

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FIVE TEACHING
PRINCIPALS IN SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FIVE
TEACHING PRINCIPALS
IN SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

By

Theresa Marie Gale, B.A., B.Ed.

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Abstract

The duties and responsibilities that rural teaching principals encounter on a daily basis are as complex and varied as they are challenging. Little research has been conducted on teaching principals in the Newfoundland and Labrador context; thus it remains an area worthy of continued study. Five teaching administrators were selected from various geographical locations around the province whose schools primarily have a population of less than one hundred pupils. The intent was to ascertain the responsibilities, duties, challenges and frustrations of these individuals and to examine them separately and in context with each other in relation to the literature review.

Five teaching administrators were interviewed separately on such topics as the characteristics of their respective school, whether the small pupil enrolment and staff mediated the combined role, the extent of their duties and responsibilities, the perceived advantages and challenges they encounter, and their level of satisfaction. Interviews were conducted in person (where possible) or via telephone and were recorded with their permission. The participants themselves were direct and forthright in their responses for the most part while two were notably guarded in respect to questions pertaining to their relationships with their school board and their level of job satisfaction.

One of these five participants was observed in his school over a day and a half. The observation was instrumental in that it provided the researcher a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities in the role, especially the workload involved. This

participant observation essentially provided a reference point for clarifying and examining the interviews.

This ethnographic study incorporates case study as the primary strategy through interviews whereas participant observation is the secondary strategy. The study examined the findings from two perspectives, essentially employing Yin's model. Individual cases were thoroughly described and a cross case analysis was conducted to determine similarities and differences within the data collected as well as with the literature review.

Much of the research pertaining to teaching principals was conducted in the United States and Western Canada but the participants involved in this study both supported and refuted the findings in the literature. The literature suggests, for example, various reasons which contribute to the level of job satisfaction. These include the close relationship with the community, the prestige inherent in the position, and being able to shape (even in a small way) the school's destiny. Job security was the prominent reason for job satisfaction in this study while familiarity with the community and solid professional relationships with fellow teachers and students were second and third reasons.

Other points arose from the research, one of which noted that administrators saw themselves as a teacher first. High levels of frustration were also noted, particularly in respect to paperwork and being far removed from the decision making body.

This ethnographic study provides an insight into the lives of five individuals; a

glimpse into their daily duties, their challenges, their sources of frustration as well as their sources of satisfaction. It is hoped that this one study will encourage others to continue research in this virtually unexplored territory.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The principalship has been the focus of study for most of this century (Clapp, Chase & Merriman, 1927; Morrison, 1943) yet little has been researched on the rural principal, particularly what his/her duties and responsibilities entail. "Rural school leadership and programs are too often ignored in the studies..." (Chance & Lingren, 1988, p.23). Small schools were written about and administered as if they were merely miniatures of larger schools (Cutler, 1989) because the assumption was that rural principals had the same duties and responsibilities as their urban counterparts which is erroneous as rural principals quite often have a dual role-- that of principal and teacher-- and thus have distinctive problems, situations, and duties (Jacobson & Woodworth, 1990).

Ellwood P. Cubberly as early as 1923 described the dual role of the principal as a person who "ought to be capable of deciding quickly and accurately, and then promptly dismiss them (decisions) from his mind ...ought to be able to take a class from any teacher and teach it well..."

Warren (1965) further defined the principal's role as having a "major responsibility in setting the tone, establishing the conditions, and providing stimulation for the kind of learning that goes on in the school... and his ability to relate effort to purpose are factors of major importance in determining the extent to which goals are attained" (Warren. 1965, cited in Walsh, 1973, p. 2).

The concept of the teaching principal has evolved from minute administrative duties

of the head teacher (Pierce, 1935) to increased administrative responsibilities as well as a teaching assignment. In studying the South Dakota rural principal, Chance and Lingren (1988) report that 75 percent of those who responded to their survey indicated that they taught periodically in a specific area; 32% reported teaching one or more courses on a regular daily basis.

Rural schools are also defined by certain characteristics which separate them from being classified as urban; geographic isolation and population being two. While Census Canada defines a town or community as rural with a population of less than 5000, Lewis (1990) further suggests having a population of less than 2500. The majority of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador are considered to be rural, making it very much a province of small rural schools headed by teaching principals. Rural principals have obligations and pressures which are distinctly unlike those of non-teaching administrators in urban or suburban areas whose school populations do not necessitate the combined role (Jacobson & Woodworth, 1990).

The advantages of being a teaching principal in a small rural school are noteworthy. The close personal setting, the respectable rapport between principal and teachers, students and parents, and small class size undoubtedly minimizes some of the tensions which the urban school administrators may experience (Hutto, 1990). The rural teaching principal also has the opportunity for professional development by maintaining teaching skills and utilizing new pedagogical techniques (Grady, 1990). Lewis (1990)

asserts that a common strength of the rural school is its smallness and close personal settings. Hutto (1990) suggests that because "rural schools many times have a more relaxed environment in which to learn...there is more freedom to add courses in rural schools thus special programs can be more easily implemented, often by the request of the principal" (p.8).

While the strengths are numerous, the challenges of being a teaching principal in a rural setting also have to be noted. Geographic location often prevents rural administrators from attending workshops and conferences (Chance & Lingren, 1988), and as a result rural administrators are isolated from other professionals (Barnett, 1989). One way to allay this isolation would be to access a computer conferencing network (Garber, 1992).

In a study conducted by Marilyn Grady (1990) in rural Nebraska, the primary challenge for the teaching principal was a lack of time as the pressures of the dual role interfered with each other: frequent interruptions, numerous meetings, not enough time to deal with teacher problems, discipline problems, or to execute teacher evaluations.

The teaching principal has a great responsibility in the rural school and with it an even greater challenge juggling the duties of his/her dual role. Ironically, increased student enrolment was historically one of the factors which influenced the emergence of the teaching principal as the head teacher took on more administrative responsibilities with the higher enrolment (Pierce, 1935). Eventually the principal emerged because of the

increasing administrative duties. Today, declining enrolments and government cutbacks are the catalyst to positions being combined (Grady, 1990) resulting in increased teaching responsibilities for the administrator.

Purpose of this Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to describe in detail the roles and responsibilities as well as the perceived advantages and challenges of full time teaching principals in small rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. Five teaching principals were invited to participate in this study. The intention was to develop a portrait of each of these participants in order to illustrate the dynamics and demands of their dual role in a small rural school.

Guiding this inquiry was a set of questions such as the following:

- * What are the characteristics of the schools administered by teaching principals?
- * Do they parallel positions in urban areas? Importantly, does the small enrolment and small staff mediate the combined role?
- * What qualities do teaching principals possess that permit them to fulfil the combined role? What is the secret to successfully performing both roles?
- * What are the extent of their administrative duties and teaching duties?
- * What problems does the role especially create (ie. teacher evaluation)?
- * What is the work setting? What is a typical day?

- * What supports presently exist or are planning to be implemented to aid the teaching principal?
- * Do they have the opportunity for professional development?
- * What are the perceived advantages/challenges of being a teaching principal?
- * What are the perceived differences between their roles and those of full time principals or full time teachers?
- * What are the obstacles and/or challenges associated with the combined role?

The study was designed to be flexible and open-ended to a degree so as to provide the participants the opportunity to identify and speak about issues and concerns not identified by the researcher. It is recognized that in this study the expertise and understanding of the topic lies primarily with the participants.

Significance of the Study

Little research has been done in respect to rural education, less still in terms of teaching principals. While studies such as those conducted in rural South Dakota, rural Nebraska, and other states have undoubtedly contributed to our understanding of the rural principal and provided an insight to the daily pressures and increasing duties encountered by rural principals, research on rural principals is largely an unexplored area in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. Although studies have dealt with the duties of the teaching principal, few if any have dealt directly with pressures involved with the dual role.

Hardly any research has been conducted in respect to rural Newfoundland and Labrador where 116 schools out of 416 have a student population of 100 or less and whose communities are far under the 2500 population parameter for defining rural communities suggested by Lewis (1990). In conducting the study in the Newfoundland and Labrador setting, it is hoped that the findings will be a significant contribution to the local, national, and international data base on rural education studies. It is hoped that this study will also provide insight and guidance for those who will inherit such roles, as declining enrolments and cutbacks will undoubtedly increase the number of teaching principals.

Limitations

The study is designed as a qualitative inquiry. The following limitations of the project are therefore recognized.

1. Limited Access
2. Time
3. Interviewer/observer effect
4. Observer bias
5. Selected Subjects

1. The researcher may not necessarily have inclusive access to all information, events or activities which take place in the schools, particularly conversations between the principal and his/her subordinates or the principal and his/her superordinates. It is also possible that some of the participants may, for whatever reasons, withhold pertinent data from the

researcher. "It is not possible or necessary to observe everything. So conditions and restrictions must be considered" (Wiersma, 1995, p. 258).

2. This study is an ethnographic inquiry into the professional lives of individuals. While an arbitrary decision to keep the interviews to one to one and a half hours in length will garner an adequate amount of information, the inquiry will nonetheless be limited.

3. "The observer by his mere presence, biases the situation he is observing" (McCall, 1969, p.305). The observer by her presence may unintentionally alter the scope and validity of the obtained information. The informant may be intimidated or possess preconceptions of what the researcher expects to hear and thus alters the information accordingly. Furthermore, as a "subject of observation", the participant may act differently than s/he would under normal circumstances.

4. The interviews will be recorded so as to garner as much relevant information as possible and so as not to draw the interview over an extended period of time which may distract the informant and influence his/her responses which could lead to brevity. In recording and transcribing the data, the researcher must be cognisant not to taint the data with her own bias. Neutrality is essential and facts must be reported as they occur and not as she perceives them through her own value system. Bias in collecting, describing and interpreting the data will limit the validity and reliability of the findings. The researcher must be sensitive and responsive at all times to contradictory evidence.

5. The selection and identification of potential candidates is dependent upon three criteria:

their geographic location, the size of their student population (primarily 100 or less), and their dual responsibilities. Initially, all school boards were requested their permission to contact selected individuals and these individuals were then contacted to obtain their permission to partake in the study.

The final limitation is related to the nature of the ethnographic study itself. Because the information obtained from the candidate is personal, it pertains to their individual situation and their personal viewpoint. Understandably, acquiring collaborating data is difficult.

Definitions

Certain terms will be used extensively throughout the study. The definitions are therefore provided and where necessary the explanations concern Newfoundland and Labrador. It was decided to define small schools as those with a population of less than 100 because it is here that one is more likely to find a teaching administrator. Additionally, these small schools with their declining enrolment and teaching units have resulted in increased teaching duties for the administrator.

The principalship is "a collection of important tasks and responsibilities that must be carried out in order for the goals of the school to be effectively achieved" (Hughes & Ubben, 1989, p.4).

Teaching Principal is a school administrator who has inherited or performs any amount of teaching responsibilities as a result of fulfilling the position.

Small School for the purpose of this study is any school (primary, elementary, junior high, senior high or all-grade) primarily with a total student population of 100 or less.

Challenges are the demands, burdens, concerns, or difficulties intrinsic in a situation or circumstance.

Organization of the study

The study encompasses six chapters. The first chapter presents the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study as well as pertinent definitions.

Chapter two encompasses the methodology employed in the study. This chapter elaborates on the characteristics of the ethnographic inquiry, particularly case studies and interviews.

Chapter three contains a review of relevant literature to the study. The review provides direction in interpreting and analysing the data pertaining to the research questions. The principalship, challenges facing the principal, life in a small, perhaps isolated, community in addition to the rural teaching principal, are the foci of the literature review.

Chapter four concentrates on the analysis of individual cases and chapter five provides a further analysis of the data. However, in chapter five, cross case analysis, according to Yin's model, is examined.

Chapter six discusses and summarizes the results in respect to the significance and related literature. Practical implications have been explored. This final chapter also identifies potential areas of further research.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This study is an ethnographic inquiry into the duties and responsibilities of five rural teaching administrators in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They were chosen for their geographical location as well as their student enrolment: schools whose student populations are primarily less than one hundred.

This section elaborates on the aspects of ethnographic study, in addition to the techniques employed to collect usable data. The case study is the primary strategy employed whereby data is collected through interviews. Participant observation is the secondary strategy and is decidedly linked to the case study. The advantage of the observation itself is to establish a reference point and "image in context" for examining the interviews.

Ethnographic Research

Qualitative research provides direction for study in a natural setting. Specifically, qualitative research is a method with a specific set of procedures for undertaking research (Lancy, 1993, cited in Wiersma, 1995). Earlier, Smith and Glass (1987) expounded this concept further by providing a comprehensive working design whereby decisions are made in the preliminary plan about the subject or sites to be studied, the length of time for data collection and possible variables to be considered (Smith and Glass 1987 cited in Wiersma, 1995).

Ideally ethnography itself provides the opportunity to reveal the subject's reality as the research takes place in a non- contrived natural setting (Taft, 1982 and Fetterman, 1988). Taft (1982) proposed that "ethnography is used to both record primary data and to interpret its meanings"...(p.59) and later he described ethnography as a "naturalistic enquiry" (p.59). Fetterman (1988) describes ethnography as the "art and science of describing a group or culture" (p.13) whereas Spradley (1980) characterizes ethnography as "the study of both explicit and tacit cultural knowledge" (p.8) whereby culture is defined as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour" (p.6).

Spradley (1980) proposes that culture consists of tacit knowledge which is largely outside the people's realization therefore it is the ethnographer's role to "make inferences about what people know by listening carefully to what they say and by observing their behaviour" (p.11).

Jacob (1987) ascertains that holistic ethnographers seek to describe and analyse all or part of a culture or community by describing the beliefs or practices of the group studied and showing how various parts contribute to the culture as a unified, consistent whole (Jacob, 1987, cited in Wiersma, 1995).

Fetterman (1988) further defines the ethnographer as one who is...

interested in understanding and describing a social or cultural scene from the emic or insider's perspective. The ethnographer is both a storyteller and scientist, the closer the reader of an ethnography comes to understanding the native's point of view, the better the story and the better the science (p.14).

Case Study

Various strategies such as case studies, participant observation, and histograms are utilised to depict the natural setting (Yin, 1984). In this research, the case study will be the principal strategy and participant observation will be the secondary strategy. The participant observation, however, will be directly linked to the case study.

As the case study is the native's outlook on reality which is the focus of the research, the case study must be examined from the emic perspective (Fetterman, 1988). The case analysis itself will therefore alter with the subject of study. Stenhouse (1988) further considers the emic perspective of reality when he suggests that:

... it (ethnographic case studies) calls into question the apparent understandings of the actors in the case and offers from the outsider's standpoint explanations that emphasis causal or structural patterns of which participants in the case are unaware (p. 52).

Nevertheless, the theme of the investigation will remain constant along all cases. Consequently, the design of the method of data collection and analysis itself is actually a multiple case study as opposed to an individual case study as there are five participants interviewed each comprising a case. As the research topic would not be thoroughly developed by a single case, multiple cases were explored.

