracurricular involvement including such activities as drama club, cheerleading, hockey, school spirit committee and graduation planning.

*School Size – Seen as Positive*

Within each interview, participants were asked to discuss elements about school that they liked and disliked. The prevailing positive comments, on both Islands, were made in reference to the small size of their schools and classes. Many participants gave their opinion of small class learning being advantageous over learning in larger classrooms and offered opportunities to build relationships with peers and staff. The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island A:

L: So what about school, tell a little about what it is like to go to school here?  
 Donna: I likes it. I really likes it, you knows the teachers and we got time to spend with everybody. So I guess it's a lot better than being in a big school where you got you do most things on your own.

L: So overall what do you think about school, do you like it or not like it?  
 Alice: Yeah I like it. You got a lot of advantages here. This is a small amount of people and then we got more time with teachers. Teachers got more time to come help you. If you needs extra work or extra help they are always there to help you or whatever. It's the advantage.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island B:

L: So generally what do you think about school?  
 Amanda: I likes it here, likes the class size. It's not really big and the student-teacher ratio is kind of low, right. So that's what I likes about it.

L: Talk to me a little about your class size?  
 Hanna: Class size (pauses) I finds it really great, like, World Geography, I think is the biggest class and that got thirty or twenty eight. But I find the classes are good, the smaller size, like, it is more of less one-on-one with the teacher. And usually he goes at a rate that everyone could follow and I find it's really good.

*Emphasis on Post-Secondary Education at School*

Within the interviews, students were asked to consider things said to them at school about post-high school plans. The following comments suggest a school environment where there is great emphasis on continuing their education into post-secondary school. Participants discussed posters advertising post-secondary institutions and programs, handouts from staff, post-secondary resource rooms, and career fairs. In the interviews students discussed how school staff has encouraged them towards a post-secondary education. The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island A:

L: So who helps you out to make these plans

Randy: Oh well, we have a guy here every Wednesday from Gander Bay, he is a guidance counselor. He talks to us a lot about it.

L: So where else do you get your post-secondary information from besides the guidance counselor?

Randy: The principal, he is always talking about that kind of stuff.

L: So how about here at school, do they talk to you guys about making sure you have plans made?

Thomas: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. They always got like courses up on the walls and stuff, there are numbers you can call and teachers are always telling you about stuff like that.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island B:

L: So right now while you are making your plans to go, who gives you information about schools?

Nancey: The guidance counselor, Miss (\*\*\*\*), she had everything on schools, applications and books and pamphlets.

Amanda: Ahhmm.. well I researched myself, like on the internet and stuff. My guidance counselor. I talked to her about a couple of things.

*How School Experiences have Influenced the Post-High School Choices of Participants*

A question about possible influences of school on post-high school plans was asked within the survey. Participants stated that school had exposed them to such influences as

computers, advice from teachers and guidance counselors, visits from post-secondary schools, career fairs and discovering areas of academic strengths and weaknesses. The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island A:

(From Survey) Alice: Ever since I was old enough to use a computer I have loved using them, especially now that I am in high school I have the opportunity to use them even more. Every course that is offered in computers I take because I find it very interesting.

(From Survey) Frank: With the advances in technology our school computer room has advances as well. My plans for after school have to deal with computers, so the computers and programs have helped with my choice. I have access to the computers, so I can see what things I am interested in and also learn how to do certain this.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island B:

(From Survey) William: During school I have done courses that have been a great part of my decisions in what I want to do. When I get out I have plans to do forestry and wildlife.

(From Survey) Elizabeth (not interviewed): because of certain courses I took in high school and some I didn't like but some I did like.

Hilda: Ahhh, friends who have gone and come back for visits, ahhh, they have been out here for the career fairs and a representative, they are all really nice people. And if you have a question they will just talk you through the whole process, right.

*Thomas, Wendy, Pam and Kevin – Different Responses to Academic Problems*

Overall the research participants is a homogeneous group, however there were some participants who displayed some academic difficulties. During the interview Thomas shared his academic limitations. Wendy was considering new post-secondary options due to frustrations with on-line learning while Pam and Kevin discussed the need to return to school for an extra year in order to complete required credits. Three of these Participants have responded in different ways to their academic issues.

*Thomas*

Thomas's academic average was the lowest of all of the students on Island A who shared this information. Within the two following quotations Thomas gives his academic limitations and his preference for physical activities as factors influencing his post-high school plan.

Thomas: I'm not good at some subjects, but I like to get involved in sports and stuff.

L: So why do you think you choose to go into the Armed Forces?

Thomas: Because it involves (pauses) you know (pauses) it isn't involved with working and just mostly because it's more like sports, running about and stuff like that.

However not all school aspects were negative. He commented positively about teachers and his involvement in extra-curricular activities. Thomas made the following two comments about school:

L: Tell me about school. What you like and what you don't like.

Thomas: Well, it's a good place to go to school and the teachers help you out a lot, but school is school. I don't really like it.

L: Are there any kinds of extra-curricular activities you are involved in?

Thomas: Oh, Basketball, Volleyball, I Love sports!

L: So what do you think about that?

Thomas: If it wasn't for sports there wouldn't be much to do around here.

*Wendy*

Wendy discussed some of the difficulties that she was experiencing with the distance education format. Later in the interview she talked of wanting to drop the distance course as a strategy to focus on other classes which she felt were suffering. She also spoke of the support she received from the school staff about this decision. Later she discussed her feelings about continuing school.

L: What do you think about that? (physics on-line)

Wendy: I am finding it *really* (emphasis on really) hard. Like, that's the first time physics has been done on-line here and (sighs) oh my, I am doing it by myself, I got like no help from other classmates. I am just there by myself. So there is only a bit of help from Mr. (\*\*\*\*) (principal) and my teacher.

L: And is it hard because of the way it is taught or because it is physics?

Wendy: I think it would be a lot easier if it was in class, but I know physics is a little bit hard anyway. But I think it would be a lot easier if I was in a class.

L: Do you have to do physics?

Wendy: Well see I was going to do nursing (pauses). Ahh, I needed either physics or chemistry 'cause I was going to go to Kitchner to do it. But I am not doing well enough in it so I am just going to go on and do the practical nursing, if I gets accepted.

L: So could you fail the physics?

Wendy: Yeah, well, I'm getting out of it now because I am missing half of my math class just to do it, so it is fooling me up. So I am getting out of it and I am going on to do math. Because that's the only subject that I am doing bad in is physics, right.

L: So what happens when you decide to drop a course like that? Does anyone try to talk with you about it?

Wendy: Well, they *have* (emphasis on have) so far. That's why I have tried to stay in it and do better, but.

L: What are some things that you don't like ? (about school)

Wendy: I think, just after so long, now I think we are all just getting tired of it (pauses) our class like. I don't know, we miss a lot more of school now. I can't wait for it end now.

### *Pam*

Pam stated negative comments about school. This participant also shared her academic average, which was among the lowest of the participants on Island B. Within the interview Pam shared that she might have to return to school in the upcoming year in order to complete all of the credits necessary to graduate. It should also be noted that this student had told the researcher about stress within her family during the past few years, a situation that has made school difficult for her. However she still plans to continue her education past high school.

L: So what do you think about school?

Pam: Boring, it's getting boring every year.

L: Why do you think it is boring?

Pam: They don't do nothing, they are doing the same things over again, like, as you would do and I don't know, it's just that teachers writes too many notes and stuff.

(From Survey) Pam: It (school) encourages me to go on to college and to get a degree.

*Kevin*

Like Pam, Kevin also expected to return to school for an extra year due to poor academic performance. While examining Pam and Kevin there is a clear difference in attitude towards school. Kevin discussed his involvement in student council and past membership in the drama club. In the following quote, Kevin also shared his realization that he must improve in school if he is to reach post-high school aspirations of becoming a teacher.

Kevin: It's not too bad (school), I likes it here. It's a good school. Before I used to hate it or whatever. It really bothered me, studying and stuff and I guess that's what really fooled me up.

L: How come?

Kevin: Well when I was in grade ten and eleven I didn't really care much. I would kick my feet up on the desk and wouldn't do anything about it. It was only like the end of grade eleven that I got my head down into the books right. So I studied a lot and this year I studied a lot and this year I tried to become better in school and stuff. So I got my 80's. I got no less than 75 in every course, but I fooled up. I got to come back again next year to take three years of language which I never got because I didn't really care.

L: What do you think happened all of a sudden that made you want to buckle down and get it done?