Data Collection

The primary means of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews of five individual teaching principals. Observation of one of these subjects was also

conducted. The study is descriptive research which involves collecting data to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of study, teaching principals in small rural schools. Descriptive data is usually collected through the use of questionnaire surveys, interviews or observations (Gay, 1987).

Interviews

Not all data collection in an ethnographic study is necessarily conducted through participant-observation. Interview may be conducted with key individuals and data may be collected through a survey that may support or refute information collected through observation (Wiersma, 1995, p. 260).

Several factors must be taken into account prior to an interview if the process is to yield usable data. Whyte (1960) suggests such issues as using open ended versus closed ended questions, evaluative and descriptive questions, order of questions, the rapport between the researcher and participant must be considered and their effect minimized in order to avoid contaminating relevant findings. Understandably, prior to an interview, the design must be scrutinised rigorously.

The interview instrument (See Appendix A) was field tested prior to the actual interviews by a member in the population of small schools but not one of the five subjects. The purpose of this interview was to garner feedback on how to strengthen the instrument; to improve on questions which were unclear, or did not solicit usable information, or which were deemed to produce negative reaction in subjects. Also the field interview ensured whether or not the data could be examined in the manner intended.

In ethnographic research , interviews are essential; therefore the ideal method of

data collection would be a semi-structured conversation in a relaxed environment for the participant as well as the researcher. Palmer (1928) contended that "the conversation of human beings is an important part of the data of social research, as well as an important part of social research technique" (p.169). It is "the ability of the subjects of social research to converse with each other and with the scientific investigator (that) is so vital" (Palmer, 1928, pp.168-169).

Burgess (1982) suggests that a researcher is not limited in an unstructured interview and is free to follow up on impressions emanating from the interview. With a semi-structured interview, the researcher is free to investigate thoroughly, to reveal new considerations to a problem and to procure precise descriptions from the informant. According to Burgess (1982) interviews provide "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts from informants that are based on personal experience" (p.107).

A distinctive feature of this type of interview is a face page or fact sheet accompanying the primary list of interview questions. A fact sheet to garner demographic information (Appendix B) as well as a list of interview questions was forwarded to the informant one month and another copy faxed days prior to the actual interview date. While relatively flexible, the list of interview questions as presented in Appendix A were used as a control. The interview questions are derived from the research questions and

were used as a base from which the researcher directed the interview. It must be noted, however, that they served primarily as a guide as other questions undoubtedly arose as the interview progressed. Although the primary method of data collection was the semi-structured interview which suggests a lack of direction, the interviews were semi-structured. The researcher established a framework for conducting the interview thereby allowing flexibility while at the same time ensuring control.

Firstly, a letter of permission was forwarded to the respective school boards requesting participation (Appendix C). A second letter was forwarded to the subjects themselves requesting their approval to participate in the study (Appendix D). A separate letter was forwarded to the individual being observed in his work setting requesting his participation and permission to be interviewed and job shadowed. (Appendix E).

Once permission was obtained from both the participating boards and principals, the subjects themselves were contacted personally by telephone to introduce the researcher and to provide the overall guidance and scope of the study. After this initial contact, interviews where possible were conducted in person whereas others took place over the telephone. Three of the interviews, with the permission of the participants, were recorded. Due to problems with the teleconference telephone provided and refusal from two of the participants to record the interview, note taking was the only method of recording data for these two interviews. Recording the interviews ensured as natural a conversation as possible. Writing down notes and ideas by the researcher during the

interview could lead to bias and brevity on the part of the researcher and in the participants' responses as the interview is prolonged. However, that appeared not to be the case as these interviews followed the same format as the three interviews conducted previously. Also both interviews were still within the allotted time frame.

The interviews were conducted between one to one and a half hour periods and had a set format with various open ended questions to elicit as much valuable information as possible. Whyte (1960) advises that interviews prolonged beyond this time length will lose their focus and energy. The quantity of information sought should not exceed one and a half hours. After the interviews had been conducted they were listened to for any inaccuracies and/or clarification on some responses. If clarification or additional information was needed the respective subjects were contacted via telephone or e-mail and asked to clarify their responses on the particular item as was the case for one of the interviews. Notes were taken on the initial listening of the three taped interviews conducted in person and over the telephone (if applicable) following the interview. Notes were also taken immediately after the interviews which were not recorded in addition to those taken during the interview. However, should an interview have required additional time then a follow up interview at a later date was arranged. Clarification was needed for one of the interviews and this individual was contacted again during a period of twenty minutes.

In order to obtain comparable data from all subjects, all interviews were conducted

and recorded (where possible) in the same manner using a conference telephone and/or a recorder. Confidentiality is assured to all participants with their responses.

Participant observation

Participant observer fieldwork is conducted in the framework of a case study to enable the researcher to collect data on site. Stenhouse (1988) ascertains that "in ethnography, a case is studied in depth by participant observation supported by interview" (p.49). Hammersley (1983) suggests that ethnography and participant observation are cognate terms. While Ball (1988) affirms that observation is used as the main tool of investigation; in this study it is used as a secondary instrument.

Of the five subjects only one subject was observed in the work place for a period of one and a half days primarily due to financial constraints; the expense of air fare and accommodations being great factors. The observation was naturalistic in form in that the intent was to record and study the behaviour as it occurred. Data was accumulated by "following those under study through their daily round of life, watching what they do, under what circumstances, when and with whom, by questioning them about the meaning of their activities" (Ball, 1988, p. 507). Experiencing the participant's natural environment provided the researcher with tacit knowledge (Taft, 1988 & Spradley, 1980).

Prior to the observation an interview was recorded, with the participant's permission, and conducted to ascertain the principal's responsibilities and duties. During the observation itself, detailed notes were taken describing the principal, the setting,

teaching role, classroom dynamics and office procedures.

Analysis of Data

In analysing the data, this study incorporated Yin's design which involves analysis on two levels, a single case analysis and a cross case analysis (Yin, 1984). Patterns, correlations, the relation between the information obtained and the research questions are examined and described for each case and consequently a brief separate report is rendered for each.

The second level of Yin's model includes cross case analysis. This time patterns, chain of evidence, and irregularities across all the cases as a whole are investigated. One report is generated allowing the reader to surmise, or at least note variations which may have ensued. While providing generalizations is not the purpose of the study, all researchers, according to Shulman (1981) attempt some degree of generalizability for their findings.

The data is analysed according to demographic information with respect to sex, age, years of experience in administration, years of experience in teaching, the grade levels taught together with which subjects, the type of school each administrator works in, school enrolment, and the number of teachers on staff.

Data is then organized according to teaching responsibilities and duties of the subjects and as well how the position evolved. In addition, different and similar pressures, influences involved with the dual role are compared and dually noted. Furthermore, the

interviews are scrutinized for advantages and challenges related to having the position in these small rural schools. From the instrument used in the interview process, recommendations were solicited from the subjects on what an individual would recommend to anyone fulfilling a similar position or prospective teaching principals in like schools and are provided in the concluding chapter of this study.

Validity and Reliability

The worth of ethnographic qualitative research has long been validated. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) note the high degree of internal validity in ethnographic research. They maintain that research "conducted in natural settings...reflect the reality of the life experience of participants more accurately than do more contrived or laboratory settings" and that informant interviews are "less abstract than many instruments used in other research designs" (p.221).

Validity is the "quality of the conclusions and the processes through which these were reached" (Taft 1988, p. 61.) However, he proposes that accuracy and credibility as opposed to validity and reliability are "the most important criterion" (Taft, 1988, p.61).

He further submits that

a report in which the investigator describes the precautions that have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the observations has more credibility than one in which the reader is merely asked to take data and finding 'on faith' (p.61).

The use of triangulation, or multiple sources and methods, will enable the

researcher to crosscheck findings thus ensuring improved validity and reliability as it is the preferred method of substantiating credibility and accuracy in qualitative research. To strengthen this study evidence on which interpretations are founded are described thoroughly. Evidence which would be inclined to contest any conclusions or interpretations was tested.

However, ethical considerations and limitations confine the variety of information which may be garnered making triangulation difficult to achieve. Limitations deter other sources of information to be used for triangulation purposes. Nevertheless, as the goal of ethnographic research is to reveal an individual's reality which is crucial to the study, the absence of these sources does not alter the research. Techniques such as pattern formation, chain of evidence and coherence can be employed to verify internal validity.

While all researchers, according to Shulman (1981) attempt some degree of generalizability for their findings, the goal of this study is not to infer generalizations on the basis of the data collected. The purpose of this study is to describe characteristics and perceptions of contemporary teaching principals in small rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. Kennedy (1979) asserts that in an ethnographic research, the onus of generalization lies with the reader of the research report:

Clearly the study of a...case with no replications limits the strength and the range of generalization arguments considerably.... But, in fact, the range of generalization simply cannot be known to the evaluator. That the range cannot be known, however, does not mean that a range does not exist...the range of evaluation is a matter of judgement. For studies of single cases, however, the judgement should not be made by the evaluator. Instead, it should be made by

those individuals who wish to apply the evaluation findings to their own situations. That is, the evaluator should produce and share the information, but the receivers of the information must determine whether or not it applies to their own situation. (p.662).

Ethical Considerations

Information acquired throughout the course of this study followed the guidelines regulating all research conducted by the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. Written consent was obtained from the school boards and respective participants to conduct the study and to report all pertinent results. Names of the participants, schools and communities remain confidential: however, individuals, schools, and communities were supplied with an alias where verbatim accounts are reported. Consent was requested from all participants to record their respective interviews and they were given the opportunity to keep the recordings of their interview or have them destroyed. Three of the participants wanted the recordings returned once they had been listened to for clarification and notes were taken. They did not want them transcribed or included as part of the appendix. All data collected remains confidential except where written permission has been given to use an alias. As the aim of this study is to describe challenges of the teaching principal, information from other sources such as teachers, parents or boards were not pursued. Letters of consent were therefore not requested from these individuals.

The case study rendered significant data. The interviews themselves were conducted within the time frame projected. Three of the participants did not object to the interviews being recorded but were at times guarded in their responses. The remaining

two individuals who were uncomfortable with the tape recorder and therefore refused its use provided poignant and detailed information. Their responses were direct and unabashed.

The participant observation itself took place over one and a half school days (including one evening) and provided insight into the length and scope of the administrator's day. It helped in fact to clarify points made by the other participants, especially in respect to the numerous interruptions and paperwork principals have to deal with throughout the day.

Chapter 3

The Review of the literature

The literature will be divided into four sections:

- A) The Principalship
- B) The Typical Teaching Principal in Small Rural Schools
- C) Small Schools/ Rural Communities
- D) Challenges Facing the Teaching Principal

The Principalship

The literature on educational administration focuses largely on the complexities and problems faced by urban and suburban principals. The benefits, while duly noted, are not expounded upon in any great detail and little literature is available on rural principals. Though the principalship has been the focus of study for most of this century (Clapp, Chase, & Merriman, 1927, Morrison, 1943), little has been researched on the duties and responsibilities of the rural teaching principal where the quality of administrative leadership is closely connected to the quality of the educational programming within the school (Jacobson, 1990).

"Rural school leadership and programs are too often ignored in the studies..." (Chance & Lingren, 1988, p.23) Small schools were administered as if they were merely miniatures of larger schools (Cutler, 1989). It was erroneously assumed that rural principals had the same duties and responsibilities as their urban counterparts. However,

Jacobson and Woodworth (1990) noted that rural principals quite often have a dual role, that of principal and teacher, and thus have distinctive problems, situations, and duties.

The concept of the teaching principal has evolved from minute administrative duties of the head teacher (Pierce, 1935) to increased administrative responsibilities including a teaching assignment.

While researchers such as Hutto (1990), Grady (1990), and Lewis (1990) note the strengths and weaknesses of rural schools, few researchers have studied the increasing pressures and responsibilities of the rural principal.

Cross, Brandy and Gleadow (1980) noted that ... "principals and teachers in rural schools perceived isolation, lack of privacy, inadequate support services and lack of professional contacts to be the major disadvantages with working in a rural setting" (cited in Haughey & Murphy, 1983, p.2).

Goldring (1986) recognised that the principal must at times deal with loyalty between fellow teachers and parents, particularly if it becomes divided when the demands of both are in conflict. Duke (1988) purports that fatigue is largely a problem with the small town principalship, especially when dealing with "hundreds of human interactions, the evenings filled with meetings and paperwork, the pressures to meet impossible deadlines and the burdens of handling other people's problems" (p.310).

Chance and Lingren (1988) studied rural principals in rural South Dakota and concluded that geographical isolation lends itself to professional isolation as rural

administrators are often prevented from attending workshops and conferences because of their location. Isolation and limited resources also made it difficult to obtain good programs (Jacobson, 1990).

In her 1990 study of rural Nebraska, Grady determined that the primary challenge with the teaching principalship was the lack of time as pressures of the dual role conflicted with each other. Frequent interruptions, numerous meetings, insufficient time to deal with teacher problems, teacher evaluation as well as discipline problems demanded equal time. In that same year Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) performed a study of 21 Western states in 25 different school districts and found that teaching principals did face significant day to day challenges, even in settings that appeared to be ideal. Small town principals, according to Schmuck and Schmuck ... "must balance the academic deficits and emotional needs of children from broken families against a public outcry for higher student achievements" (p.32).

Notwithstanding, Duke maintains the predominant hindrance for a principal or teaching principal is:

The principalship is the kind of job where you're expected to be all things to all people. Early on if you're successful, you have gotten feedback that you are able to be all things to all people. And then you feel an obligation to continue doing that which in your own mind you know you're not capable of doing. And that causes some guilt (Duke, 1988, p.310).

The four significant issues for principals are essentially the definition of their role, the power and authority to perform their job, relationships with colleagues and the respect,

rewards and recognition associated with the job (Mackler, 1996).

Sackney (1980) purports that most principals seeking this position usually do so because of their desire to guide the school in the direction they perceive schools should be going. Principals want schools to reflect their vision. Nevertheless, in striving to be influential, they often encounter barriers which contradict or thwart their ideal. These obstacles associated with the principalship are classified by Sackney (1980) as dilemmas:

1. Socialization Dilemma
2. Dilemma with Organizational Members
3. School-Community Relations Dilemma
4. The Trust Dilemma
5. Conflict Resolution Dilemma
6. Evaluation-Professional Growth Dilemma
7. Decision Making Dilemma

After accepting the position, Bridges (1977) notes "...his powers are more often limited than s/he anticipates" (p. 206). Sackney reaffirms Bridges' assumption which he defines as the socialization dilemma because principals begin to realize quickly how little power they actually have. Although they have some influence, they do not have unlimited right to transfers or dismissal of incompetent subordinates nor can they veto the appointment of new teachers.

In many instances the power to make work assignments has been restricted by collective agreements. Furthermore, increased teacher professionalism and

militancy together with declining enrolments and decreasing resources have contributed to an increased likelihood of disappointment for principals (Sackney, 1980, p 1).