Kevin: I don't know. It's just that I really sat down and thought about life and stuff right. What I am going to do when I get out of school right. And I guess I was looking through a calendar for memorial and I was trying to think of something to do, but I knew it was something in music or literature. So, ahhh, it came up that's what I wanted to do, go to Memorial and do my Bachelor of English. So I figured out what I needed in each course. So I told myself I had to go from there and do it right.

*Theme V - Positive Teacher and Student Relationships.*

Within the interviews many participants commented on their teachers. Overall the comments suggest a positive relationship between teachers and students. Participants reveal their perceptions that teachers are available for extra help with academics and approachable about

post-secondary planning. Within the following quotations participants state 'we know who they are', 'they are always there for you' and suggest that staff 'care' about students.

Hanna: Relationship with teachers here is great, definitely.

Kevin: And the teachers and that are always here for you.

L: are there things that you really like about going to school here?

Rachel: It's close, we know the teachers, we know who they are or what ever.

Donna: The teachers are pretty good here. I enjoy school pretty well, sometimes it gets hard, but.

Randy: And a lot of our teachers care. That's the best thing, a lot of the teachers care about you, they helps you and stuff like that.

L: Are there things that you really like about being here in school?

Nancy: Well, it's like a good environment to be in. You knows most of the teachers and you can sit down and do your work and they do computers out there.

L: Are there things that you really like about being here at this school?

Hilda: The teachers have a bond with the students, and friends.

Frank: And the teachers know a nice bit about it (post-secondary) anyway, so if you have any questions we can go and ask them.

L: So tell me about school?

Nathan: Well school is good, where I suppose where it's small, like, everybody, the teachers knows you. And, like, if you need extra help they are always there for you.

Alice: If you needs extra work or extra help they are always there to help you or whatever. It's the advantage.

Donna: I Likes it. I really likes it, you knows the teachers and we got time to spend with everybody. So I guess it's a lot better than being in a big school where you got you do most things on your own.

Kevin discussed the importance of his teachers in helping him find direction in his post-high school plan. In the following quote he spoke of the indirect but powerful influence two teachers have had on his choice to become a teacher himself.

L: Who do you think gave you that idea as opposed to the message he has gotten (a friend who is not planning to go to post-secondary)?

Kevin: I am not really sure who gave me that idea, I just saw a lot of good teachers here like Mr.(\*\*\*\*) or Mr.(\*\*\*\*) or stuff like the, right. They are two literature , thematic literature and language teachers and stuff like that. And they can really teacher you and they always told me stuff that they did, like Mr. (\*\*\*\*) said he'd been here and (\*\*\*\*) said he'd been here. It seemed like their lives was, you know what I mean, they had a good experience in life. And I felt like, ahh, I should do something like that right.

### Fishery Influences

For many participants, the fishery was seen as a career option for peers with limited academic skills – specifically for boys seen as having restricted post-high school choices. Participants had also commented, on financial and physical difficulties experienced by parents and family members who have been involved in the fishery. It is not the intention of this section of data analysis to repeat previous points made concerning the participants' perceptions of the fishery. The goal of this section is to reinforce participants' image of the fishery and to consider how changes in the fishery have acted as a motivator towards post-high school aspirations.

An examination of the influences of the fishery was conducted by asking questions about the fishery as a possible employment option for the participant and young people in general. This analysis will show how responses to these questions have separated Nathan, William and Thomas from the other participants. Theme VI reinforces the perception that for these youth the fishery is not an employment option.

#### *The Fishery as an Employment Option*

When asked if they had ever considered the fishery as long-term or summer employment, a majority of the interview participants responded negatively. The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants on Island A:

L: Was there ever a time that you thought you might like to go into the fishery, when you were trying to decide what you might want to do?

Alice: No. no.

L: There was never a time when working in the fish plant was an attractive thing to do?

Alice: No.

Donna: I don't see myself at it. (the fishery)

Randy: No. I would never want to fish.

L: Did you ever think at any time that you might want to fish?

Randy: No, never (said quickly).

L: So you never thought that you would just go right into the fishery?

Frank: No. I always thought that I was going to go to a college or university.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by participants

on Island B:

Martha: I wouldn't want to work in the on the fish plant or anything like that.

L: Was there ever a time that you thought you might want to work in the fishery?

Hilda: (pauses) No. no.. too dirty (laughs).. out on the water is too cold and I get sea sick easily.

Amanda: I personally don't like the fishery, like I don't.. it's not that I don't like it, but I mean I wouldn't want anything to do with it, that not my style.

L: Was there ever a time that you thought about working in the fishery?

Rachel: Nope. never.

In the survey, participants were asked to comment on how the changes in the fishery affected their after high school plans. The following survey responses reinforce that the fishery was never considered as a career option for many participants.

Randy: Not much because I had no plans to get in the fishery.

Frank: Changes in the fishery haven't really affected my after high school plans, because my plans haven't got anything to do with the fishery.

Martha: They haven't changed (post-high school plans)

Hanna: The changes in the fishery has not affected my high school plans at all.

Hilda: It hasn't affected me as much as my friends, because my father had only stated a while back.

Amanda: It hasn't affected my plans at all. I, nor anyone in my family has ever participated or was interested in the fishery.

Kevin: The changes in the fishery never did change my plans.

*Nathan and William – Once Considered the Fishery as a Career*

Unlike many participants, Nathan and William discussed once considering the fishery as a career option. Both have since changed their minds and are making post-high school plans, which does not include the fishery.

*Nathan*

During the interview Nathan discussed his current involvement in the fishery and his decision to enter university when he is finished high school. Nathan has questioned the uncertainty of the fishery and stated the necessity to choose a career that is more reliable. He also stated that the fishery could be a good career choice under the correct circumstances. When asked if he ever considered the fishery for employment, he responded:

L: Do you ever think about going into the fishery?

Nathan: Oh yeah, when I was a lot younger, yeah. Sometimes I would be thinking it would be something to do.

L: And would you spend time in the boat with your father?

Nathan: Yeah, I spend a good time with father.

L: And do you still?

Nathan: Yeah, like every now and then we'll go out, about three time. 'Cause lobster season like is going on while I am in school, it's only the weekends I gets at it. Then close to summer time then it's like the cod, I helps him with that. And then we has crab, I guess I could be at it all day.

Nathan: I think for some people it's (the fishery) a good choice, if they gets into the right thing. Now, like, if you gets into like a large quota, like a large crab boat or something like a 65 footer, that does well. They will do as well as anyone else. But then if you goes for like a small boat, like the fish is, then, it's not worth it at al. Too much work and don't make no pay really. So if you wants to go into the fishery do something like large scale, go with the big boats, like shrimping, shrimping is a good thing.

Nathan: We don't know how long it could last or nothing. Anything could happen right. It's best to have something that you can fall back on.

### *William*

Like Nathan, William shared his negative opinion concerning the limited future of the fishery and young people deciding on the fishery as a career. Within the following quote, he discussed the resulting change in his post-high school plan:

L: Has there ever been a time when you thought you might want to work in the fishery.

William: Ahhh.. yeah.

L: Doing what kinds of stuff?

William: Not fish, but on the plant for a while.

L: Have you ever worked there?

William: No, just, like, taking in crab from the boats or like fish nets from the boats, other than that.

L: So when you were younger did you think – ‘this might be an okay thing for me to be doing’?

William: Yeah, but now it's, ahhh, changed.

L: Yeah in what kind of way?

William: ‘Cause of the cod fishery and that. Now the crab is cut now and that.

L: What is your opinion about this – somebody who is your age now decided to go into the fishery are a career?

William: I don't think it's good, ‘cause it mightn't last much longer and that.

L: And why do people get the feeling that it mightn't last much longer?

William: I don't know.

L: And who tells you that kind of stuff?

William: Well you hears it on the news and my family uncles and that.

### *Thomas – Attracted to the Fishery as Employment*

Of the sixteen participants, Thomas was unique in his thinking towards the fishery. While his interview responses are similar to other participants concerning the future of the fishery and the necessity to leave Island A, Thomas still hopes that he might someday work in the fishery. The following quotes from Thomas illustrated his feelings towards the fishery as a career option.

Thomas: I'm not good at some subjects, but I like to get involved in sports and stuff.

L: Do you think that you might have wanted to go into the fishery?

Thomas: Oh yeah! Oh yeah, definitely.

L: So tell me a little bit about that, about how you feel about the fact that you can't go into the fishery?

Thomas: I feels bad, because you know, it's something that I'm really good at, right. Something that (pauses) a lot of people have always been doing and stuff. Everyone else had been able to do it, everyone else is out there at it.