MacPherson (1979) suggested that teachers, as members of an organization, view principals as a source of restriction whereas principals "...view teachers generally as uncontrollable and wanting to exercise power in which they do not have to do in things they should not be doing" (Sackney, 1980 p. 2). Outside the classroom, teachers want their administrator to help alleviate their frustrations by dealing with difficult parents and students (Waller 1965, Lortie, 1975) which often becomes a challenge as each member has his/her own personal needs. Furthermore,

...teachers want their principals to keep things on an even keel, to cater to the individual needs of staff members, to advocate the staff's point of view to administration (Central Office) and to seek suggestions from teachers before making decisions (Sackney, 1980, p. 2).

The principal is the one often sought for support; however, ..."one of the most important lessons principals must learn is that they can't do everything" (Pigford, 1988, p.118).

Leithwood, Cousins and Smith, in their study on the nature of problems regularly faced by principals during the course of the school year, noted one salient area in particular was with subordinates. They documented that two thirds of the problems the typical principal encountered "...revolved around internal workings of the school, its staff and clients" (Leithwood, Cousins and Smith 1990, p 12).

They discovered problems from external sources as well, especially from senior administrators. In that same study 73 of 907 respondents felt superordinate or senior administrators were sources of problems for principals.

Senior administrators...they place accountability demands on principals, visit their schools, provide approval or non-approval of principals' initiatives, request attendance by principals at board meetings for a variety of purposes, and insist on adherence to system procedures. (Leithwood et al. 1990, p.13).

Furthermore, Barth (1980) suggests that

...there is a huge discrepancy between what principals would like to do and what they really do. Most say they want to be instructional leaders who work closely with teachers, children, and curriculum. Instead... principals spend the bulk of their fragmented time in an elaborate juggling act. Principals rarely control their tasks, their time, or their location...few are able to shape the job as much as it shapes them (p.6).

School-community relations is also an area of concern for the principal who is caught in a dual accountability to staff and to parents. Parental involvement is currently en vogue because government has taken the initiative to install school councils in each school. A large proportion of this representation is from the community and parents.

Despite the fact that some teachers generally feel that current parent participation is sufficient, some provinces, such as Saskatchewan, have made parental involvement in schools mandatory through legislation. Principals "...shall establish mutually acceptable and beneficial channels for communication between the school and parents of pupils" (Renihan, 1983, Saskatchewan Education Act, 1978).

Through recent and future changes, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador

are commandeering this partnership of school principals with local community groups and parents through the new school councils. Pigford best summarizes the potential dilemma facing today's principal:

...to build such relationships I served on local boards, regularly attended community functions, and participated in community activities. It was not uncommon for me to be involved in community events at least three weekends each month. While I found this role very rewarding, it was also very time-consuming (Pigford, 1988, p.118).

Cooperation of both parties is essential in working in the school environment because a degree of interaction between schools and their surrounding communities is inevitable (Quarshie & Bergen, 1989). The quandary arises for the principal and is magnified when the individuals concerned, such as staff and students in particular, fail to view situations or problems in the same way resulting in mistrust (Cousins, Bradley, and Smith, 1990).

The predominant theme throughout all difficulties encountered by principals is time related, specifically a lack of it (Jacobson, 1988, Grady, 1990, Engelking, 1990, Sackney, 1980, Bates, 1993, Duke, 1988, Williamson and Campbell, 1987, Housego, 1993). Time was one of the four main factors Williamson and Campbell (1987) attributed to principal stress and sequentially burnout; not being able to manage it, not having enough of it as well as the demands put on it.

Principals acknowledged that:

...my work was frequently interrupted by staff members who wanted to talk...I had to participate in school activities outside normal working hours at risk of sacrificing

my personal family life...I have too heavy of a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish in the normal work day (Williamson and Campbell, 1987, p 110).

Today's principals brave a multitude of predicaments which increase occupational stress and undoubtedly create a serious effect on the principals' job performance. The end result could very well be a negative impact on the delivery of educational services in schools.

The Typical Teaching Principal in Small Rural Schools

...teaching and administering small schools is different from teaching and administering metropolitan schools. Isolation limited resources, limited services, and staff limitations increase the responsibilities of rural teachers and administrators (Gardener and Edington, 1982, p. 18).

A demographic profile of the teaching principal is not readily available. However, Doud (1989) concluded, after a ten year study, that the typical rural principal is a "white, married male in his 40s" with the average age being 47 years. A ratio of male to female principals were noted at 80% to 20% at the elementary level (Doud, 1989) and 96% to 4% at the secondary level (Pellicier, Anderson, Keef, Kelly, and McCleary, 1988).

Schmuck and Schmuck in 1990 shadowed 38 small town principals over a two day period and observed them in meetings. They noted that the mean ages of these principals were 48 for male and 43 for female principals. The female principals served in that capacity on average for approximately six years as opposed to ten years for their male counterparts.

"While women comprise 69% of the overall teaching positions in the nation, they

hold only a fraction of the administrative positions (Feistritzer, 1988, cited in Chance & Neuhauser, 1991). Fauth (1984) noted that only 20% of all elementary principals were female and less than 4% were secondary principals.

While projects such as The Equal Educational Opportunities Office of the South Dakota Division of Education was designed for women and minorities, Chance and Neuhauser (1991) recommend that "unless programs are developed to address the issue of under-representation of women and minorities as administrators, the gap will continue to widen" (p.5).

In addition to being white male and young, the typical rural administrator is inexperienced with five years or less in their respective principalships (Muse & Thomas, 1989). Rural principalships are frequently used as "stepping stones" or "proving grounds" to other administrative positions often in larger urban areas in the same or other school districts. In their 1989 study, Muse and Thomas reported that 52% of rural principals in seven western states indicated that they had five years or less as a principal in their present districts. Administrative experience is acquired in rural areas before urban administrative positions are sought (Jacobson, 1988, cited in Hurley, 1992). Muse and Thomas (1990) maintain that rural schools provide experience for the novice administrator who eventually wants to secure a position in an urban school resulting in principalship turnover every two or three years. Regrettably the teacher/administrator turnover rate in small rural schools is high.

Muse and Thomas (1990) also propose that administrators who had grown up in rural or small towns were inclined to apply for positions and do so after having taught for a number of years in the same school or another school in the area. Administrators who are pre-appointed from the community are employed after he "had proven himself" (p. 10). However, the current trend is to "seek candidates from outside the district who will 'fit' the community's image of a school principal..." (p.10). Muse and Thomas suggest that the notion of 'fit' is rather ambiguous as the "image" of a typical school administrator is indisputably male, white, and relatively young (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983).

Significant changes presently occurring in education in the province will undoubtedly modify dramatically the configuration and future governance of schools. Teachers are seeking greater empowerment (Jacobson 1990) and more input into decision making thereby decentralizing administration in some areas.

...bigger is no longer considered to be necessarily better when it comes to determining the optimum size for educational governance. Smaller, site based units of school governance may offer students and communities significant educational benefits that outweigh many of the advantages previously thought to be gained only through increased centralization (Lamitie, 1989, p 38).

Furthermore, Swanson and Jacobson (1989) (cited in Jacobson & Woodworth, 1991) argue that intended learning outcomes will be independent of school or district size because of technological advancements. To improve school effectiveness, small schools do not necessarily need to consolidate.

Small Schools/Rural Communities

The small school is perceived as a miniature self contained unit of larger schools (Culter, 1989) which serves "...the varied needs and interest of small groups of students" (Nachtigal, 1982, p. 19). The design of the small school should, according to Nachtigal (1982), encompass distinct yet connected characteristics which distinguish small schools from their urban counterparts such as basic human relations, flexible operations, versatile personnel, and "facilities must serve multiple purposes and pupils" (Nachtigal, 1982, p. 19).

Barker and Gump (1965) noted the small school's evident unique strengths. Academically, students of smaller schools were apt to take more courses, and were more likely to enrol in community festivals and competitions. Furthermore,

...the savings incurred by larger classes and having one top administrator when small school districts are combined into a larger unit may be more than offset by higher transportation costs. Further, there is little evidence that consolidation has resulted in lower per pupil cost or lower taxes (p. 20).

Gutrie (1980) suggested that "...evidence in favour of cost savings associated with larger size school and school districts is at best ambiguous" (p. 20).

The school is an essential and invaluable asset to any rural community as it enhances its worth and prosperity in addition to providing a variety of social, cultural, civic, and educational services (Cross, Leahy & Murphy, 1989). "The school stands at centre stage, providing the community with a sense of identity, a source of employment, and a common meeting place" (Miller, 1993, p.93).

A high graduate rate is repeatedly a feature of the small rural schools (often 100%) because the atmosphere is more relaxed (Hutto, 1990). There is more "freedom to add courses which may not be a part of the normal curriculum" (p.8). Special courses can be easily implemented often by the principal due to the relatively short bureaucratic chain of command.

Challenges Facing the Teaching Rural Principal

The advantages of the rural principalship are worthy of note (Grady, 1990; Hutto, 1990); it is in fact the epitome of the principalship. A small well kept school, a competent encouraging staff operating in harmony with equally supportive parents and community, and realistic number of students per class is undoubtedly the ideal. The rapport and support between the school and students and parents is an objective many urban principals seek to achieve. According to the literature, however, some of the problems these principals encounter are similar to their urban counterparts. It should be noted as well that other problems faced by rural principals differ distinctly from urban administrators.

A study conducted in 1990 involving 21 western states in 25 different school districts found that teaching principals encountered consequential daily trials, even in proverbial ideal settings. "Even though principals of small town schools do not encounter some of the social problems posed by their urban counterparts, such as drugs or crime on the school grounds, they do face a multitude of common administrative problems." (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1990, p 32).

One predominant challenge with the teaching principalship, in particular, noted by Grady in her 1990 study of rural Nebraska, was a lack of time which was further compounded by the combined position. Frequent interruptions, numerous meetings, insufficient time to deal with teacher problems, teacher evaluations, and discipline problems demanded equal time.

Duke (1988) cited fatigue as a major problem with the small town principalship because of the many functions required and limited time to complete them satisfactorily. "The long days filled with hundreds of human interactions, the evenings filled with meetings and paperwork, the pressure to meet impossible deadlines and the burden of handling other people's problems" (Duke, 1988, p 310).

The principal's responsibility and divided loyalty between teachers and parents is an undeniable consequence (Goldring, 1986). "The principal must support the teacher's authority but must also respond to the interest of the parents..." (Goldring, 1986, p 116) which is especially challenging when the demands of both are in conflict.

Chance and Lingren (1988) suggest geographical isolation often prevents rural administrators from attending workshops and conferences resulting in professional isolation. Stammen (1991) proposes that professional isolation may be further magnified if computers are seldom used by experienced rural administrators. Jacobson (1990) believes rural administrators often experience hardships in obtaining access to good programs due to their isolation and limited district resources.

Administrators and teachers are isolated from other professionals (Barnett, 1989; Kidder, 1989). Furthermore, a report by Cross, Brandy, and Gleadow (1980) noted several major disadvantages with working in a rural setting, notably isolation, lack of privacy, inadequate support services and lack of professional contacts (Cross, Brandy, & Gleadow (1990), cited in Haughey and Murphy, 1983, p 2).

Interestingly, Muse and Thomas (1991) suggest that inexperience is largely responsible for the majority of problems rural administrators experience. Rural principalships are frequently used as "stepping stones" or "proving grounds" to other administrative positions often in larger urban areas in the same or other school districts. In their 1989 study Muse and Thomas reported that 52% of rural principals in seven western states indicated that they had five years or less as a principal in their present districts.

Administrators gain experience in rural areas before accepting urban administrative positions (Jacobson, 1988, cited in Hurley, 1992).

Because large school districts often require prior experience of the candidates for principalships, rural schools provide that experience for the novice administrator who eventually wants an urban position. Therefore, rural superintendents and school boards who seek non-rural candidates often learn that these candidates are only looking for a temporary job in order to gain experience. Then the rural principalship begins to turn over every two or three years, creating unsettled conditions for the rural school and community (Muse and Thomas, 1991, p.10).

Furthermore, in comparison to urban and central areas, the teacher/ administrator turnover rate in small rural schools is higher. The ability of the principal to retain his/her

teachers without losing them to the larger towns with improved services and living arrangements is a challenge. Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) reported that most teachers in rural areas were drawn to suburbs and larger cities , because of the inducement of reasonable salaries and better living quarters. "Only people who had grown up in small towns--and who wanted to live in them--would apply for openings, and many of them would leave for greener pastures after only a year or two." (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1990, p 33).

Small town principals like other administrators have the challenge of ensuring improved student achievement while at the same time considering the complex emotional needs of those children. Success, therefore, demands the best juggling act.

Many of the problems currently confronted by rural schools may be more the result of under-administration than poor administration because of the numerous demands of the administrator's time.

Since small rural districts often confront severe fiscal constraints, their electorates sometimes attempt to restrict the growth of their school budgets by capping the size of their districts' administration. In order to "make do", the rural administrator is often forced to assume more responsibilities than can be adequately managed in the time allowed. Unfortunately, if not performed well, any one of these disparate roles can affect negatively the quality of the educational program (Nachtigal, 1987, p. 33).

Not surprisingly, the principal in some small rural schools is, in addition to his/her administrative duties, a full time teacher, the unofficial part time counsellor, and an athletic coach. Few individuals have the ability, time or willingness to undertake as many diverse

responsibilities which are involved in such a principalship.

Educational reforms for higher student achievement have been the primary objective of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador in addition to cost cutting initiatives to reorganize the education system. However, with these current directives for change in Newfoundland and Labrador

...they (principals) must strive to upgrade the quality of classroom teaching while soothing the battered egos of teachers beleaguered by mandates for change, inadequate resources, and parents' accusations. They must manage their meagre budgets efficiently while calming the frustrations of staff members who have not received a significant pay raise in years. (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1990, p 33).

The economic roots of the majority of communities in Newfoundland were, and to some extent still are, directly or indirectly tied to the fishery. The cod moratorium has been the catalyst for the downward spiralling economy in rural areas and many families are unable to adapt. Because of failing economies, Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) noted families in the Western United States were not encouraging their children to be more productive in respect to education or to teacher's expectations. Characteristically, low achievement and motivation intensified.

Additionally, graduate university training programs ambiguously ignore the rural principalship (Jacobson et al., 1990, Chance et al. 1988, Grady, 1990).

...it was professors and their theory based approach to preparation that were most singled out for criticism by rural respondents. The comments concerning administrative preparation made by the total group of respondents indicated a clear call for experienced-based training (Jacobson & Woodworth, 1990).

Negative perceptions about university-based preparation may also explain why

rural administrators in the above studies considered their university programs to be too theoretical and needed to improve on the more practical aspects of the rural principalship.

While the findings of this particular study did support some of the assumptions discussed in the literature review, other points also surfaced. All five participants concur with Williamson and Campbell (1987) that the workload is considerable. Three of the participants refute Doud's theory that the typical teaching principal is male and in his forties; rather they lend support to Muse and Thomas' theory that the typical rural principal is young and inexperienced, often with five years or less in administration.

One significant piece of information garnered from this study which was not readily available or provided in other studies was the educational background of the participants. It can be assumed that all administrators have at least an education degree, however, four of the five participants have either completed a Master's degree or were in the process of finishing one. Interestingly, three of those four have or will have a Master's degree in educational administration.

Undoubtedly the literature review is as relevant as the research questions in providing guidance and focus for this study. The literature review, in particular, helped raise further questions and ideas which are explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Individual Case Analysis

Following Yin's model, each teaching administrator has been examined individually followed by a cross-case analysis. The participant observation follows the same pattern as the other cases but is obviously more detailed as an on-site observation enables the observer to note details that other participants in an interview situation may take for granted and/or forget to mention.

Case One

The first of the five interviews was conducted over the telephone for a period of one and a half hours in late November. From the interview it appears that Maria (assumed name) is a dynamic charismatic woman who is responsible, capable, direct, tireless, trustworthy, organized and flexible. Especially impressive is her openness and candour. She takes great pride in her accomplishments and dedication to her many roles but she also recognizes her limitations albeit a little reluctantly. This teaching principal is a woman in her early thirties who has been teaching for nine years, the last five of which have been as a teaching administrator. She is currently teaching all subjects in grade six with the exception of French and Science. Interestingly, seventy five percent of her school day is consumed by instruction. She was initially hired as a special education teacher at another school within her district, during which time she was completing her special education degree on a part time basis during the school's summer sabbaticals and through correspondence. She was in fact finishing her degree in special education when the administrative position became available.

"My job (at another school in the community) had become redundant. I was advised to check out administration if I didn't want to spend the next five to ten years getting bumped." This position was offered to her on the understanding that she complete courses towards a Master's Degree as part of her contractual agreement although not necessarily or entirely in administration. "As part of my contractual obligation, I had to take at least some courses at the Master's level. It was my decision to do an educational administration degree." She has since graduated with a Master's Degree in Educational Administration.

She is the sole administrator at her school which has a student enrolment of 83 pupils and declining, a teaching staff of 4 and a half units (the half unit is French which is shared with two other schools), and a secretary. There is no formal physical education program nor are there any music classes at this elementary school. There is also no recognized vice-principal although there is a teacher willing to take on the immediate administrative duties on days when the principal is absent due to illness, meetings, and so on. The immediate administrative duties would include matters like dealing with parents' concerns, discipline, but mostly taking messages for the principal to deal with when she returns.

The school itself is extremely well run largely due to the superior organizational skills of its administrator. Monthly reports are submitted on time, regular staff meetings are held, activity days are planned but for much of the time it is never a planned day (or plans get changed as emergencies arise). "My day is never a planned day sometimes it's a knee jerk reaction" which means having to shelf previously made plans to deal with crisis, however large or small, as they transpire. The key is not to necessarily anticipate problems but not to be staggered by them when and, if they, occur. However, she did add that "there's never

enough time to do anything the way you want. I'm never quite sure if I'm doing something effectively."

Maria was uncertain if the administrative position at her school was originally that of a teaching principal. However, the dual role of the administrator and teacher has been prominent within the last ten years. Undoubtedly, with the reduction in staff allocation triggered by the decline in student population, the teaching duties of the administrator have increased. "The small (and declining) school population definitely resulted in increasing demands and a change in my job description." Maria now teaches 75% of the time, essentially all but two courses in Grade 6. She asserts that the small school enrolment definitely mediated the combined role and accordingly the expanding duties and responsibilities of the teaching principal. She anticipates teaching another course next year as more classes are combined and teaching units reduced. "When I took over this position, it was as a teaching principal. Every year the teaching part has increased as we kept losing (teaching) units."

Specifically the administrative tasks performed include, but are not limited to, submitting monthly returns to the school board office on time; putting out memos such as report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and being Master of Ceremonies at concerts throughout the year; improving teacher morale; holding regular staff meetings; overseeing the different curriculum as instructional leader; allocating resources provided; being responsible for money and funds raised and allocating where they would be most beneficial; chairing the former Parent-Teacher Association; attending evening meetings in respect to the

principals' group and the school council, as well as managing the plant. "There are many changing roles and many demands on your time and energy."

Maria is also responsible for purchasing and/or securing supplies for the school's organized activity days, for example, in addition to organizing the event itself. Thankfully, support comes from teachers and parents for these days but a lot of work goes home with her in the evenings. She has to call in substitutes for teachers (it is not uncommon to get a call at 6:00 in the morning) and she makes the decision whether or not to close the school due to inclement weather. With one or two forty minute periods a day to deal with administrative matters, it is not uncommon for her to take administrative work home in addition to planning and correcting for the classes that she teaches. In her own words, "the job is never left at school."

With her dual role, Maria does encounter some problems which she sees more so as potential obstacles especially with teacher evaluation. As this topic will be dealt with more thoroughly later on in this case, it is sufficient to say that much of her evaluation is done informally.

Maria was quick to point out that there is no such thing as a typical day for her. However, her day does start at 6:15 a. m.. She has a 40 minute commute to work which means she arrives around 8:15 in the morning. An average day is approximately 10 hours, excluding the preparing and correcting time for the classes that she teaches, usually between two to three hours.

It is an extremely tiring and stressful job at times because she is often interrupted

during the day. If an emergency arises that has to be addressed immediately, the secretary covers her class while Maria, as principal, has to deal with an irate parent, for example. Many of the administrative duties of the position such as meetings or contacting parents, nonetheless, have to wait until after school or in the evenings. She admits that she has lost a considerable amount of weight due in part to stress, more responsibilities and to skipping meals because of meetings and so on. "There's too much stress, too many responsibilities, too much time away from your family."

She arrives home around 4:30, knowing that she may have a meeting to attend at the school at 6:00 or 6:30 p. m. therefore she has to leave home 5:45 p. m. as the school is 40 minutes away. The meetings (sometimes two or three a week) last anywhere from one and a half to two hours, sometimes more and she arrives home after 9:00 p. m., long after her children are in bed. "There are some days when I don't see my sons at all. They're still in bed when I leave and when I get home at night." The expense of a baby sitter when her husband is at work is definitely another increasing challenge.

There are no real supports that presently exist to aid her in her dual role. However, principals have established the beginnings of a network of sorts within her district but it clearly fell short of her needs. Maria was given a one day in-service after she was appointed to the teaching principalship. Having had no administrative experience prior to accepting the position, she was given the "full run down" in one day. "I was given a one day in-service. The full run down in one day and that was it." However, she was fortunate to have another teaching principal that she could call on and thus was able to avail of this teaching principal's

knowledge and expertise.

There is a group starting up within her school board to deal with the concerns of principals, morale and so on but that is still in the planning stages and there was little that she could elaborate on other than to say that it is desperately needed. Professional development for rural teaching principals is obviously an area which could be further explored.

While an obvious disadvantage is the workload, there are noteworthy advantages to the position, not the least of which is good teacher/administrator morale, small numbers of students, close community relationship in addition to little or no discipline issues. "I really enjoy my classes. I have a close tie with teachers because I can relate to them. I'm in the trenches along with them as it were." Maria noted that the role of the principal has changed because of the smallness of the school, although she was not originally a part of the staff when reductions began. "The role of the principal has changed. I am more visible to the community and students. I know the parents and students very well and I am accepted by them."

Teaching, in particular, affords a relief to the day to day administrative duties and she enjoys the bond she has developed with her students. Children warm quickly to the principal because of this higher comfort level. The students know that Mrs. Smith is their principal but they also know that as soon as she walks through the classroom door, she is their teacher. There is also a certain degree of pride in the fact that they are taught by the principal. Maria enjoys the sense of community, the challenge of the hybrid position, and

the better working relationship with staff members. "I can't deny that teaching is a big part of what I do, so maybe I'm a teacher first." In addition, she gets to retain her teaching skills which she professes may be lost if the position were strictly an administrative one.

Maria alludes that there are more challenges to being a teaching principal as opposed to a full time administrator or teacher. The obvious difference to either of the positions is that she does both. She has the same administrative duties as that of a full time principal but unlike her urban counterpart she also has considerable teaching duties. "I have the same administrative duties as full time principals but I teach too." She believes she is a more effective principal because she is not removed from the day to day goings-on --she is a part of the teaching staff and her fellow teachers both respect and appreciate her dual role. Her dual role strengthens the professional and personal relationship with colleagues because she can relate to them and teachers are more open with her as a result. Conversely, the distinct difference between her role and that of other teachers is her mounting administrative responsibilities.

Noteworthy, however, are the obstacles which for the sake of definition include problems, disadvantages or difficulties which conflict or prevent her from fulfilling her duties as teacher and/or principal. High on this list is time or lack of it. There is never enough time and while she does things that are required they are often rushed leaving her wondering if she has performed her duties effectively. "I do what's required but things are rushed."

Understandably, stress is second on her list of drawbacks. The stress level is high

because of her many roles (administrator, teacher, mother, wife) and the demands on her time and energy . Often the family suffers. Meetings and other commitments take away from her family life and at times the job comes first, the family second. "Your family suffers with this job. Meetings and commitments often take you away from your family. The job is always first, the family second." Family life especially suffers because the job is often taken home with her and requires several hours in the evening. However, she cautioned, "Make sure you make time for your family. I'm seeing the effect of my job demands on my family."

There are really two full time positions combined and these two jobs require equal amount of time. Maria finds that she is spread too thin; her teaching duties are put before her administrative duties and the administrative duties take away from her instruction, such as being interrupted in the middle of a lesson to deal with an administrative emergency.

Although Maria did not directly state it, there are some feelings of isolation from the board office. Because of the realignment of the school boards, the district office is very far away and contact is limited. "The district is so far away now," she added wistfully.

Professionally, one of the obstacles mentioned was teacher evaluation. She admitted that it was a difficult task to undertake primarily because of the time constraints. She teaches the majority of her time therefore much of the evaluation is done informally. In order for her to be a part of the evaluation team she would have to call a substitute teacher in to cover her classes as there are no available teachers. Additionally, the majority of the teachers on staff have more teaching experience than she does and may resent or become suspicious of her part in the evaluation. She feels that the close relationship she shares with her colleagues

may be compromised. "Evaluation is tricky, especially when the teacher is being evaluated by someone with less experience. I enjoy my relationship with my colleagues and I don't want to put it in jeopardy."

Maria is often caught in the middle between teachers and students or parents and teachers. When communication breaks down between either of these two groups, she will act as mediator. As a principal she is essentially the next level. However, if she has a problem with a parent, teacher, or student the next level for her is the board office. With the board office being so far away this can in itself be quite frustrating. If in a grievance or arbitration dispute she wonders who will support the principal in this situation? What happens? It is something she has not encountered but it is undoubtedly a concern.

She advises anyone interested in this position to be organized and firm but flexible enough to deal with changes in plans. "For anyone coming into this profession, I say go in with your eyes wide open. Be sure to clearly separate what you can do with what you want to do and what you hope to accomplish in the future. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to do more than you're capable of doing" She intends on remaining in this position and would like to continue being an administrator, maybe in a larger community. However, she adds that if her present position becomes too demanding and stressful she could very easily resign. "I would consider leaving this profession if there were other job opportunities and I don't mean necessarily in the educational field."

Case Two

The second participant was interviewed in early December for a period of 65 minutes. He is male, in his early forties and has spent twenty-four years in the education field. From the interview David comes across as charming, charismatic, direct, opinionated, somewhat jaded, hard-working, astute, dynamic and, in his own words, a little ruthless. His no nonsense attitude has served him well in his years as administrator and his humorous outlook on life and situations has ensured him great success in his professional life. For this position he emphasises "sensitive people need not apply."

The last four years he has spent as principal in his current school but he has held teaching administrative positions on and off for ten years. He was raised and now lives in the same community where he is currently the school's administrator. He started teaching on staff after returning from Labrador but did not have as much experience as his colleagues. He was attracted to and accepted the position of teaching principal because it offered more security than his seniority provided. "I decided to apply for administrative positions because at the time not many people were interested in them. There was more security as a teaching principal." At the time, not many teachers were interested in administrative positions, especially ones that included teaching at least twenty-five percent of the time. David Jones (assumed name) taught all subjects at grades seven and eight for thirteen years before

seeking a principalship and has taught at this school prior to becoming its administrator. "I started on this staff but I didn't have as much seniority as other teachers. This position was attractive because of its security and seniority; no one could bump me out of this job."

A Master's Degree is required by his respective board as a condition for hire in respect to the teaching principal position. However, as he had previous experience in administration (six years with another school), he was offered the job provided he agreed to return to university to acquire a Master's degree which he is presently completing in Leadership, formerly Educational Administration. "I already had six years in administration in another community. I agreed to go back to get a degree. I'm doing a Leadership degree now." However, he added, "There was only one course which referred to rural education-current issues in rural education. This course referred to teaching principals in passing. I found that course enjoyable and interesting, but did not really elaborate on the teaching principalship."

The school where David is currently has been open for 23 years and it has always been administrated by a teaching principal. It is the policy within his school board, in fact, that the administrator teach at least twenty-five percent of the time. "The school board insists that principals teach at least twenty-five percent of their time. I think this is a policy with our board only and I think that's because the

majority of our schools have student populations of under one hundred and fifty.”

David, however, teaches more than sixty percent of his time.

The all grade school presently has 150 pupils with a teaching allocation of 12.25 units. It has two administrators both of whom teach more than 60% of their time. There is also a secretary. There is only one resource teacher for the entire school and one challenging needs teachers for several challenging needs students. This school was realigned last June but due to court challenges prior to September regarding the denominational system, it still houses K-12 students for this current school year. However, it will definitely be downsized next year to a K-9 school with a teaching allocation of 7 or 8 units and a student population of well under 100 pupils. “I’m teaching at least sixty percent of the time. It’s going to be more next year because we’re losing three or four units. The senior high kids are moving to another school.” The end result will be increased multi-grading. Presently grades Kindergarten and one, grades two and three, grades five and six, and grades seven and eight are combined respectively. “We’ll be downsized to K to 9 next year. We have a lot of multi-grading now, K and one, two and three, five and six, seven and eight and it’ll be more next year.”

Some high school courses such as religion and physical education are combined and students have to avail of independent studies or distance education

courses to meet graduation requirements. Some students needed another 3000 level course, for example, to secure honours status, so some of the teachers have volunteered their time and subsequently divided courses into different sections and teach them after school. Currently two 3000 level courses are taught in this fashion after school. He fears that the programming is essentially a "bare bones curriculum." David foresees his teaching assignment increasing as the enrollment declines "unless the government leaves principals out of allocations." His current administrative duties are numerous beginning with the first school report at the commencement of the school year in September. This report is completed annually and it compares the performance of his school provincially and nationally using such instruments as Canadian Tests of Basic Skills, and writing assessments. He has to write a reaction paper for teacher evaluation, is totally responsible for discipline, has to compile the monthly reports, and deals with parental, student and teacher issues.

Additionally, he is recognized as the instructional leader which he feels does not get enough of his attention as he handles other concerns. He therefore goes to the school board for briefing on new courses that are developed for the curriculum. David also has to open and close the school plant each day unlike full time teachers who are permitted to leave at 3:15. He must also serve on the school council; the choice to serve or abstain was not his to make.