L: What would you have done? Had your own boat?

Thomas: Yeah I probably have, yeah.

L: And what would you have done during the off season?

Thomas: (pauses) Nothing

L: And would you come back to live?

Thomas: If I could.

L: What would you do here you think?

Thomas: Probably work on a longliner or something like that if it's still going on.

*Theme VI - Participants Perceive Fishery Future as 'Gone'.*

Overall, participants present a pessimistic tone towards the fishery. Participants made comments about past 'cuts' and downturns in the fishery, fears of possible new 'cuts' and downturns, continued over-fishing and the fear that fish stocks will never return to previous. Many of the participants describe the future of the fishery as uncertain. While participants suggest that the fishery may be an option for some youth within their community, this group described the fishery as 'come to a stop', 'done', 'not a lot left' and 'unreliable'.

Thomas: Once they (fish) are gone **they're gone**.

Frank: 'Cause like everyone knows, **the fishery**, there is **not a lot to it now** and the **cod is basically gone**. Things like that, so there is not a lot left.

Donna: Well so much stuff has been cut and there are **so many cuts** and everything. I **don't know if it would last** anyway.

From Survey - Maggie (not interviewed): As we all know **the fishery has come to a stop** unless you want to get into it really big like most people on Island A, including my parents who went a bought a longliner.

William: **It mightn't last much longer** and that.

From Survey – William: There is **no fishery** or very little, and **no crab** and I **do not see a great future** in the fishery.

Rachel: I'm afraid, like, if I did get involved in the fishery one way or another I **knows it's probably not going to last**.

Alice: I don't think young people are really interested in the fishery, there's **not really that much left of it**, so I don't think they would pursue anything in the fishery.

L: What do you think about, or what is your opinion about a young person choosing to work in the fishery for the rest of their lives?

Kevin: (sighs) Well, I suppose that's there, if that's the thing they want to go right. Ahh.. but my opinion on it is that it is not a good thing to do. You know, when you get out of school and you **just go fishing** (emphasis on fishing), right. **It's not something you can rely on**. I mean, **the cod fishery is done** and now it's **just crab** and that's **soon going to go right**. Like, there is only so much stuff you can take, right and after a while that's going to go. So **it's not going to be something you can rely on**. It's not something a young person can rely on.

Rachel: Well the young crowd, they are all going to post-secondary and the wants to do something with their lives or whatever instead of fishing because **they knows it's probably not going to last**.

Rachel: I can't see the **fishery** lasting (long pause). I can see it lasting for a while, but **not further**.

Amanda: There's **not really that much left** of it. I don't think the fishery is coming back like the way it used to be.

Hilda: Younger people like myself who knows in ten years the fishery could be **shut down forever**. I mean what do they got to live on right?

Survey and interview comments, which are mostly negative, have worked together to assemble an image of how participants perceive the fishery. Overall, participants describe the messages concerning the fishery received from their parents, family members, peers and community as – 'if you can, you should consider another career option'

### Post-Secondary Attitudes and Post-High School Plans of Participants

The investigation of participants' post-high school aspirations and attitudes towards post-secondary education was the fundamental goal of this thesis research. Within Chapter 4, a statement of each participant's post-high school aspiration was provided as a method of participant introduction. The goal of this current section of data analysis is to present a more in-depth examination of those aspirations by considering progress made towards the initiation of post-high school plans. This will also examine various levels of indecision witnessed among many participants and more specifically, how this indecision has impacted upon the immediate plans of three grade twelve participants. Theme VII will examine the feeling that personal interest is importance for any post high school plan.

#### *Furthering Their Education*

The interview and survey results revealed that as a group, these research participants held a similar post-high school goal; the eventual attainment of a post-secondary education or training program. The following quotations are representative of comments made by Participants on Island A about the value of a post-secondary education:

(From Survey) Randy: Some times it discourages (school) me but I know if I don't do some post-secondary time I won't be able to keep a good job.

L: Why do you think it is important for you to continue with your education?

Nathan: (pauses) Well, if I don't, it's going to be pretty hard to do like anything else.

Like, going to work in a factory or something, to get paid for doing like a lot of work and end up getting nothing. I don't want that, I wants something for a future. I want something to do that I can retire early.

L: So why do you think it is important for you to continue on with you education.

Alice: Well the rest of my life depends on it, like if I wants a good life and a family or what ever. I need to go to school to get my education to get a good job or whatever. If not I won't have much of a life.

(From Survey) Frank: Yes I do (have plans to enroll in program at university or college in September after finishing high-school). I am planning on attending university. I want to get a degree and have a good job after.

The following quotations are representative of comments made by Participants on Island B about the value of a post-secondary education:

L: Where do you think you got the idea that it is important to go? (onto post-secondary school)

Nancey: Well I see it as important to go when no one else did and I want to be the first one in my family to go on to school and pretty much get an education while I can.

L: Why do you think it is important for you to go on (and go to school)?

Hilda: I think everybody has something to do. Everybody should have to do it (pauses) in order to be successful nowadays. With all the technology arising you need to be secure financially you know. There's just so much going on.

Hanna: I like school (pauses) I really do. You got to try and do your best, because if not you are not going to get nowhere out of it. You have to realize that. It's no good to go to class and think, 'well I haven't got to pay attention, it's no odds to me anyway'. "Cause it all pans out in the end. If you want to do something good in your life.

#### *Post-Secondary Setting Choice*

While all participants predicted immediate or eventual enrollment in post-secondary programs, there were differences in academic interests and setting preferences. While many of the grade eleven participants were undecided about specific programs, they did indicate their preferences in post-secondary settings. College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University of Newfoundland were most prevalent post-secondary choices. The interview and survey data resulted in eight incidences of participants considering the College of the North Atlantic and eight incidences of participants considering Memorial University. None had considered programs at private colleges, two had considered Armed Forces training and one participant was planning to enter Transport Canada training to become an air traffic controller.

*Participants with Definite Post-High School Plans*

Maggie, Hilda and Rachel reported they had been accepted into post-secondary programs. These participants made the following comments:

Maggie (not interviewed): After high school I am accepted into the Centre for Nursing Studies for the Practical Nursing program for twelve months.

L: Any other kinds of areas interest you? Do you have a plan B if that doesn't work out?

Hilda: Yeah, ahhh, medical radiology at The College of the North Atlantic.

L: So have you applied to go already?

Hilda: Yeah for both. I have a provisional acceptance for MUN already.

L: Where do you think you will end up for school, what do you want to do?

Rachel: I got a letter yesterday, come from College of the North Atlantic – that's were I am going to be going, doing legal administration.

L: And is that in St. John's?

Rachel: Yeah

L: So the plan is made

Rachel: Yeah.

Thomas was also definite in his post-high school plans. He made the following comments about his choice to enter Armed Forces training after graduation:

Thomas: They (parents) want me to go back to school (post-secondary), but I am not yet. I'm not good at some subjects.

L: So why do you think you choose to go into the Armed Forces?

Thomas: Because it involves (pauses) you know (pauses) it isn't involved with working and just mostly because it's more like sports, running about and stuff like that.

L: Not behind a desk all day?

Thomas: I'd love to do it. I always wanted to do it.

Thomas: I will probably have to do physics (next year, on-line), where I'm going into the Armed Forces and you have to do physics.

Within the interview, Hanna also made it very clear that she intended to attend Air

Traffic Control Training upon acceptance into the program:

L: So where do you think you will go?

Hanna: Ahh, I don't want to go to university, I wants to be an air traffic controller. So, like, I got to go to Gander to write the entrance exam (pauses) pass that with high enough marks then you got to go for an interview and another exam, passes all that then you go to Cornwall Ontario for nine months or something like that.

L: And then you would work in Gander?

Hanna: Gander (pauses) well there's only one station in every province, one in Gander and Alberta and Edmonton. I think New Brunswick is another one, I think. Probably that first three years I'd go to the North West Territories, get isolation pay and stuff like that, get started out.

#### *Post-High School Indecision in Non-Graduating Participants*

Feelings of indecision about post-secondary programs could be observed among many participants who were either in grade eleven or who were expected to return to school for an extra year. While many had decided on the area of academic interest, final decisions had yet to be made. The following comments indicated a level of indecision seen within groups of participants:

L: What do you think you might want to do when you are done?

Nathan: I don't know, I kind of everything, just searching around now.

L: What kinds of stuff interest you?

Nathan: I'm thinking about doing some kind of engennerring either chemical or marine or that's probably what I'm going to do.

L: Any idea where you think you might go to do that?