His teaching duties include religion courses at the senior high level and he in fact teaches 32 periods in a 14 day cycle or 32 out of 70 periods excluding preparation time. Any preparation that he would normally have been allotted to aid in the preparation of his classes is used for administrative purposes. Preparation for classes hence is completed at home as is correcting assignments and tests. Fortunately, he likes the courses that he teaches and does not find them to be overly strenuous in respect to preparation. He admits that he would have great difficulty fulfilling his duties if his classes were time consuming to prepare as well. He sees teaching religion as a refreshing break from the day to day administration duties and appreciates the connection to his classes. Even if there were no teaching duties with the administrative position, he would elect to teach a few courses to maintain contact with students. While teaching is his first priority and he sees himself as a teacher first, teaching sometimes becomes secondary as administrative duties demand his constant attention. Interestingly, his extra-curricular activities include coaching softball, soccer, and table tennis, being the Master of Ceremonies at assemblies, concerts, and graduation exercises and being the teacher advisor to the senior student council.

He, like the first participant, agreed that there was no such thing as a typical day. The only thing typical about his day was that it was at least 10 hours. His

school day begins at 8:00 a. m. and classes start at 8:45 a. m. He teaches 2 or 3 one hour classes out of 5 a day and handles the every day administrative concerns for the remaining two periods. He is frequently interrupted during his classes and while he tries to deal with administrative matters outside of class instruction on many occasions it is unavoidable and consequently teaching becomes secondary. He feels that if he taught a course such as mathematics which is a university admittance requirement, it would negatively impact on his students because there would be the stress of completing the course in a shorter period of time. Since religion is not a course which is required for admittance, students feel they are getting a break. However, if a teacher is available, s/he will cover the class when he is called away on an urgent matter.

Paper work is done in triplicate. With discipline matters, for example, there is one copy for the school board, one for the school and one for the student's parents. His school day ends at around 5:00 p. m. or 5:30 p. m., and administrative concerns, such as contacting parents, are dealt with after school. "I try to deal with administrative matters outside of classroom responsibilities but sometimes it's unavoidable." He is often, however, back at school in the evening correcting, preparing tests, or attending meetings. David states tersely that there are no supports or professional development available for teaching principals within his

school board as far as he is aware and he has not availed of any nor has he been made aware of any in existence.

He states pointedly that there are no privileges or benefits to the position he holds. The only two advantages include job security and the solid working relationship he has developed with both students in the classroom setting and his colleagues. With such a heavy workload, he reiterates that "there are no advantages to this--no breaks, financial or otherwise."

The obstacles or drawbacks are numerous and "time is a commodity." Being a teaching principal is time consuming as it detracts from family life and work is always brought home. He maintains that he is doing two jobs instead of one and that his bonus of \$162.00 bi-weekly is paying for one of these positions. "I get one hundred and sixty-two bucks gross extra every two weeks. Not much is it? For doing a second job." Having to deal with discipline especially can sometimes ruin his whole day.

He is frustrated by the lack of depth in programming, and having little or no resources for his school. "There is no depth of programming. We have to get by with so little, no resources." The school has few resource people (one for the entire school) in addition to a challenging needs teacher who is responsible for several severely disabled children. Multi-graded classes continue to be a challenge and a

source of frustration. He finds teacher evaluations to be extremely tough but refuses to elaborate further. He is part of the evaluation team and conducts both formal and informal evaluations.

He is often caught in the middle of disputes between teachers and students and parents and teachers. Trusting the professional integrity of his colleagues he is compelled to give them his full support which can lead to a break down in communication with students and/or parents if the situation is not handled professionally or effectively. The school has a "three strikes, you're out" policy; if a student is written up three times and s/he is sent to the office then it is an automatic suspension. The office is seen as the last resort and students respect that authority.

However, he feels that he really has been given "an authoritative position with no authority and that's based on twenty-four years experience" as the school board overrides any decision he initiates although they appear to be in collaboration with him. He declined to elaborate with specific examples. Another obvious disadvantage is the stressful workload because it is frustrating at times to keep everyone happy--teachers, students, parents and importantly himself. "It's extremely stressful and I'm frustrated. You have to keep everyone happy--teachers, students, parents and lastly yourself, and that's tough to do." There is really "no time to relax (actually I can't remember the last time I did)" and being highly visible in the small community he

consequently has little or no privacy which can also be quite frustrating. "There is no privacy in this community either. I'm highly visible in this community and that's the pits."

David believes there are really no incentives in becoming a teaching principal and advises anyone thinking about this profession "to think about another field, maybe out of teaching altogether." His frustration with the expectant changes that have occurred are evident, especially in light of the fact that the scheduling that he completed in June of 1997 for a K-9 school had to be redone before September of the same year when everything returned to its original format. He adds, "There has to be a greater incentive to this position." He remains in this position because it is secure and he has "too much time and effort invested to leave now but it's not too late for you." Nevertheless, he insists that if there ever is a time when he is extremely unhappy, there would be no hesitation or guilt in leaving.

Case Three

The third individual interviewed is relatively new to the education field. This particular interview took place on two separate occasions in early December; one hour the first time and the second occasion involved a twenty minute telephone conversation to clarify some of the topics discussed previously as well as others. This administrator is in his late twenties and is one of the first graduates of Memorial University of Newfoundland's

reorganized education program. He had no prior teaching or administrative experience before accepting this position and has been the teaching principal at this school for the past four years.

The interview revealed an individual who is dynamic, incredibly hard-working, aware of his capabilities and limitations, helpful, honest, driven, supportive, clever, flexible and unbelievably organized. Organization, according to John, is the key to success. His current position was offered to him in May and, after completing the requirements for his degree during the summer, convoked with a Bachelor of Education in October of that year.

He was initially attracted to the position for several reasons; the job security it offered; his father was raised in the same community; his bachelor degree dealt with multi-grading (he calls it ageism) and rural education; the multi-graded system was not new to him having gone through the system and importantly multi-grading experience on a resume is certainly beneficial when pursuing other positions. "My Bachelor of Education dealt with multi grading--it's called ageism now. A lot of the courses I did touched on rural education to a certain extent." Interestingly, both he and his older brother applied for the same position.

The school board does require a Master's degree for the position, however, they decided to wave the requirement on the understanding that he would eventually complete a graduate degree. This third participant plans on pursuing a Masters' degree when time and finances permit, probably within the next few years. "Technically you have to have an M Ed (for this job). The Board decided to wave the degree, but I am planning on going back to get

one eventually.” At present his dual position consumes a great deal of his time.

The position was originally half time teacher and half time administrator. As the enrollment dropped, however, teaching units were lost and the administrator became a full time teacher as well. A small school needs at least 50 students in order to be awarded administration time. The K- 8 school currently has an enrollment of 34 pupils and a teaching staff of two and one half teachers. Allocation units for programs such as physical education and French had to be used for regular classroom teachers. Undoubtedly, the small school enrollment and staff mediate the dual demands of the position. Interestingly, allocation of teaching units are based on student enrollment of the previous September. Unfortunately, while there will be an increase in the student population next year, one teaching unit will be lost as a result of this formula.

At present there is also no French program in the school as the teachers are not able to teach this subject. There is no formal physical education program although classes are offered where possible. The physical layout of the school includes three classrooms, a library with five computers on line and an office for the administrator. There is no secretary, therefore, he covers all secretarial duties as well as his administrative and teaching duties. “I have a lot of roles--teacher, principal, guidance councillor, computer technician, secretary and occasional custodian.”

John’s list of duties are considerable. He does all the orders for school supplies such as construction paper and textbooks as well as janitorial supplies. He has to balance the school budget as well as the school council budget and account for all spending. He

completes the monthly reports, weekly teacher attendance, inventories, telephones substitutes when needed, and organizes what needs to be done for the month.

He is also the instructional leader. Because of the multi-graded system, he looks at the objectives for courses and uses the text as a resource. With the help of program specialists, he determines if some courses can be combined. He tries to incorporate similar course objectives of each grade into his lessons plans such as graphing for example. "I definitely like the fact that I can shape the curriculum any way I like."

He is also part of the evaluation team and helps with interviewing for the positions that are advertised for his school such as selecting applicants to be interviewed and is present during the interview itself. In fact, the final decision rests with the principal. "I am in on the interview process for new teachers. I have the final say--this person has to work with me after all."

There is a pre-school program that is offered at the school and he is entirely responsible for the employee ensuring that she fulfils her contract and he is responsible for paying her. There are no formal staff meetings, however, there is a meeting every day as the staff all stay for lunch and any problems and/or concerns are discussed at that time.

John's teaching duties include grades five, six, seven, and eight in a multi-graded situation. The school operates on a six day cycle or forty two periods and he teaches seven classes a day with no preparation time for the courses he teaches. Administrative duties, for the most part, are "handled before school, during lunch, after school or in the evening."

He used to live in the community initially as a bachelor but since his marriage now

lives 50 kilometres away in a larger town where housing is readily available. He drives the 30 minutes or less commute and arrives at school at 7:30 a. m . Like the other participants, he reiterates that there is really nothing typical about his day other than its length. "My day usually goes from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There are days when I have to shovel the steps."

Upon his arrival, he unlocks the school and does a visual check for damage. He shovels any snow that has accumulated on the steps or walkways from the previous night. In the case of inclement weather, he makes the decision to either close the school or have a delayed opening by 8:00 a. m. In such a case, there is a telephone pyramid system in place where he calls several students, then those students are responsible for calling several others on their list and so on.

After clearing snow and noting any damage, John starts on his lessons plans for the following week (usually three days in advance), takes care of any paperwork that has to be done, updates the school's bankbook, and picks out supplies. If the school is closed, he remains to take care of some pressing administrative duties or to simply get ahead of the game. He does all his photocopying for tests, assignments, and so on in the morning before the school day begins. Students are let in after the bell rings, the register is taken, the recess order is taken, a prayer is said, there is silent reading for ten minutes and then the language arts program commences. He teaches the entire seven periods in the day without a break and supervises them or monitors them during recess. Because there is no preparation time allotted in the schedule, "all preparing for his classes and correcting is done after school or in the evening at home, two hours at least."

There is no secretary or answering machine, therefore he has to answer all calls. If he has to answer the telephone, seat work is assigned, and a responsible trustworthy student is left in charge. Fortunately, his office is directly across from his classroom so he still has visual contact with his students.

Most of the pertinent calls are made during lunch hour such as telephoning to order school pictures, school nurse or calls to the board office. Any facsimiles that have to be sent are done during this time as well. The school has the only facsimile machine in the community so if anyone wants a letter written or a facsimile sent s/he comes to the school. "I have the only fax machine in this community. I write letters and send faxes for those who ask me." All necessary interviews or meetings take place before morning classes, at recess, after school or at night. Now that he is better organized he tries to leave school around 5:00 p. m. Although his day is still between 10 to 12 hours in length, he insists that in the beginning it was more like 15 hour days. "I am more organized this year so I have more time to spend with my family."

John cites numerous advantages to his position of teaching principal. He enjoys the relationship he has with the community and parents in general. "I have an excellent relationship with the community. My father is from here so they think of me the same way they thought of my father. My dad was respected in this community, especially for his hard work and fairness." If they need something written or sent, they come to him; in turn he gets their full support. Hence, new changes are handled relatively easily. He can arrange a meeting at any time and expect a considerable turnout. He talks to parents both on a private

and professional level and the community appreciates his efforts.

Prior to his arrival there was a high teacher and administrator turnover rate. Teachers were there to get tenure with the board and then left but he has been there for four years now and has no intention of leaving in the foreseeable future. "The community appreciates my efforts, especially since I've been here for four years. There used to be a high turn over before I came. Teachers basically came here to get their tenure and then left."

He appreciates the close personal relationship he has with his staff and students and has unfailing support from the other members on staff. He buys little gifts for the students, and he organizes their extra-curricular activities such as drama, science fair, a couple of trips a year to the Salmonier Nature Park or bowling to name a few. They have Roman Catholic celebrations and they take a collection for the needy or the church every Friday.

He has little or no discipline problems. At first a social worker and child welfare had to be called in for support in dealing with children who had emotional or personal difficulties he was unable or unqualified to handle. Each year that passes, there is more trust and this is the best year yet in respect to discipline.

Another distinct advantage is that, provided he first has the school board's approval, he can shape the curriculum any way he likes. Working with program specialists, they decide what best serves the school; if certain courses can be combined, for example. In fact, John considers the program specialists as one of his greatest supports. He sees the close working relationship he has with the board as one of his strongest benefits and he appreciates knowing things before they are brought to the public.

In respect to evaluation, he has the teacher's full support. Teachers are not intimidated by it because they see it as a tool for improvement and not for dismissal. They accept that it has to be done and it is to their benefit and to the benefit of their students.

It is the board's policy that a teacher is evaluated every five years which means he himself will be evaluated this coming year. The only problem he foresees when he is part of the evaluation team is what to do with his fifteen students during the formal evaluation period? This becomes a challenge because seat work has to be assigned to his students while he is evaluating the other teacher.

The most pertinent drawback is a lack of time; there never seems to be enough of it. He has to draw the line sometimes and decide where to put the best part of his time--teaching or administering? He sees himself as a teacher first because it was one of the first things that attracted him to the job. "I'm definitely a teacher first. I was initially attracted to the position because of that, but neither part (teacher or administrator) really suffers a lot." He insists that neither part really suffers to any great extent (he has only missed two and a half sick days in the last four years). He does admit, however, that one role suffers for the other at times.

There never seems to be enough time to spend with his family although it is better this year than in previous years. He tries to be home around 5:00 or 6:00 p. m. but he has to put in a lot of Saturdays. He has no preparation time so all his planning is done after school or at home, again cutting into family time.

Another disadvantage is the numerous roles he has. Not only is he the principal and

the teacher, but he is also the secretary, guidance councillor, computer technician and at times custodian.

He sometimes finds himself in the middle of disputes between teachers and students or teachers and parents. He knows his teaching staff very well and gives them his support 100 percent. He trusts their professional integrity and professionalism and expects no less from them. If a teacher has erred, he handles the situation himself but this rarely happens.

The stress level is considerably high and quite frustrating especially when drafts and/or critiques must be prepared for new courses and submitted to the board. He draws on the support of the other teachers if he is having an especially rough day. It is certainly a mutual relationship.

Aside from the program specialists, there are also two professional development days allotted each year to help him in his position. The staff has already had a day for stress management and he is hoping to have a day for computers specifically, the Internet and Stem-Net. His greatest support undoubtedly comes from his colleagues and he greatly appreciates it.

The distinct difference that he sees between himself and full time administrators is that they can spend time and lobby to get other things for their schools and students. Although he is vocal when he has to be, he does not have the necessary time to address administrative concerns other than the immediate ones. "You have to be outspoken, especially if you hope to get things for your school." The primary difference between himself and full time teachers is that they get preparation time in their schedule--he does not.

John has every intention of staying where he is for as long as he can. "This job is definitely secure. I like that." Although the stress level is high, he has learned to deal effectively with that. He enjoys the job security, likes the outdoors (he is a nature lover) and feels appreciated by the community. The only way he would intentionally leave would be if the board put unreasonable demands on him such as extra duties or "another position became available in a bigger area that offered me the same things I have now with more benefits but that position would have to be very attractive."

For anyone coming into a teaching principalship, John advises get organized as quickly as possible, realize his/her limitations and set his/her expectations accordingly. The job can be quite frustrating and demanding but it is rewarding, not financially, but interpersonally and professionally.

Case Four

Paul, like those interviewed before him, has several noteworthy qualities that, while relatively new to the position, serve him well in his current dual role. This interview also revealed a person who is sincere, direct, honest, hardworking, dedicated, attentive, driven, unfailingly diplomatic, and organized. He recognizes and accepts his limitations but is determined to achieve his expectations such as improved teacher morale, teacher/administrator and teacher/teacher relationships, classroom dynamics and better overall communication. Paul has been with this board and this particular school for only four months and as he admits is relatively new to the staff room dynamics. "I'm still trying to

find my way.”

The fourth participant is male, in his early forties who has been in the education field for a total of eighteen years. The first two years of his career were as a teaching principal, fourteen years (including the first two) as a classroom teacher, and the last four years as social studies curriculum coordinator with another board. He is currently a teaching principal once again and has been in this position since September of this school year. He does not reside in the same community where he currently works but he is from the surrounding area and has a 30 minute commute to school each day.

He was away from the classroom setting for several years and saw this position as “a chance to get into a school and have some control over its destiny; I want to make a difference.” Job security was not a key factor in accepting this position as he was tenured with another board for the past 18 years. “Job security was not really a key factor for me. I have 18 years now. I’m pretty secure. Although, the ironic thing is I’m now on a probationary contract with a new school board.” He does admit, however, “I guess I’m secure in the sense that administrators can’t be bumped out of their positions by teachers or other principals.”

He already had completed all the necessary requirements before commencing the position. “I have my Master’s degree in Educational Administration. But I did start out as a teaching principal—my first two years in this profession actually.” He has a Master’s degree in Educational Administration and has completed all the course requirements for a Masters’ degree in Curriculum and Instruction. None of the courses he did when he completed his

Master's degree dealt with teaching principals; "nothing prepares you for this." He does add that the courses he took primarily involved the principal as plant manager, instructional leader and evaluator, but did not include principal as teacher. Although the first two years of his professional career has been as a teaching principal, he feels that he is still new to the teaching principalship because it had been such a long time ago.

He is unsure of the origin of the teaching principalship at his school but it has been in existence for a while. The all grade school with a population of slightly over one hundred pupils was allocated one administration unit which is spread over two administrators and is included in the eleven teaching units along with the resource teacher and challenging needs teacher. Both the principal and vice-principal have considerable teaching duties; the principal teaches 6 out of 14 credits or 43 percent excluding preparatory time. Paul teaches senior high social studies and this portion of the Kindergarten to twelve school is run on a fourteen day cycle with five one hour periods per day. Most days he teaches two periods but some days he teaches three or four depending on the schedule.

One third of the physical structure of the building itself was removed after six portable classrooms were condemned. They are now in the process of building a new wing on the school and until it is completed, finding physical space to hold classes continues to be a challenge. The school day is sometimes disrupted by the noise of the carpenters but that is taken in stride.

There are numerous administrative duties, most of which is handled conjointly by the teaching principal and the teaching vice-principal. Paul sees his vice-principal as his greatest

support. He, like Paul, is new to his current position but has taught at the school for many years. Together they deal with discipline, student suspension, newsletters for the various levels and staff issues. Although some duties such as monthly reports, calls to the board, calls to parents and the running of the physical plant are solely the responsibility of the teaching administrator, he tries to avoid dividing duties. Both the principal and the vice-principal have backgrounds in school improvement, so much of their work is a team effort. The vice-principal has become invaluable to the teaching principal. They both have backgrounds in team building, and they have similar goals. Needless to say, this administrator wants to acknowledge the efforts and support of the vice-principal, especially the responsibility for administering the school. It does not rest solely on his shoulders.

As mentioned previously, his teaching duties include three courses in social studies at the senior high level. He teaches six out of a possible fourteen credits or 43 percent of the time. Preparation for his courses is done at home because he really has no time to prepare for his classes during his preparatory time as he is constantly dealing with administrative issues during the school day. "There is always something new; student suspension, new children to the school, usual call or two from the board office, parent calls."

He is often called away from his class to attend to an urgent message. During this time if a teacher is available, s/he covers his class in his absence. "I have to leave classes to take calls or deal with parent issues which means teachers who are free have to cover my classes, especially when an emergency comes up. Needless to say, teaching sometimes suffers." He did not explain what happens if a teacher was not available. Like other

administrators, Paul serves on the school council and attends meetings in the evenings on a regular basis. He admits that he is still trying to find his place and niche in the school.

A day for this educator begins around 7:45 a. m.; forty-five minutes before the staff arrives. He car pools with the vice-principal so they have a chance to discuss school issues during the 30 minute commute to and from school each day which saves some time. He and the vice-principal discuss in the morning the plans for the day. Teachers and support staff arrive between 8:20 and 8:30 and from 8:20, the teaching principal deals with teacher concerns and issues such as finding class space, discussing a particular student and so on. Letters are drafted for the secretary. Calls are taken throughout the day from the board office, parents or other groups. He has recess and lunch supervision as well as two or three periods to teach. The school day ends at 3:00 p. m. but teachers are not permitted to leave until 3:30 during which time the principal deals once again with teacher concerns, makes appropriate telephone calls and so on. Once the teachers and students have left the building, the two administrators discuss plans for the following days and weeks. They try to leave around 4:30 p. m. but most days it is 5:00 p. m. which means he does not get home until well after 6:00 p. m. "The school ends at three, teachers leave at three thirty. I try to leave by four thirty but most days it's five. I get home around six or a quarter to (six)."

The declining enrolment does mediate the combined role to a degree, and this teaching principal has dealt with some problems especially teacher evaluations. He has already been on the evaluation team so far this year. Five individuals are being evaluated this year, including himself and the vice-principal. "Evaluation is a touchy area. There are staff

problems--yes between teachers--but as long as you're fair, it's O. K." There are staff problems but as long as he is fair and consistent, everyone is fine. He sometimes feels like an intruder in an already well established group and he has to mediate disputes between teachers but he did not elaborate further with an example. He does admit that he has "to mediate disputes between teachers on a daily basis." With areas concerning parents and/or students, however, he tries to support the teacher fully.

He has to mediate disagreements between teachers and students. "I do have to deal with teacher-teacher disputes as well as teacher-student disputes, particularly when there are extremely high teacher expectations and low student expectations." He also mediates disputes between parents and teachers. For the most part, support is given to the teacher while ensuring that what is being done is best for the student. He tries to create an acceptable atmosphere but sometimes had to take teachers to task and intervene when there has been a gross error or miscalculation in judgement.

Paul is not sure what supports presently exist to aid the teaching principal or what supports are in the planning stages of implementation. He acknowledges his vice-principal and his secretary who has been in that school for twenty years as his support network. He especially sees his secretary as his greatest support and readily admits that at times she runs the school ensuring that memos and meetings go ahead on time. He has not been told of any professional development days available for himself or his colleagues. There is a tentative partnership with the coordinators at the board level who help with some things such as curriculum planning, and determining course objectives.

There are some advantages to this dual role. He especially enjoys the improving teacher-principal relationship. The collegiality is tense at times but he is developing a sound relationship. He likes the rapport that he is developing with the students and their parents. He thinks that the professionalism both at the classroom and at the office level is advantageous. "I'm developing a good professional rapport with students and parents, both as a classroom teacher and administrator."

Conversely, time appears to be the greatest drawback. "Time is a commodity—quaint but true." There are so many things that he wants to do and would do but there is not enough time to realize them. "There are so many things you want to do but not enough time to do it. Sometimes I feel like I'm barely keeping my head above water." He has to consciously make time for his family because he has so little of it free. He believes the time spent with his children keeps him in touch with reality and he is thankful that he does live a considerable distance away from the school so he is not tempted to go down there in the evenings to complete work or to finish something that he had started that day.

I have to make time to be with my family. You have to force yourself to make time because school can consume all your free time. My children keep me in touch with reality. I'm glad I live away from the school. It's a good thing. I'm not tempted to go down (to school) all the time.

The bonus is not an incentive. Fifty-five hundred dollars a year is insignificant when he considers the pay cut he took when he moved to the area. "There is little incentive. You're expected to teach for very little money and prestige. It's really two full time positions." He adds that "it's stressful, frustrating, demanding, rewarding." It is especially exasperating

when he goes in every morning with a planned schedule but seventy-five percent of his plans get altered or scrapped altogether. "I go in every morning with a planned schedule but 75% of my plans get changed which can be very irritating." While he has learned to be flexible, he acknowledges that the job is quite demanding and aggravating at times.

"This job is very tiring, between 12 and 13 hours a day, sometimes 10, sometimes 15. It all depends on the day and the time of the year." The administrative part of his dual role is done at school but a lot of it is also done early in the morning, before classes, after school or at home.

The teaching principal is really two full time positions. There is less contact time with students. All grading, preparation time and report cards are done at home. A lot of administration stuff is done at home as well--contacting parents, month end reports and so on.

He acknowledges that there are distinct differences between a teaching principal and a full time administrator or teacher. With the teaching principalship, the two roles are combined into one and the teaching principal has to be "a model teacher for other teachers as well as students." He has to be the instructional leader in the school. He does all the administrative duties the position entails such as reports and discipline but he has teaching duties as well. Conversely, he has the administrative duties to fulfil that a full time teacher does not. The teaching principalship is really "two full time positions and at times one position suffers for the sake of the other. It is unavoidable with this job description."

"My advice for anyone going into administration? Go in with your eyes open and roll with the punches. You have to be flexible and always expect surprises." He cautions

future administrators not to take anything personally or as a slight to his/her character and person but always be ready for anything.

Like the others, Paul intends on staying. He left a secure job for this one but would leave if there was little incentive, increased demands on his time, or more responsibilities such as extra teaching duties.

I think I'm going to stay but if I were to leave, it would be for several reasons. If the demands increased every year, more responsibilities such as more teaching duties--too frustrating, too much stress.

His reasons for remaining include seeing the influence he has on the system, working along side with teachers, the contact with students, the sense that he is having an effect, however minor, on the system. "I like to think I'm having an effect." He takes a great deal of pride in his work and sees himself not solely as a teacher or a principal but as an educator; one who is responsible for the overall education of children.

Case Five

The fifth participant interviewed was also shadowed for one and a half school days in early January of this school year. With this individual case analysis the typical day is described thoroughly beginning with the school council meeting attended the previous evening. The pattern for the information follows a similar format as with the four individuals interviewed previously.

The fifth teaching principal is male, in his early thirties who has been in the educational field for seven years as a substitute teacher, replacement teacher and now as a

teaching administrator. He lives and works in the remote community which is accessible to other communities by snowmobile during the winter months or by boat in the Spring and Autumn. He is currently in his second year as the teaching principal at this particular school.

From the interview and observation, it seems that this individual is resourceful, flexible, creative, supportive, direct, honest, industrious, helpful, intuitive, attentive and organized. He has goals that he is determined to accomplish such as getting resources for his students, he accepts his limitations (there are so many things that he wants to do but does not have the time to do it), he realizes his capabilities and sets goals accordingly.

He was attracted to and applied for the position because it was the only permanent position available that offered security. "I accepted this position because there were no other positions available. It's secure. Other administrators or teachers can't bump into administrative positions." He accepted the position because of its permanence but also because it provided a job opportunity for his wife who currently holds the half time position as the special education teacher. "By accepting this position, I knew my wife would have a chance at the other position in this school as there is only housing for one family available." Prior to this, he had held replacement positions and consequently wanted more stability in his career; his spouse had primarily been a substitute teacher. The relative isolation did not attract many individuals who are willing to live and work in remote communities.

As with the other participants, a Master's degree is required as a pre-requisite for the position. He was in the process of completing his Master's Degree in Learning Resources when he was offered the position and presently has three courses remaining to complete his

degree. He had no administrative experience prior to accepting the position, however, since "it was primarily a teaching position, I did not anticipate any serious problems." He anticipated that the administrative duties would be relatively minor considering that the school only housed 9 students." However, he adds that he did not expect the amount of paperwork and all the minor duties and responsibilities such as doing monthly reports, attending meetings, or surveys that he has facsimiled to him on numerous occasions. "I have to do sheets for the student assistant, fire inspection sheets, monthly reports, janitor and student attendance not to mention every survey that comes from the board office."

From the beginning of the school's existence, there has always been a teaching principalship. Initially there were two full time teaching units because student numbers warranted it. However, with only nine students there is only one full time position. It was necessary to add a half unit because of the need for a special education teacher; three of the students are having difficulty with their reading programs and consequently are not reading at their grade level. There is also a student assistant to help in the afternoon.

As with case three, a small school needs an enrolment of 50 pupils in order to be allocated administrative time. This school has a student population of nine with a teacher allocation of one and a half units and a student assistant. There is no vice principal or secretary therefore he handles all administrative and secretarial duties in addition to his teaching duties. There is a custodian who cleans the school two hours every afternoon. The teacher allocation will remain the same for the next school year as there is only one student who will be leaving to attend senior high.

All required courses are taught at the school with the exception of French; the teachers are unable to teach this subject. There is no formal physical education program but one 45 minute class is provided every Friday afternoon at the community hall; the students vote on which activity they are going to do. As the teaching principal has a background in music, he also offers one music class a week as well.

The physical layout of the school includes two relatively large classrooms, a foyer, a computer centre on a higher level attached to the principal's classroom, and a library/office/corridor. The corridor to the bathrooms has shelves lining one wall with various text and resource materials and a telephone is attached to the inside wall just outside the classroom. The cord enables the principal to bring the receiver into the classroom where he can keep an eye on his students while he is answering the call.

Art work and students' projects are displayed in the foyer and the classroom is decoratively arranged and airy. As there is only one clock in the classroom the participant has to ring a bell to signal the end of the first period in the morning, recess and lunch hour; the bell is not needed in the afternoon as all students are with him. The school is supplied with three computers one of which is connected to the Internet. There is a facsimile machine, printer, photocopier and numerous computer programs for both the principal and students. The community itself is small with several houses, a church, a community centre/theatre, school and a church.

The list of duties are considerable including ordering school supplies such as texts and janitorial supplies, balancing the monies allocated for the school and accounting for all

expenditures, completing monthly reports, student and teacher attendance, inventories, deciding when to close school in case of inclement weather, and answering all mail and facsimiles.

He is the instructional leader and decisions for courses and/or objectives rest with him. Courses such as music and physical education are combined and similar objectives are taught across the curriculum, such as literature but with different stresses for the various grade levels.

This individual primarily teaches grades four to nine in a multi-graded situation and is also responsible for grades one, two and three in the afternoon because the other teaching position in the school is only for the morning sessions. His wife is responsible for Kindergarten to grade three including special education at these grades as well as for grades four and six. The school operates on a five day schedule with seven classes a day with no preparation time for the courses he instructs. "Prep time? What's that? I have no preparation time. All of my lessons plans and correcting are done in the evening or after school." Administrative duties are taken care of in the morning, during lunch, after school, in the evenings, as well as during the instructional day.