Alice: Well, I would like to go to St. John's. I don't know if they offer it in there right. I haven't looked into different schools, who offer it, but wherever the best school is, I'll go there.

Alice: Well, I'm not sure one hundred % where I'm going, but I wants to do computer analysis.

L: So what kinds of stuff interest you?

Frank: Computer science, something in computer sciences programming I would say.

L: Any idea were you are going to go?

Frank: I think I am going to St. John's.

Randy: I don't know (pauses) 'cause, like, I like hunting and fishing. Like trips and that types of stuff, so I'm thinking about doing conservation. And I don't know (pauses) there are two or three things. I am not going to MUN.

L: What other things besides the conservation stuff?

Randy: I was looking into mechanics or welding or something like that.

Kenny: I think I would probably become a teacher or probably something else. I'm not really sure yet. I know I would like to do something with literature or something like that too. I'm not sure. I would like to travel the world as well. I'd love to do that.

L: So what do you think you might want to do when you are done?

Martha: Business administration

L: You got your plans made on where you want to go and that type of stuff?

Martha: Ahhh, not yet I don't.

#### *Graduating Participants – Indecision May Lead to Delays in Post-Secondary Enrollment*

Three grade twelve participants - William, Nancey, and Donna discussed taking a year off before beginning their post-secondary program of choice. Within the following quotations these participants show incidences of wavering program choice and financial issues as causes of their personal dilemmas.

#### *Donna*

Donna plans to eventually attend a nursing program, however her survey and interview responses showed a struggle which has resulted in her considering taking a year away from school.

(From Survey) Donna: Deciding on what to do after school was, and still is kind of a minor problem for me. I want to do something working with people and I especially like kids. Nursing came to mind, but by me not completing chemistry in high school I can not take nursing – which was somewhat of a disappointment for me but practical is something you do not need chemistry for – biology is good as well, so my plans are pretty well set on trying this at least. Or maybe by the time I graduate my mind will be changed and I may go up on the mainland somewhere for work for school.

Donna: Well they kind of just..wants me to do whatever I thinks I wants to do. He said, dad said, he don't want me to end up going to school if I don't think I wants to go back to school this year, that is it best to wait if I wants to and work. See if Human Resources will put me through, then I won't have to worry about a student loan. And he said he would help me with the rest of it. So I think that's what I am going to do.

Donna: I don't really know if I want to go to school to school right away 'cause I am kind of tired of school now. So I think I wants to take year off. I am going to apply to St. John's just in case I change my mind right.

L: Do you have to do physics?

Donna: Well see, I was going to do nursing, Ah I needed either physics or chemistry 'cause I was going to Kitchener to do it. But I am not doing well enough in it so I am just going to go on and to practical nursing, if I gets accepted.

### *Nancey*

Like Donna, Nancey also discussed taking a year off and her indecision about enrollment immediately after high school.

Nancey (From Survey) I'm undecided. I may stay home for a year and make some money or I may leave for college in September. If I go to College I am planning to do a three-year course on business marketing.

L: In your survey, you said that you were thinking about taking a year off, are you still thinkingg about that?

Nancey: Ahhh. I am not sure. I was thinking of maybe staying home, make some money. Instead of going in there and getting all kinds of dept with loans and everything. So I'm not sure about that.

### *William*

William stated that he would like to eventually enroll in the forestry and wildlife program. In his case, both costs and program indecision were discussed as motivation for taking a year off. Unlike Donna and Nancey, William spoke in more definite terms of working for a year prior to enrolling in a post-secondary program.

William: (From Survey) I had plans to go to College of the North Atlantic, in Corner Brook doing forestry and wildlife, but things have changed.

L: What do you think about people going to school right away?

William: I don't know. Well in some cases good and some cases bad.

L: What is your main reason for taking a year off, is it money?

William: Ahhh, well, money and figuring out what I really wants to do and that.

*Amanda – Very Indecisive about Post-Secondary Program but Not about Post-Secondary Enrollment*

While Amanda showed a high level of post-secondary program indecision, there is no indication that this indecision will lead to her not attending a post-secondary institution.

L: So have you filled out all of your applications and that kind of stuff yet?

Amanda: No

L: Is there a deadline for that?

Amanda: Yeah, March first.

L: But that's past.

Amanda: (laughs) well I am kind of in trouble there.

L: But that's your plan – to fill out the forms and stuff?

Amanda: Yeah, well I went today and filled on-line but I haven't sent it in yet because I needs a social insurance number and I don't have that. So I am going to have to ..

Amanda: My guidance counselor, I talked to her about a couple of things. Ahmm.. everyone around, like well, my family – my aunts and uncles. I talks to everyone about this because I am so lost. I don't have a clue what I wants to do. And they all kind of help me. Well the teachers and stuff

Amanda: I likes (pauses) organizing things, I am really good at that. Ahhhh, I'm artistic and I like business. I likes *everything* (emphasis on everything) so I was thinking about being a paralegal. But I am not really sure. I wanted to be a psychiatrist, but, ahhh, there is a lot of different fields you can put in, like there's child psychiatrists deals with certain areas and I don't think I can stick to one area. Like the way I was, when, since I was (pauses) oh god (pauses) grade seven or something, friends would come to me if they had a problem and I would try to help them. Like, I like (emphasis on like) helping people, so I want to do that, but not really. I don't know for sure there are so many choices.

*Theme VII - Long Term Plans Should be Motivated by Personal Interest.*

Within the interviews many participants discussed personal interests as the motivator behind specific post-secondary aspirations. All participants expressed plans to continue into education and training programs past high school. For these participants, there was never a suggestion that their career aspirations were based on economic attraction or the increased likelihood of employment with a particular field. For many, their choices were described as something they were 'really into' or 'always wanted'.

Kevin: But I always felt **I always wanted to do something different**. I either wanted to travel the world or help others or something like that.

L: Do you ever look at what they (parents) are doing and say "that's definitely not for me"? (the fishery)

Frank: It's not like it is definitely not for me, **it's just that it don't interest me that much**. Like I could, this summer, if I didn't get on a project – I will probably work at the fish plant, if I can get on. Now I am going to try to stay clear of it, because **I don't like that kind of stuff**.

L: What do you think attracted you to that (air traffic controlling program)?

Hanna: I have no idea.. 'cause ever since I could remember **I have always wanted to be a nurse** and that was it – I was going to be a nurse. It's like I loves hospitals and everything to do with it, and that was it. In the last few years (sighs).. well my cousin is an air traffic control assistant, and I don't know.. there was actually nothing that attracted me to it, **it's just that it came in my mind and that was it**.

Rachel: I applied, well, **I always wanted** to do something with law. I don't know why, **I just always wanted to**.

L: What attracts you to the medical radiology program?

Hilda: Just the clean atmosphere, the people atmosphere. Yeah **I'm really into** communicating with people.

L: What do you think you might be doing in the next five to ten years – Can you visualize that?

William: Well, Ahhh, forestry and wildlife **'cause I likes that kind of stuff**.

Kevin: **I know I would like** to do something with literature or something like that too. I'm not sure. I would like to travel the world as well. **I'd love to do that**.

L: So who put that thought into your head – to go to the Armed Forces?

Thomas: **I always (emphasis on always) wanted to do it. Always wanted to do it**. It's hard to do it though.

Nathan: I think everybody (peers) got the same thing (plan), computers. There are a lot of people planning to do that. I was planning on doing something with computers but then I changed my mind, 'cause really working with computers is a desk job. Sitting down at a desk all day. Like, engineering is something like not really sitting down all day.

Alice: **I would like to be** a computer analysts, that's like dealing with computers and dealing with computer games and on the web developing web pages or what ever.

Nancey: (From Survey) It seems that everyone is going for the same careers that can make them the most money, instead of what they enjoy. People are mostly looking at the field of medicine instead of giving or providing people with what they want or need.

The importance of personal interests was often used a method to explain why some of their peers had not chosen to enter into post-secondary programs after graduation. It was the opinion of some participants that; even with the strong messages about the limited future of the fishery, the fishery was a good post-high school choice if it was an area of interest.

Donna: I think it's a **good choice** (the fishery) **if that's what they want to do**. But I would never do it.

L: What do you think makes that group of people, who might go into the fishery, different than someone like you, who is thinking about scholarships and engineering school, some who have their minds made up to go.

Nathan: I think it's **just their interests** and stuff, **they don't like the paper work** (school work) and all that kind of stuff. They don't like it and **fishing interests them**. It is what ever interests them.

L: Is it a difference in school, like how they do in school?

Nathan: Well again, it is (pauses) **how they do in school has to do with their interests**. If you don't care what you get out of it, you are just here to get it done and they can say they got grade twelve and get out of it. **They are not interested in anything else**.

Frank: **They like fishing** or what ever so they'll stay perhaps.

Martha: Probably because they are into the families and maybe **that's their choice** and **that's what they want to do**. Probably they want to make money if they could.

#### Potential Barriers to Post-Secondary Education

Participants were asked in the survey to consider potential difficulties they might face while attending a post-secondary program and what types of services might help to ease these predicted difficulties. These difficulties were also investigated within the interview. In Chapter 4, opinions about potential post-secondary barriers were provided as a method of participant introduction. Overwhelmingly, these responses were connected to the expected cost of attending a post-secondary program. The goal of this current section of data analysis is to present concerns about issues related to program cost and also participants' opinions about what might ease these potential problems.

*Issues of Cost*

While some participants discussed family connections and academic barriers such as passing required high school courses and program entrance exams as potential difficulties faced while attending post-secondary programs, the majority suggested that issues related to cost would be most likely. When asked about potential barriers the majority of participants responded:

Rachel (from survey): Money. I may not get a student loan due to the income of my parents.

William: I will be facing a student loan and will be accepted upon my grades.

Elizabeth (did not interview): Money should be a bit of a difficulty.

Amanda (from survey): Money is an issue because everything is so costly at school. I'm not worried so much about grades but the change of it all will be difficult.

Randy (from survey): The main difficulties is going to be money and location.

Kevin (from survey): Money and my past school marks. I slowly came aware of how important school is.

Frank (from survey): One of the main difficulties I would probably face is MONEY! I would have to get a loan. The other factor, family commitments, would only play a small factor.

Nancey (from survey): I feel that the largest difficulty could be having the money to pay bills, rent, tuition and food. There is also gas money and school books to buy. But with some organized planning it can work.

Rachel: Money, definitely. I'm not going to get a student loan. Mom and dad got to pay for everything. It's not so much the school as rent and food and stuff like that.

L: If you have to think about when you are getting ready to go – can you think about anything that might get in your way? Any barriers that might make it difficult for you?  
Nathan: I suppose (pauses), the cost of living and going there and everything 'cause out here there's like people pay out big loans. But I think mostly, just, I suppose then you get to go off by yourself. That's cool. I will probably enjoy that. Money is the main thing.

L: When you are making your plans to go (to post-secondary) do you think there are anything that will make it more difficult for you to go?

Randy: Money (pauses) that's the main thing. I will have to make some money next year.

L: If you think a little bit about when you are going to go to school – do you think that there are any difficulties that you might face?

Alice: Yeah

L: Like what ones?

Alice: Money (laughs), probably.

#### *Possible On-Campus Services*

The responses to the question of necessary on-campus services also reflected the concern about cost while attending post-secondary programs.

Martha (from survey): If the student loans would be cheaper would make it easier.

Rachel: A student loan or some kind of help in that way.

Randy (from survey): Student loan or a part-time job.

Frank: I would need a loan for the money situation and as family commitments. I think a phone would do and also being able to come home for holidays.

Pam (from survey): If student loans would be cheaper would make it easier.

Nancey (from survey): Difficulties maybe eased by some on-campus, paying jobs after school, this may even allow someone to get extra credits. Also, financial plans which allow someone to pay tuition in low installments.

William (from survey): Not having to worry about student loans.

Rachel (from survey): Student loan, or help in that way.

Elizabeth (did not interview): Some help with a loan.

Amanda: Someone who to lead you step by step if you needed it. Help on how to get places, just basic help until you get the hang of things.

### Summary

This concludes the analysis of the survey and interview data. This chapter provided an opportunity to examine the most dominate themes which surfaced during the analysis. The next chapter will attempt to answer the seven major categories of research questions.

## CHAPTER 6

## ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The collection of information from participants was guided by the seven major categories of research questions listed in Chapter 1. These categories of questions were designed to examine participants' community awareness, peer awareness, parental influences, school influences, fishery influences, post-secondary attitude and barriers to post-secondary education. In this chapter, answers to the subsidiary questions within these categories are presented as a summary of the data collected during the research and as a review of possible factors influencing participants' post-high school aspirations. Answers to these questions are presented as generalizations of the research group; individual exceptions to these answers will be discussed within the final chapter.

## Community Awareness

*How do participants describe their communities?*

Many participants gave examples of out-migration and economic downturn, while still expressing a level of fondness for their home communities. Community aspects they disliked were difficulties in accessing medical care, limited social possibilities and lack of employment opportunities. Community aspects they liked were feelings of physical safety and social inclusion.

*How do participants predict their communities will change?*

Participants reported such community changes as declining cod fishing, increased crab and turbot fishing, increased use of long liners, families not doing as well financially, unpredictable fish plant work, families moving and decreasing school populations. These participants suggested a continuation of economic downturn within their communities.

Predictions for the future of their communities were bleak due to the increasing numbers of young people out-migrating to attend post-secondary schools and find work.

*How do participants describe the future employment possibilities of their home community?*

Current employment was described as 'seasonal' for a large number of people and government-funded projects in the winter with limited opportunities for youth. Movement from their home communities was seen as necessary for future success. William, Kevin, Hilda and Thomas could see themselves returning to their home communities to work, but only after completion of a post-secondary program and then only if specific employment was available to them.

Peers Awareness

*What are the perceptions of youth who are not planning to attend post-secondary programs after high school?*

Participants suggested that academic limitations would result in peers not attending post-secondary school or out-migrating to other areas of the country to find employment. Predicting that most peers will advance to some form of post-secondary education after high school was widespread throughout the data, making those who choose to not attend post-secondary programs as the exception among peers in the community. Overall, participants did not see themselves as part of this group peers.

*What are the perceptions of youth who are planning to enter the fishery after high school?*

The participants suggested that academic limitations would result in peers remaining at home to work in the fishery. Overall this was seen as a poor post-high school choice, however

participants recognized that if the fishery was an area of interest for these peers it might be a good employment choice. Overall, participants did not see themselves as part of this group peers.

*Do these participants recognize a gender difference in post-high school plans of their peers?*

Participants' stated that female peers possess more positive school attitudes than males and are more likely to have university as part of their post-high school plans.

### Parental Influences

*How do these youth perceive the employment choices of their parents?*

The fishery was seen as a natural choice for their parents' generation; their parents were seen as not having the choices available to today's generation.

*What types of direct advice have been given by parents to their children about post-secondary education?*

Advice from parents included encouraging children to get good grades, continue with their schooling beyond high school and emphasizing moving away. Parents also cautioned against working in the fishery, accumulating large amounts of future debt, early marriage and poor roommate choices.

*What messages are sent to children concerning the fishery, out-migration and career choices?*

Encouragement towards post-secondary education was evident among all participants. There were strong messages that the fishery is not a good choice and that parents wanted 'something better' for their children, even if this necessitates moving away from their home community.

### School Influences

*Do these participants 'like' or 'dislike' school? How has this influenced their post-high school plans?*

Interview comments have suggested that many participants felt positive about their schooling experiences. They are involved in extra-curricular activities, like the school setting and enjoy their relationships with their teachers and their peers. Many commented that through their school experiences they feel encouraged to continue with their education and have learned the importance of post-secondary education. Participants stated that school had exposed them to such influences as computers, direct advice from teachers and guidance counselors, visits from post-secondary schools, career fairs and discovering areas of academic strengths and weaknesses.

*How do participants perceive the post-secondary information given to them by their schools?*

Post-secondary information given at school was seen as positive. Participants described the school as a source of post-secondary information providing an environment encouraging post-secondary education and an approachable staff to answer necessary questions about post-secondary programs.

*Are participants involved in extra curricular activities?*

All interview participants were involved in extra curricular activities including tutoring, participating on student council as president and members, participating on the volley ball and basket ball teams as players and captain, drama club, cheerleading, hockey, school spirit committee and graduation planning.

### Fishery Influences

#### *Have these youth ever considered employment in the fishery?*

While many participants expressed never having a desire to work in the fishery, Randy and Hanna told of wanting to work in the fishery as summer employment. However, through their interview and survey responses it is clear that neither of these respondents would choose the fishery as a long-term career option. William and Nathan told of once wanting to work in the fishery but have since changed their minds and intend to enter into post-secondary education or training. Only Thomas would still consider working in the fishery.