This participant lives in the community; specifically in a one bedroom apartment attached to the school. He is hoping that the school board will agree to build an additional room on the apartment for his small but growing family. He adds that the only thermostat for the entire building (including the school and the apartment) is in his living room which means he has to regulate the temperature but it is also there in case of emergencies such as

pipes freezing and/or bursting.

One full school day was observed but he notes that this was not a typical day for him as there are usually more interruptions. Nevertheless, the day for this participant began at 8:00 a. m. when he had to come across the river to pick up his observer and return to the school; a round trip of over 30 minutes. The computer technician who was also scheduled to arrive that morning elected to drive his own snowmobile over to the school otherwise he would have had to transport him as well. The participant opens the school at 8:50 to let the students in to prepare for morning classes. After a quick head count, the first class begins at 9:00 a. m.

On this particular day, two of the students had a spelling test while the third student worked on problem solving. After the ten minute quiz, problem solving for all the students began. The older students took responsibility for the younger ones, ensuring that they were kept on task. The students themselves are responsible, well behaved, approachable, curious, attentive and independent. The multi-graded situation is relaxed and the teacher enjoys a good rapport with the students. He is patient, firm, attentive, supportive and a little humorous.

Aside from an occasional glance, both the technician and the observer are ignored by the students as they continue their classes. One student in particular tried to include the observer but was quickly put back on task by both the teacher and the students. The bell was rung at 10:00 to signal the beginning of the second hour and the end of language class.

During the first period there were two interruptions by the computer technician

asking for something or explaining a particular item on the computer. There was also a telephone call during this class explaining the delay in the arrival of their calendars. Seat work was assigned as the teacher took care of the call. The telephone is installed on the exterior wall of the classroom in the corridor leading to the bathroom. The teacher is able to have visual contact (a nod or glare to keep students on track) while he is taking the call.

The participant has an assigned reward system for everything from not pushing others on the way to school to having homework completed neatly and correctly to staying in their seats while he is on the telephone. The students can use their points at the end of the month (if over 20) to select a prize such as a book or extra time on the computers in addition to their computer class.

The recess bell is rung, sometimes by a student, at 10:45 a. m. to begin recess and again at 11:00 to end recess. There is no canteen but the students are provided with crackers and a spread and milk or juice. Some students also take this time to help others with their reading. The older students may read a book for the younger ones or the younger ones may read a book with help from an older student.

During the second period of the morning, literature, there were two more calls, one of which was for the computer technician. Sometimes for literature the students study poetry. This particular day they studied a couple of poems by David Woods whom they have all met. This young poet from Nova Scotia visited them during Drama Fest the previous year. The students were keenly interested and while all read the same poem, questions were asked and points explained that appealed to all age levels. Clearly the younger students

received enrichment but were not daunted by difficult words or unfamiliar expressions. They have a rule that after the first reading a student may get 25% of the meaning, 50% after the second reading, 75% after the third and 100% after the fourth. One student in particular asked to read and insisted that he did not get 25% after the first reading so he asked to read it aloud again. All were assigned questions --some of which they made up themselves--and were put in groups to help each other with the poem.

During the last period of the morning--science-- there was a fourth call. During science two older students worked on a science project under the watchful eye of the teaching principal and wrote up the lab assignment. They finished early so they asked if they could alter the experiment a little to observe changes which the teacher agreed provided they write up those results too. James (assumed name) worked with the remaining younger students on a different project dealing with soil. This project was an objective for several grade levels so it was completed by several students. With a multi-grading situation, James noted that the objectives for each subject had to be taught not the text itself; the text in these instances becomes the resource or learning aid in completing the objective. Understandably organization is certainly necessary.

Lunch hour started at 12:00 p. m. and the participant let them in at 12:50 to prepare for the afternoon session. The first class of the afternoon began at 1:00 which was music and ended at 1:45. In the afternoon session, James has all grades from one to nine therefore his music class is general and appealing to all. At 1:45 the younger students on this day were assigned printing or writing depending on their grade level and the older three students

worked on projects which they may print up on the computer. Their final work is then displayed on the bulletin board next to the classroom's exit for all to see. The last class of this particular day was physical education which they have at the community centre. They may suggest a game or activity which has to appeal to all grade levels and then the class votes. During the afternoon session, a teacher aid helps some students who are having difficulty with certain courses such as reading or mathematics. The special education teacher prepares for the teacher aid what has to be done with a particular student for the afternoon session as she is not working in the afternoon. Classes end at 3:00 but the teaching administrator's day does not end with the final bell. He has to prepare various facsimiles for the school board and the Department of Education. He prepares his lessons for the following week and he agrees to a 40 minute interview concerning his responsibilities and duties in his dual role.

The only thing typical about his day is that he teaches all seven periods--there are no preparation periods allotted in his schedule and his day is usually 7 to 10 hours long excluding preparation time for classes and correcting. Some days it can be as long as 15 hours; it really depends on the time of the year. The evening before the observation, for example, this teaching principal attended a school council training session which began at 4:00 p. m. and ended around 9:15 p. m. with an half hour taken for supper which was provided by the session organizers.

James noted several advantages to his current position. Both he and his wife have relative job security; he has an excellent professional relationship with the teacher assistant

and the special education teacher who happens to be his wife. He enjoys the close relationship he has developed with his students—some of the younger ones play with his three year old son. He gets to spend a considerable amount of time with his wife although it is in a professional capacity. As the atmosphere in the school is comfortable and welcoming, it is not uncommon for the second teacher to drop by in the afternoon to prepare for classes the next day or the next week and their son comes along with her therefore he gets to see his son very briefly on occasion.

He and his family are accepted by the community and while he has little privacy living in a small community, it is nonetheless respected. "Because of my position, I am constantly on guard. There are things that are acceptable and those that are not. I feel everyone in this community knows what I'm doing and when. That's why I leave when I can for week-ends and vacation." He got to know the people in the area relatively quickly and appreciates the support they give him in respect to the students and school. Consequently there is little or no discipline problems.

There is however a high teacher turnover rate. The longest anyone has stayed in the considerably remote community was four years. While James does not see himself leaving in the foreseeable future, if a job became available teaching English in Senior high or in learning resources, he would not hesitate to apply for it. "If a position became available teaching at the high school level I would apply for it." While he enjoys the challenge his job offers, the remoteness, however, is a distinct disadvantage. "I feel isolated sometimes."

Also the lack of adequate available housing is another drawback. While a one

bedroom apartment is adequate for his needs now, his son is getting older and does require a bedroom of his own. There is no other housing available in the community.

He has numerous roles from teacher, principal, to councillor, physical education teacher, coach, drama advisor, and secretary. It becomes especially burdensome when he has to play all roles in one day. A lack of privacy is not necessarily a distinct disadvantage as he is respected by the community. He is nonetheless highly visible in the community and is known simply as the "teacher". "I'm known as the teacher, not (James). It's like my whole personality is tied up in my profession. I have no other identity in this community."

If he were unable to get away on the weekends when he wanted to, isolation would be a definite drawback. "There's not much to do in this community. Luckily we are able to go to (the nearest larger centre) on week-ends. We don't feel isolated here then." When the early spring thaw or the early freeze up make it impossible to use either the snowmobile or boat, then the feelings of isolation begin to surface. Thankfully it lasts about two to three weeks only.

He stresses that his greatest support is his wife. They share, where possible, the teaching duties. He is allotted two professional development days a year and his school is often paired with another school about forty or fifty kilometres away so he gets the chance to meet with other professionals and specifically another teaching principal like himself. They have social events together as well as professional days. He adds that he really does not know the duties and responsibilities of principals in larger urban areas but he assumes that the duties are similar to his. He believes that maybe they have more time to implement

changes and programs but he acknowledges that they have different problems too, such as increased student discipline which is really not a problem for him. In respect to other teachers he adds that they may have more preparation time allotted in their schedule but they also have larger classes although they may not have multi-graded classes which is a challenge in itself. "I don't want school to become my life, but unfortunately it's not working out that way."

James would like to eventually teach at a high school or in another area if the opportunity arose. "I see myself as a teacher first, principal second." He considers himself to be a teacher primarily, administration encompasses added duties which sometimes take him away from his instruction. He advises anyone wanting to pursue this career choice to get organized but to be flexible as each day is never the same and can be both rewarding and demanding.

Each participant's account of their personal experience in a teaching principal position has been invaluable to this study. They have shared the positive aspects of their positions as well as their challenges. While it is these positive elements that keep them where they are, the challenges often have left them frustrated and stressed causing them to question their reasons for remaining. Their advice for any hopeful future administrator is unequivocally "get organized, be flexible, know your limits and do what you can."

CHAPTER FIVE

Cross Case Analysis

The life of a teaching principal is anything but dull. Many responsibilities and duties encompass this challenging position and the individual him/herself must be equally dedicated, resourceful, confident, industrious, persistent, driven, ambitious, organized, and above all unbelievably flexible. The five teaching principals interviewed for this research possess these traits and qualities in abundance. All love the challenge of their job, the closeness it affords with colleagues and community but all agree that it is equally frustrating at times and highly stressful, "sometimes rewarding and very demanding."

Respecting Yin's (1984) model, each teaching administrator was examined individually in the previous chapter. The following is a cross-case analysis of the five individuals in keeping with the literature review. Some salient points are consistent with the review of the literature but others are distinctly different and unique in ways as well. This cross case analysis follows to a large extent the pattern presented in the literature review.

"Typical" Teaching Principal

Of the five individuals interviewed, only one is female. Interestingly, Feistritzer, 1988 (cited in Chance & Neuhauser, 1991) noted that women hold only a fraction of the administrative positions yet they comprise more than 69% of all teaching positions. Fauth (1984) observed that only 20% of all elementary principals are female and less than 4% are

secondary principals.

Following a ten year study in 1989, Doud concluded that the typical rural principal is a "white, married, male in his forties". While four of the participants are white, male and married, two are under 32 years of age while the two other males do fit this limited profile. Curiously, Muse and Thomas (1989) contradicted Doud's theory of the typical rural administrator and suggested that the typical rural administrator is "white, male, young, and inexperienced." The two remaining male teaching principals interviewed lend support to Muse and Thomas' theory.

Muse and Thomas (1989) also stated that the typical rural principal has five years of experience or less in his respective principalship and in fact the rural principalship is frequently used as a "stepping" or "proving ground" to other administrative positions in larger, often urban, areas. In their 1989 study of seven western states, Muse and Thomas reported that 52% of rural principals indicated that they had less than five years as principal in their present districts. Of the five principals interviewed for this research, all five participants have less than five years administrative experience in their current positions. One principal had six years as an administrator, prior to this position, in another school within the district. Furthermore, three participants are under thirty-two years of age with less than ten years in the education field and two have more than 15 years experience, specifically 18 and 24 years.

When conducting the research for the literature review for this study, information concerning the level of education received by rural teaching administrators was not readily

available and was therefore not included in the chapter. However, it was assumed that all administrators had at least an education degree and/or a Master's degree of some sort. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that assumption may not necessarily be accurate in all situations or circumstances. Interestingly, of the five interviewed only two currently hold a Master's degree, both are in Educational Administration. One is presently pursuing a Master's degree, in Leadership, formerly Educational Administration, another is a few courses short of a Masters's degree in Learning Resources. The fifth does not hold a Master's degree but plans to eventually pursue one within the next five or six years.

Of the five individuals interviewed for this study, four participants were hired for their present jobs prior to the completion of their current degrees but on the condition that a Master's degree or courses toward one would eventually be undertaken. Of these four specific individuals only one had prior experience in an administrative position; the remaining three had no experience. However, the fifth individual, who had already completed the educational requirements for his current position, had also been previously hired as an administrator prior to the completion of his Master's degree; the first two years of his career were as a teaching principal.

One salient point which emerged from this study and voiced by researchers such as Jacobson and Woodworth (1990), Chance and Lingren (1988) and Grady (1990) was a lack of preparedness for their current position. Interestingly, three administrators alluded to a lack of preparation for their present positions as a significant challenge. One principal who completed her Master's degree in Nova Scotia noted that

there was no mention of teaching principals in any of the courses I did, certainly not teaching principals. The professors assumed that the principal was initially a teacher. In all the courses I did, the principal was referred to as a plant manager, not as a teacher.

She added “my administrative experience prepared me for my degree. My degree did not prepare me to be a teaching administrator.” Additionally, she felt that a one day in-service was also insufficient as she had more questions than answers at the end of the session.

Another teaching principal, who completed his Master’s degree before the reorganisation of the graduate programs, noted that there was no reference to teaching principals in the courses he completed either and the third added that there was one course that he took which dealt with rural issues. This course, however, briefly touched on the concept of the teaching administrator as there were so many topics covered because of the nature of the course. He took this course out of interest; it was not compulsory for his degree.

Rural Communities

Four of the participants were connected with the communities where their respective schools are located prior to accepting the position. Interestingly, three state this point as one of the reasons for pursuing and consequently accepting the position. One principal (David) was born and raised in the community where he now lives and works. Another, John, is the teaching principal in the community where his father was raised. He used to live there initially when he first became employed and would still be living there if housing was available for him and his young family. Of the other two, Maria was born and raised in the

adjacent community and frequented the area as an adolescent competing against the neighbourhood school in various sporting events. The fourth (Paul) is from and now lives a short distance away from the community where his respective school is located. While the fifth participant (James) was acquainted with the community where he now lives and works but did not grow up there, he was raised in a small rural community on the east coast of Newfoundland.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) propose that administrators who had grown up in rural or small communities were inclined to apply for positions in rural areas. They tended to do so after having taught for a number of years in the same school or in another school in the area. Of the five participants, one had taught in the same school where he is now the administrator and another had taught in another school within the community. David supports this theory; "I live and work in the same community I grew up in." Maria adds, "I grew up in the neighbourhood community and I used to compete against this school and the high school in sports."

However, according to Baltzell and Dentler (1983) the current trend is to "seek candidates from outside the district who will 'fit' the community's image of a school principal ..." although Muse and Thomas suggest that the notion of 'fit' is rather ambiguous (cited in Baltzell and Dentler, 1983). The three remaining candidates were hired outside the community although two were familiar with the surrounding area.

Small Schools

Of the five schools administered by the teaching principals interviewed two operate as a Kindergarten to Grade 12 School, one houses Kindergarten to grade 9, another has Kindergarten to Grade 8 and the last is an elementary school with grades Kindergarten to grade six. Four of the schools have a student population of 100 or less. This population parameter was deliberately selected, however.

Nevertheless, one of the schools has a current population of 150 but was initially selected because as of June of the previous school year it had a population within the accepted parameters and starting in September of the next school year will continue to have a pupil population total of under 100. It was decided to keep this particular school as part of the study primarily because it was one of the initial schools selected, the teaching principal was interested in remaining a part of the study, it had the required population at the time (it is still a small school) and because of its location. Five teaching principals were selected from various geographical areas around the island, Labrador, the Northern Peninsula, Central Newfoundland, the South West Coast and the South East Coast.

Depending on the student enrolment, the characteristics of the school alter slightly. The teaching units vary understandably with the student population. Two schools have a teacher allocation of 12 and 10 units respectively because of their status as a Kindergarten to grade 12 school; one has four and a half units, another has two and a half units and the last school with a student population of under ten pupils has been allocated one and a half units.