#### *Do these youth see the fishery as a viable career option for youth of their community?*

Overall, participants describe the messages concerning the fishery received from their parents, family members, peers and community as – if you can, you should consider another career option. However, participants also recognized that a small group of peers might be interested in the fishery as employment, but overall the fishery and its future was described as ‘gone’. Overall, participants did not see themselves as part of this group peers.

### Post-Secondary Attitudes and Plans

#### *Do these youth see post-secondary education as part of their post-high school plan?*

All participants had verbalized the long-term goal of obtaining some type of post-secondary education or training. However for some participants there was some indecision about the choices of specific programs and timing of enrollment.

**Barriers to Post-Secondary Education**

*Can these youth identify any potential barriers to successful completion of their post-high school plans?*

Overwhelmingly, responses about barriers were connected to the expected cost of attending a post-secondary program. While some participants discussed family connections and academic issues as potential difficulties, the majority of participants suggested that issues related to cost would be the largest difficulty faced while attending post-secondary programs.

## CHAPTER 7

## RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The main research question of this study explored how the downturn in the ground fishery impacted upon the post-high school choices of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students in the CCS AB area. The specific research findings and recommendations discussed in this final chapter result from answers to the subsidiary questions. The recommendation section contains suggestions designed to encourage the development of practical initiatives for student service departments in support of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students while attending programs at post-secondary campuses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## Research Findings

*Research Finding 1: All Research Participants See Value in Obtaining a Post-Secondary Education and Have Aspirations to Attend Post-Secondary Education or Training Programs.*

All research participants discussed their immediate or eventual enrollment in educational and training programs after high school. This aspiration was also found in studies conducted by Genge (1997), Tucker (1999) and Canning, Wyse and Strong (1999) that examined aspirations of Newfoundland and Labrador youth from rural communities with economic uncertainty. During interviews, participants suggested that most peers would also aspire to a post-secondary education and training programs. As recommended by Sharpe and White (1993), these participants have recognized and adapted to the economic challenges in their environment. They have recognized the need for an education to meet changes in job availability. Participants commented that a post-secondary education would lead to increased employment opportunities and ensure 'a better life'.

*Research Finding 2: For the Majority of Participants the Decline in the Fishery was not the Main Motivation Towards Post-Secondary Education and Training Programs.*

Survey and interview comments have worked together to assemble an image of how participants perceive the fishery. As also witnessed by Genge (1997), the results of this thesis suggested that the majority of participants had never considered the fishery as long-term employment. Many participants stated that changes in the fishery were irrelevant to their post-high school plans. However, the economic climate within their communities, which is directly related to the downturn in the fishery, appears to have had an impact on participants' motivation to continue their education beyond high school.

*Research Finding 3: Nathan, William and Thomas – Illustrated How the Fishery had Impacted their Post-High School Plans.*

When examining the possible impact of changes in the fishery on post-high school aspirations, it is useful to consider the post-high school adjustments made by Nathan, William and particularly Thomas. Unlike the majority of participants, the fishery downturn was relevant to these three participants. They discussed once wanting to work in the fishery but now feel it is an unreliable employment choice. William and Nathan appear to have made this decision easily, while Thomas would still like to work in the fishery if the opportunity arises. Unlike interview responses of other participants, comments made by Nathan, William and Thomas show evidence of each developing an alternative post-high school plan due to messages received about the fishery.

*Research Finding 4: Participants on Island A have Stronger Memories of the 1992 Ground Fish Moratorium than Participants on Island B.*

At the time of the 1992 Ground Fish Moratorium participants from both islands were similar in age and lived in communities that historically relied on the fishery as a means of

employment. Yet they have varied memories of the event. Examining the economic and employment differences between Island A and B may present possible explanations for the variations in memories. The existence of a more diverse employment environment on Island B perhaps suppressed the direct impact of the fishery closure. Island B contains a larger economic base that includes a hospital, clothing stores, two supermarkets, a hotel, a number of convenience, local fast food establishments, gas stations and hardware stores in addition to the fishery. The two groups of participants varied as well. Parents of two participants from Island B were not involved in the fishery, while all of the participants' families from Island A had a history in the fishery. The simple fact that Island A had little else besides the fishery and the school as employment may help explaining why these participants appear to have stronger memories concerning the closure of the cod fishery.

*Research Finding 5: Messages Received from Family, School, Community and the Fishery Have Encouraged Out-Migration of Research Participants.*

Research participants discussed messages received from almost every area of their lives that have reinforced the necessity of physical movement away from their home communities. The fishery represents a resource that is 'gone'. They described their communities as having limited employment opportunities in for themselves and their peers, while both family members and school staff have encouraged them to continue their education past high school.

*Research Finding 6: Participants Recognized and Described Youth from their Communities who Might not Aspire to Post-Secondary Education.*

During the data analysis it became clear that research participants recognized that not all youth within their communities would aspire to post-secondary education or training programs. Through their interview responses participants described these youth as: more likely to be male

than female, having lower marks in school, having limited post-high school choices, more apathetic towards education, might be interested in fishing as a long term career option, more likely to move away from Newfoundland and Labrador to find employment or to remain in their home communities to seek employment.

*Research Finding 7: Remaining at Home After High-School with No Post-Secondary Education or Training was Described as the Least Effective Post-High School Option for Youth of CCS AB.*

Overall there were negative opinions of CCS AB youth remaining in their home communities after high school. Peers described as having limited academic opportunities were seen as increasing their options by leaving home to seek employment. Physical movement for all youth was seen as more advantageous than remaining on Island A or B.

*Research Finding 8: The Majority of Participants Described Themselves Differently than Peers who Might not Aspire to Post-Secondary Education and Training Programs.*

Throughout the data, a majority of participants suggested that they were unlike youth in their communities who might not aspire towards a post-secondary education. Through the data analysis a profile was created of these Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students as: having a positive attitude about school and the value of education, having a valued relationship with teachers, being involved in extra-curricular activities, having parents who encourage post-secondary education and are supportive of post-secondary education choices, having no interest in long-term employment in the fishery and wanting to make employment choices different from their parents.

*Research Finding 9: Extra-curricular Activities as an Indication of Positive School Attitude.*

All participants were actively involved in or had a history of extracurricular involvement. It is the opinion of this researcher that extra-curricular involvement, as a group attribute, is useful in expanding the examination of the research participants. Extra-curricular involvement is a self-chosen level of school association, which suggests a degree of positive feelings towards this aspect of school life. While this involvement does not always indicate academic success, it can be used as evidence to suggest a type of favorable attitude towards school.

*Research Finding 10: Participants View Changing Community Demographics from a Perspective of How it May Impact their Schools.*

The fact research participants recognized and expressed concern for the declining population within their schools is not surprising. For an explanation, we need only consider the school's significance in the lives of the participants. Aside from providing the necessary academic exposure, school also provides a location for day and night time socialization opportunities. Their level of extra-curricular involvement may also have helped stimulate the ability to view demographic changes from another perspective, for example, how the decreasing numbers of people in the community can impact upon the future of the school.

*Research Finding 11: Both Parents and Participants Hold a Similar Value for Post-Secondary Education and Training Programs After High School.*

The importance of finishing high school and then continuing into education and training programs is consistent in the aspirations of both parents and participants.

Billson and Terry (1982), London (1989; 1992; 1996) and Padron (1992) describe First-Generation Post-Secondary Students who struggle to obtain a post-secondary education due to

lack of encouragement and support from family members. This difficulty was not seen in the research participants, suggesting that not all First-Generation Post-Secondary Students struggle against the desires of their parents and therefore feel a lack of support. The separation process which is seen as troublesome for youth who choose to break away from firmly entrenched family roles and expectations as described by London (1998) also does not appear to exist among the research participants.

Research participants describe their parents as active in their post-high school decision making process and very encouraging of post-secondary education. McGrath (1993) found that value of education or parental encouragement was the single most important factor in eliminating barriers to post-secondary education. Looker (1994: 1997) also suggested that post-secondary encouragement and parental participation were also useful in directing children towards education past high school. Looker (1994) suggests the need to recognize the power of parental encouragement as a contributor to post-secondary aspirations of children from families with limited education levels.

*Research Finding 12: Parents were not a Source of Post-Secondary Education Information for the Research Participants– School Staff, older Siblings and Family Members Played this Role.*

York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) described that due to lack of personal experiences, parents of first-generation students possess an inability to pass post-secondary information to their children. While this inability was also seen in the lives of research participants, it was impossible to ignore that participants received post-secondary information from other influential areas in their lives such as older siblings, cousins and school staff. Participants did not suggest they felt a lack of post-secondary information, however this perception may change after they are enrolled in and experiencing post-secondary environments.

*Research Finding 13: Community Aspects and Parental Encouragement may have Created a More Educationally Committed group of Post-Secondary Students.*

Pratt and Skaggs (1989) suggested that First-Generation Post-Secondary Students are more focused in their post-high school plans, due to high levels of internalization created by lack of parental support. The results of this research suggested that participants did appear to be very committed to their plans, however this researcher would disagree with Pratt and Skaggs (1989) that this attribute is based on lack of parental support. This researcher would suggest that enrollment and completion of a post-secondary education is elevated among these youth due to high levels of parental encouragement and the very clear notion that the 'safety net' of returning home to seek employment is unavailable.

Directions for Future Post-Secondary Research and Services to Students

The directions proposed for future research and services to first-generation students display an enhanced appreciation of first-generation students and student services. The following section of recommendations do not necessarily relate directly to the results of the research study, instead these recommendations show a wider perception influenced by the literature review, observations and the research experience.

*Recommendation 1: Further Research into the Aspirations of Potential First-Generation Post-High students and into First-Generation Students while Attending Post-Secondary Education and Training Programs is Necessary.*

While the results of this thesis research answered a number of questions about Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, it has also raised additional research questions about parents, general characteristics and post-high school choices of youth from rural communities

with economic uncertainty and how successful these students are when they eventually reach post-secondary education and training programs. The following is a list of additional questions suggested by the researcher:

*1.1 Further Research into Parents of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students*

- What is the impact of parental encouragement or lack of encouragement on Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students?
- Are barriers to post-secondary education removed when there is consistency about the value of education among children and parents?
- How can parents with lower levels of formal education be motivated to encourage their children to complete high school and consider educational programs after high school?

*1.2 Further Research into Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students*

- Are more Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from rural communities with economic uncertainty aspiring to education and training programs past high school?
- Are Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from rural communities with economic uncertainty choosing out-migration or aspiring to post-secondary education programs after high school? How are they different?
- What are the high school graduation rates of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students?
- Further examination of the fishery and its impact on Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students is required. Research should be specifically targeted at high school students like William, Nathan and Thomas, who would have gone into the fishery and have now changed their minds.

- Are aspirations different among Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from rural and urban communities?
- What are the influences of older siblings and extended family members with post-secondary experiences on potential- First-Generation Post-Secondary Students?
- Are there gender differences in post-high school aspirations of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students?

### *1.3 Further Research into First-Generation Post-Secondary Students on Post-Secondary Campuses*

- Are numbers of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students from rural communities with economic uncertainty increasing at post-secondary institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- Which first-generation students arrive on campus with the encouragement and support of their parents? Which first-generation students arrive on campus without the encouragement support of their parents? Should their services be different?
- Is there a relationship between parental education levels and attrition statistics at universities and colleges? For example, a comparison of first-generation attrition levels to second and third generation attrition levels.
- Follow up of unsuccessful and successful First-Generation Post-Secondary Students to compare their experiences, discover voids in services and best practices for students.

*Recommendation 2: Student Service Initiatives Should be Designed to Meet the Needs of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. Particularly Universities and Colleges that Knowingly Attract First-Generation Post-Secondary Students.*

When supplying services to First-Generation Post-Secondary Students it is important to consider how their life experiences might make them different from second and third generation students, particularly in their first year of study. York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) stress the need for student services personnel to be sensitive to the special situation presented by first-generation students. They suggest programming that can reduce conflicts through counseling and financial aid. The same messages were conveyed by Billson and Terry (1982), Grayson (1995), Hsiao (1992), London (1992), Terenzini et al (1996), TERI (1997), Willett (1989) and Padron (1992). Through the research findings, this researcher can also suggest the following services designed to meet the needs of First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. These services can begin at intuitional recruitment and continue until graduation.

*2.1 Recruitment of First-Generation Students*

Visits from post-secondary institutions to high schools are often conducted as recruitment and orientation to post-secondary programs. These visits often include a presentation by a current student. These recruitment visits should be focused on issues specific to First-Generation Post-Secondary Students, especially for areas known to have high numbers of Potential First-Generation Post-Secondary Students. Other suggestions for these visits are: first-generation students should be selected to visit communities with low levels of formal education to discuss first-generation issues experienced themselves, presentations should assume post-secondary information is not available from parents, take home material should be written at an appropriate literacy level and parents should be invited.

### *2.2 Orientation of First-Generation Students should Include Orientation of Parents*

Student Services departments should not assume that parents will naturally have the skills or information necessary to navigate through the new environment and culture of post-secondary settings. Inclusion of parents in orientation programming will maintain involvement within the new lives of their children and help to answer questions for themselves and their children.

### *2.3 Orientation Programs for Rural First-Generation Post-Secondary Students should Recognize their Transitional Issues*

Ultimately these students and their parents are learning a new culture; there is often a physical relocation to a more urban environment along with discovering the nuances of campus culture. New issues for these students that will require adjustments are:

- transition from smaller one-on-one learning environments to larger classroom settings
- transition from learning environments with close and personal relationships with school staff and peers to more impersonal learning environments
- transition from an environment where extra-curricular activities were important in their lives to an extra-curricular environment that may be more intimidating and therefore less attractive for incoming students.

### *2.4 Programming Directed at First-Generation Students Should Focus on Encouraging Personal Contact with Staff, Faculty and other Students.*

Personal contact with staff, faculty and other students could be encouraged through the following methods:

- recommending that students live on campus
- encouraging students to take advantage of professor and lab assistant's office hours.
- facilitating regular contact with faculty advisers,

- designing special peer support programs, or
- organizing faculty and student social events.

*2.5 Programming Directed at First-Generation Students Should Consider Possible Cost Barriers to Successful Completion of Post- Secondary Programs.*

Cost was considered the greatest barrier by the research participants. The following programs could help reduce the impact of cost on First-Generation Post-Secondary Students:

- Development of flexible tuition payment methods.
- Access to on campus working opportunities such as employment in the library, faculty research assistants, student union, housing, student help centres, recreation departments
- Encourage Co-op education programs. Also ensuring that these opportunities are discussed at student recruitment and orientation meetings and clearly advertised on campus.
- Encouragement of scholarship application for students who meet the requirements and the development of scholarships specifically directed at first-generation students from rural communities.

### Conclusion

Levin (1989) issued the warning that began almost two decades ago about upcoming changes in higher education demographics and the importance of services to students based on these changes. Levin also stated that incoming post-secondary students originating from these

new demographics will come from low-income families and will be the first in their families to enroll in post-secondary education programs.

The results of this study suggest that parents' education level was not a barrier to the development of post-secondary aspirations. The role played by parents was one of active encouragement in towards education and training programs after high school. However it is unknown if parental educational levels will produce hidden barriers to the successful enrolment in and completion of post-secondary programs.

Through the research, participants provided insight into how they see their own futures, particularly how their plans are connected to the current atmosphere of their home communities. Motivation to undertake post-secondary education was influenced by individualized responses to a combination of variables. These include the changing fishery and economic conditions, employment limitations seen in their communities, individualized academic strengths and weaknesses and family encouragement. Messages from their community, parents, school and the fishery have motivated the participants forward, towards employment opportunities through education that were unavailable to their parents.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Letter to School Boards**

Mr. or Ms. (\*\*\*\*)

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am currently conducting an investigation of the post high school choices of rural high school students. Specifically I am interested in grade 10, 11 and 12 students identified as "potential first-generation post-secondary students". These are high school students whose parents highest level of education is high school or below and have not attended a program at college or university. For the purposes of this study, if a parent received some type of post-secondary training through The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) their child(ren) would still be considered a potential first-generation post-secondary student.

My research is designed to examine if potential first generation students from rural communities are considering enrollment in post-secondary programs after high school graduation. I am interested in talking with a variety of young people who are considering any number of post high school plans, including: attending university, attending private or public college, getting a job, caring for family members, leaving their communities or leaving the province. I am hoping to examine factors that might have an effect on post high school choices, including the closure of the fishery, schooling experiences and parental training through TAGS programs.

I have received permission from your school board to contact principals to invite voluntary school participation in my thesis research. I am hoping that interested principals and teachers will discuss the study with grade 10, 11 and 12 students in their schools.

Each interested participant will be mailed a short survey designed to collect information concerning age, gender and parental education levels. Here they will also be invited to share in writing a description of possible plans following high school. In addition, each participant will be asked if they are interested in taking part in an interview or focus group. Not all subjects who indicate interest will be contacted for an interview. A signed parental permission form is required for student participation. No survey will be used for analysis and no interview or focus group participation will take place without a signed parental permission form.

I have attached a poster that can be posted within schools or distributed to students. This poster asks interested students to contact me. Perhaps, principals and/or teachers could collect names of interested participants and send them to me. I could then send parental permission forms and surveys back to schools to distribute, or I could mail the information directly to the homes of interested students. In addition, I have sent a copy of the study survey (formatted for legal size paper) and interview questions. I hope these documents will help in answering any questions presented by staff or students concerning the study. Please feel free to make copies of any forwarded documents.

This study has received the approval of the Ethics Review Committee of Memorial University of Newfoundland. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and individuals will not be identified during data analysis or written report. This study will be prepared as my Masters thesis and a summary of my findings can be made available to you upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (709) \*\*\*-\*\*\*\* or by fax at (709) \*\*\*-\*\*\*\*. I can be reached via e-mail at [lpinhorn@hotmail.com](mailto:lpinhorn@hotmail.com). If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Graduate Programmes and Research at (709) 737-3402. This research is being supervised by Dr. John Grant McLoughlin within the Faculty of Education. If you have any questions he can be reached at (709) 737- 3270.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Pinhorn

**Appendix B**

**Letter to Parents**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Presently, I am studying what rural high school students plan on doing when they finish high school. I am interested in grade 10, 11 and 12 students who are considered "potential first-generation post-secondary students". These are high school students whose parents' highest level of education is high school or below and have not gone to college or university. If a parent received some type of post-secondary training through The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) their child(ren) can be part of this study. I am requesting that you grant permission for your child to take part in this study.

This research will explore if these rural students are thinking about enrolling in post secondary programs when they finish high school. I am hoping to look at things that might effect their plans for after high school, such as closure of the fishery and if parents took a training course funded through TAGS.

I am interested in talking with students who may have a variety of after high school plans including: attending university, attending private or public college, getting a job, caring for family members, leaving their community or leaving the province.

If your child(ren) is interested in taking part in the study he/she will be mailed a short survey to collect information about age, gender and parental education levels. They will also be asked to write a description of his/her plans for after high school. Your child(ren) will then be asked if he/she is interested in taking part in an interview or group meeting. Not all subjects who want to take part in an interview or group meeting will be contacted. Signed parental permission forms are very important. No survey can be used without a signed parental permission form. No child can take part in an interview or group meeting without a signed parental form.

The interviews and group meetings will be audio recorded. All notes and recordings will be held in a safe location and destroyed at the end of the study.

The Ethics Review Committee of Memorial University of Newfoundland has approved this study. During the interview your child will be told that he/she can stop at any time. Your child may choose to not answer any question. All information gathered is private and at no time will your child's name be used. Taking part in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw your permission any time. This study will be used as my Masters thesis and my findings can be made available to you upon request.

If you agree to having your child take part in this study, please sign the consent form attached to the survey. It should be returned with your child's finished survey in the postage paid envelope. The other copy is for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 754-1421 (call collect) or e-mail me at [lpinhorn@hotmail.com](mailto:lpinhorn@hotmail.com) (all lower case letters). If at any time you wish to speak with a person not connected with the study, please contact Graduate Programmes and Research at 737-3402. This study is being supervised by Dr. John Grant McLoughlin within the Faculty of Education. If you have any questions he can be reached at 737-3270.

Yours sincerely,  
Lisa Pinhorn

## **Appendix C**

### **Permission Form**

**PERMISSION FORM**

I hereby give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in a study on rural first-generation post-secondary students undertaken by Lisa Pinhorn. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified by name during the data analysis or written report.

Please circle one of the following options:

- 1) I give permission for my child to complete the survey and to participate in an interview if he or she is contacted by the interviewer.
- 2) I give permission for my child to complete the survey, but he or she is **not permitted to be interviewed.**
- 3) I feel that I need more information concerning this study and would like to be contacted at (709) \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Signature

**Detach For Your Records**

**PERMISSION FORM**

I hereby give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in a study on rural first-generation post-secondary students undertaken by Lisa Pinhorn. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified by name during the data analysis or written report.

Please circle one of the following options:

- 1) I give permission for my child to complete the survey and to participate in an interview if he or she is contacted by the interviewer.
- 2) I give permission for my child to complete the survey, but he or she is **not permitted to be interviewed.**
- 3) I feel that I need more information concerning this study and would like to be contacted at (709) \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Signatures

## **Appendix D**

### **Survey**

## PART A

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Community Name: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Present grade level: \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Academic Average: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Educational level of parent (s)/ guardian: \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Have either of your parents/guardians ever been employed in the fishery? If so, please explain how. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Did your parent(s)/ guardian take part in a training program/post secondary course through the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy or TAGS funding? If so, what type of program? \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Do you have any brothers or sisters who have attended a program at a college or university? If so, what type of program and where? \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B

This is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on what you would like to do after high school and what types of things have influenced your choices. Please feel free to attach extra pages if you do not have enough space.

1.
  - a) Has your family influenced your after high school plans? If so, please explain how? \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - b) How have the changes in the fishery affected your after high school plans? \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - c) How have your high school experiences affected your after high school plans? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2.
  - a) What types of career/field(s) interest you? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Do you plan on attending a program at a university or college in September after you finish high school? If so, what type of program and where?

3. a) In your opinion, what are some difficulties you may face while participating in a post secondary program? (for example: location, family commitments, money, high school marks and so on).

b) What kind of help or services might ease these difficulties?

4. a) Do you feel that there are any benefits to you staying in your community or in Newfoundland after you finish high school?

b) Do you feel that there are any benefits to you staying in your community or in Newfoundland after you finish a post secondary program?

5. Do you have any further comments you would like to share?

Some students will be contacted to take part in an interview or focus group to discuss some of these topics in more detail. If you are selected would you be interested in participating? Please circle one of the following:

- YES, I would be interested in being contacted. I can be reached at (709)\_\_\_\_\_ (Please ensure that the first option on the consent form is selected)
- NO, I am not interested in being contacted.

*Thank you for your time and interest. Your responses are appreciated!*

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview Questions**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Community Questions**

- 1.1) Tell me about your community?
- 1.2 ) Are youth leaving or staying when they finish high school?
  - What do you think makes them stay or leave?
  - How do you feel about that?
- 1.3) What are the types of jobs to people do there?
- 1.4) How has the fishery influenced the job situation in your community?
  - have families left the community over the past few years?
  - how do you feel about that?
- 1.5) What are some things you like about your community?
- 1.6) What are some things you don't like your community?

#### **School Questions**

- 2.1 ) Tell me about your school?
  - what grade are you in?
  - class size
  - teachers
  - availability of courses
- 2.2) Tell me what you think about school?
  - Attitude towards school
- 2.3) What types of extra-curricular activities are you involved in?
- 2.4 ) What are some things you like about school?
- 2.5) What are some things you don't like about school?

#### **Family Questions**

- 3.1) Tell me about your family?
- 3.2) Where are your parents from?
- 3.3) Tell me about their education levels?

- 3.4) What types of jobs have they had?  
- If involved in the fishery - were they part of the TAGS program?  
- Do you think their jobs have had any influence on what you may want to do when you are finished high school?  
- Why do you think they choose to do the jobs they have done?

#### **After High School Plans Questions**

- 4.1) Can you tell me about what you want to do when you finish high school?
- 4.2) Why is it important for you to continue on with your education?
- 4.3) Tell me how your family influenced your plans of ..... ?  
- siblings  
- parents
- 4.4) Do you talk about your plans with anyone in your family?
- 4.5) What types of things are said to you in school about after high school plans?
- 4.6) How do you think your plans will effect your family?

#### **Transitions**

- 5.1) Picture your self getting ready to go to university/college. What types of things are important to you to have information on before you leave? What kinds of help do you think you will need to .....?  
- money  
- study help  
- housing  
- student aid
- 5.2) What problem do you anticipate having in doing this program?
- 5.3) Who in your live will you get this information from? Can your parents help you answer any of these questions?
- 5.4) How do students in your area plan to fund their education?

#### **Fishery \ Local Industry Questions**

- 6.1) Has there every been a time when you thought you would like to work in the fishery?  
- Why or why not?

- 6.2) How much do you know about the TAGS program?
- 6.3) In your opinion, would the fishery be a good or bad career choice for a young person from your community?

**Closing**

- 7.1) What do you think your life will be like in the next 5 - 10 years
- 7.2) Where do you expect to be living 5-10 years from now?