All schools have instances of multi-grading and three risk losing their older student population, specifically their junior and senior high students, if their schools are realigned. Right now two of the schools operate as an All-Grade School and while one principal believes that the community will definitely fight to keep the school as it is, it is foreseeable that the senior high will be bussed to a larger community which is more than 50 kilometres away. One of the remaining schools which has a population of 34 pupils has already lost its senior high students and now risks losing its junior high students as well. All believe, however, that the school does not face closure as long as there are young school children under twelve years of age.

Furthermore, Cross, Leahy and Murphy (1989) assert that the school is an essential and invaluable asset to any rural community because it enhances its worth and prosperity in addition to providing a variety of social, cultural and educational services. "...It provides the community with a sense of identity ..." (Miller, 1993, p. 93).

The schools themselves have either always been administered by a teaching principal or have been for the last ten or more years. Two of the schools which have at least 100 pupils and house Kindergarten to grade twelve students have two administrators whereas the three remaining each with population of 83, 34 and 9 respectfully have only one administrator. The elementary school with the population of 83 pupils has only one administrator. However, there is a teacher who is willing to resume the responsibilities of the administrator in the absence of the principal due to meetings, conferences or illness.

One significant concern for two of these administrators interviewed is the

programming they are offering to their students. One administrator laments that "it is a bare bones program for the students." There is no longer a physical education or music program for the students and the French specialist is shared with two other schools which means students have fewer classes than those in a larger school. While there are obvious advantages to multi-grading such as increased student independence and working with others through cooperative learning situations, this principal is concerned that course objectives are watered down or not thoroughly covered. She notes that "there's never enough time to do anything the way you want" in respect to her administrative duties. The same could apply to her teaching duties as well.

The second principal acknowledges the increase in multi-grading at his school as well, especially for next year. While some students avail of independent studies and distance education courses, he adds he is concerned because "there is no depth in programming. We have to get by with so little, no resources" and he adds that teachers are stretched to the maximum. One challenging needs teacher is responsible for several challenging needs students and there is only one resource teacher for the entire school.

It is interesting that two other principals note that the programming for their respective schools was reduced in respect to music, physical education and French but did not acknowledge this as a major concern or disadvantage for their students.

Reasons for Seeking Teaching Principalships

Although reasons for seeking rural principalships range from a desire to guide the school in the direction the principal perceives the school should go (Sackney, 1980) to the familiarity with the rural community (Muse and Thomas, 1991), few rural principals in the literature cited job security as a key factor. Interestingly, four of the five participants cite job security as either the main reason or one of the main reasons for accepting the position. "Being a teaching administrator primarily meant job security. Job security was paramount."

One was hired with no teaching or administrative experience at all and two were hired with less than five years teaching experience. A second individual adds that it was the only permanent job available with his school board which would eventually guarantee tenure; before this position he had been on replacement contracts which provided no permanence. The third reiterates that her previous job was going to be declared redundant for the following school year and she was encouraged to apply for her current position because it was more secure. The fourth individual who offers job security as a primary reason had more than ten years of experience but was still junior to his colleagues on the seniority list and was in danger of lay off. These four participants all agreed that a teaching principalship afforded them more security than teaching seniority itself as few people are reluctant to take on such demanding responsibilities in a small, sometimes very remote, community. The fifth individual who did not offer job security as a reason for accepting his position did acknowledge "I'm secure in the sense that administrators cannot be bumped." Importantly,

other administrators or teachers cannot bump into administrative positions even if that administrator has less experience.

Of the four who cited job security as a significant reason for accepting the job, one individual notes that the community where he lives and works is not accessible to another community by road; he has to take a 15 minute snowmobile ride or a 15-20 boat ride. For all remaining cases, the nearest town is over a thirty minute drive in acceptable weather conditions, making their communities relatively isolated; the nearest city is more than two hours away by car or plane.

Other reasons cited for accepting these principalships include wanting to have an influence on the system, seeing their effect on the school which supports Sackney's notion that principals want their schools to reflect their visions. Also being familiar with the area or having already taught in the community have been offered as other reasons for seeking the rural teaching principalship (Muse and Thomas 1991). However, the primary reason for four of these individuals remains relative job security.

Challenges

All concur that declining enrolments and reduction in teacher allocation have contributed to the increased teaching responsibilities of the administrator and they foresee their duties and responsibilities increasing in the future. "I'm teaching at least sixty percent of the time. It's going to be more next year because we're losing three or four units." Jacobson and Woodworth (1990) note the dual role of administrators in rural communities.

All of the teaching principals interviewed teach more than 60 percent of their time during the school day including scheduled preparation periods and two are presently teaching one 100 percent of their time. Nachtigal (1987) notes the numerous demands placed on the administrator and "the rural principal is often forced to assume more responsibilities that can be adequately managed..." (p. 33) because of his/her position within the community and due to the small school status.

All five participants have considerable administrative duties in addition to their teaching assignments such as completing monthly reports, ordering supplies, sending out memos, undertaking teacher evaluation and so on. Duke (1988) cites "hundreds of human interactions, the evenings filled with meetings and paperwork, the pressures to meet impossible deadlines and the burdens of handling other people's problems" (p.310) as being a part of the every day responsibilities of the administrator.

The five individuals interviewed concur that there was no such thing as a typical day and the only typical thing about it is its length. All five participants agreed that they spend at least 10 hours a day on their dual responsibilities, not including the time they spend preparing lessons and/or correcting tests and assignments "but some days it's more like 15." Depending on the time of the school year, some days can be very long if meetings, parent teacher conferences and paperwork are included. All are members of their school council; one of the requirements of being a principal. All participants note that their administrative duties are performed before classes begin, during lunch hour, after school or in the evenings in addition to during the school day.

All five participants admit that sometimes their teaching is interrupted to deal with an administrative matter such as an irate parent or something as simple as answering a telephone. Maria notes, "I have to leave class to take calls . . . especially when an emergency arises." John and James add, "I have no secretary. Who's going to answer the telephone?" Grady, in her 1990 study of rural Nebraska, noted that interruptions was provided as a significant disadvantage. While her study did not detail how the principals dealt with this particular obstacle, all participants interviewed in this study explain how they overcome this particular challenge. Each individual, however, handles these interruptions differently. Two have available teachers cover their classes if an administrative crisis or emergency arises, another has the school secretary keep an eye on her students while they are doing seat work. The fourth assigns seat work and puts a responsible trustworthy student in charge but can still maintain visual contact with his class as his office is just across the hall from his classroom. The fifth participant has asked for and has a telephone installed in his classroom to take calls. While this is not as private as a separate office, he can essentially get the basics of the reason for the call and contact that person at a more convenient time and date.

All of the five participants have noted that at some point, one of their roles has interfered with the other and, more often than not, it is their teaching that suffers the most, especially when urgent administrative matters have to be dealt with immediately resulting in a loss of instruction time. According to David, "teaching got to suffer, just from the loss of instructional time alone. Never mind that you may have dealt with a particularly difficult situation earlier that day and it's affecting your frame of mind for your class." Another

significant point that arose from this research which did not evolve with the literature review was how these teaching administrators saw themselves in the first instance. Considering the responsibilities and importance of the job, it could be assumed that teaching principals considered themselves to be administrators first. However, when asked how they perceived themselves first as a principal or teacher, curiously, four of the five participants in this study maintain that they see themselves as teacher first, administrator second. Both Maria and David offer that they enjoy the connection they have with teaching, especially the relationship they share with their students. Maria states, "Teaching is a big part of what I do, so I guess I'm a teacher first." John maintains that "it's one of the reasons I applied for the job" whereas James states pointedly that his job "is a teaching position with a lot of administrative duties." The fifth individual elects to consider himself primarily an educator, specifically as "one who is responsible for the overall education of children."

Strengths and Advantages

Researchers such as Hutto (1990), Grady (1990) and Lewis (1990) provide some strengths and weaknesses of rural schools. Nevertheless, few have studied the escalating pressures and responsibilities of the rural principal, especially in light of the fact that increasing numbers of rural principals are also full time teachers. Two of the five participants acknowledge that within the last year or two their teaching assignments continually have increased from 40 and 50 percent to 60 and 80 percent respectively because of the student enrolment and see this increasingly heavy workload as a distinct challenge.

While a distinct challenge is the workload, there are nonetheless noteworthy advantages identified by the five participants which parallel those provided by the literature review. Of the advantages identified, good teacher/administrator communication is cited as a primary advantage. "I know parents and students very well," Maria notes. Other advantages include the small numbers of students, the close community relationship, the sense of belonging to a community, the challenge of the hybrid position, the camaraderie among staff members, the close personal relationship with students, little or no discipline problems and the retention of teaching skills. John adds, "the community appreciates my efforts."

The individuals interviewed specifically suggest job security as an advantage as well as the solid working relationship with pupils and colleagues. A third participant notes the feelings of appreciation he receives from the community as a definite advantage as well as the unfailing support from other members on staff. In addition, this particular individual, as instructional leader, suggests being able to shape the curriculum more or less as he deems appropriate to be another significant advantage.

The five participants interviewed reiterate to a degree the findings of Grady (1990) and Hutto (1990). Grady and Hutto suggest several advantages in rural settings; a competent supportive staff in touch with equally supportive parents and community in addition to a realistic number of students per class.. The rapport and support given and received between the school and community, particularly parents and students, is every urban administrator's objective.

Hutto (1990) further offers that in a small rural school there is more likelihood that courses, which may not be a part of the curriculum, may be added and easily implemented into the program because of the relatively short bureaucratic chain of command. One of the teaching principals especially notes being able to shape the curriculum as being advantageous. He, along with program specialists, decides on objectives across the curriculum, particularly when teaching in a multi-graded situation.

Another acknowledges that two 3000 level courses are currently being offered by teachers after school for students who need another 3000 level course to fulfil honours requirements for graduation. Obviously, this dedication and sacrifice by teachers outside their teaching responsibilities are a direct result of the close personal contact they share with their students which rural schools tend to provide (Hutto, 1990, Grady, 1990). The atmosphere in a rural school is more relaxed because of the sense of a mutual working relationship toward a common goal (Hutto, 1990). A repeatedly positive feature of the small rural school is undoubtedly the high graduate rate, very often 100 percent, which is higher than in urban areas by as much as five, sometimes 10 percent (Hutto, 1990).

Obstacles and Challenges

While the advantages are impressive and noteworthy, there are distinct challenges which detract from the overall experience of the rural principalship rendering it an equally demanding, frustrating, and stressful position in addition to a rewarding experience. All note

that their workload is especially demanding and the roles they have to assume throughout the day from principal, teacher, guidance councillor, coach, secretary (for some) and part-time custodian to be both challenging and frustrating. One of the participants noted his many roles from councillor to occasional custodian.

Of the five participants interviewed four state time, specifically a lack of it, as the primary challenge of the teaching principalship. They all agree that a ten hour work day is not uncommon, sometimes as much as fifteen hours long at times when meetings are scheduled, lessons have to be prepared, or when tests and assignments have to be written and/or corrected. They acknowledge that all preparation and correcting are completed in the night and much of their administrative functions are done after school or in the evenings as well. "All of my plans and correcting are done in the evenings or after school." Paul offers "most days I get in school at eight or earlier and I don't leave until 5:30. And some days it's longer than that."

Grady (1990) determined that the primary challenge with the teaching principalship was a lack of time because pressures from the dual role tended to conflict with each other. Specifically interruptions, numerous meetings, insufficient time to deal with teacher concerns, teacher evaluations and discipline problems demanded equal time. These challenges are in addition to their teaching responsibilities.

Maria sometimes feels like she is "being pulled in all different directions." Duke (1988) purports that fatigue is the problem experienced by small town principals because of the time required to meet "impossible deadlines" and the evenings "filled with meetings and

paperwork". "Some days I get home only to go back to school a half hour later for a meeting" offers Maria.

Pigford (1988) maintains that her numerous roles demanded a great deal of her personal time. She served on school boards, regularly attended community functions and participated in community activities and events at least three weekends a month to build the kind of relationship she felt was essential between the school and community. While she found this role to be very rewarding, it was also very time consuming. David notes, "I do a lot of things with the community. I coach softball, soccer, table tennis. I am the master of ceremonies for assemblies, concerts, graduation, and an occasional wedding or two."

In a study conducted by Williamson and Campbell (1987), principals acknowledged that they "had to participate in school activities outside normal working hours at risk of sacrificing (their) personal family life" (p. 110). The five participants add that the demands of their jobs also interfere with their home responsibilities and their families. One participant admits that with "this highly demanding job (her) family comes second" on the priority list while another suggests that family time for him has to be deliberately set because it helps "keep him in touch with reality". He stresses that he needs that separation from his job and his family provides that. A third participant offers that since the birth of his son, he has cut his fifteen hour days to ten so he could spend more time with his family and thus relieve his wife of the sole burden of caring for their child. Another participant reiterates that he too has cut his 15 hour days to spend more time with his growing family.

The predominant theme of all the difficulties encountered by teaching principals is

time related or more specifically a lack of it (Jacobson, 1988, Grady, 1990, Engelking, 1990, Sackney, 1990, Bates, 1993, Duke, 1988, Williamson and Campbell, 1987, Housego, 1993).

Williamson and Campbell (1987) attributed time as one of the main factors leading to principal stress and burnout. Principals did not have enough time to deal with all the demands put on them and thus were not always able to effectively manage their time.

Chance and Lingren (1988) in their study of rural South Dakota principals concluded that geographical isolation lends itself to professional isolation. Often rural administrators are prevented from attending workshops and conferences because of their location. Their location isolates these administrators and teachers from other professionals (Barnett, 1989; Kidder, 1989). Furthermore, Cross, Brandy, and Gleadow (1980) noted in their study of rural principals that . . . "perceived isolation . . . and lack of professional contacts to be major disadvantages with working in a rural setting" (cited in Haughey and Murphy, 1983, p.2).

Interestingly, only one of the teaching principals alluded distinctly to a sense of isolation; she felt very removed from the central board office because it was so far away geographically. Another, although physically isolated from the nearest community by water, felt he "would feel isolated if he could not get away on weekends."

Three of the participants, nonetheless maintain that they are in constant contact with their respective school boards and regularly attend conferences when necessary. The fifth participant does not consider a lack of communication or contact with the school board to be a major hindrance.

However, all confirm that their schedules and location rarely or never provide them

the opportunity to meet with other teaching principals. They acknowledge that this would undoubtedly be beneficial. Furthermore, although all have access to e-mail through the Internet, they seldom have time to avail of it to communicate with other teaching principals as their workloads are highly demanding. One teaching principal admits that he hates computers and does not use them. The one participant who detests computers admits that this exasperation is a result of a lack of knowledge and comprehension about the workings of computers. Three admit to using the Internet and Stem~Net infrequently but nonetheless are comfortable and familiar with using computers. Specifically, John acknowledges "anything that goes wrong with the computer I have to fix it. It's basically trial and error. A computer technician only comes once a month."

Only one of the five participants suggests the relationship he has with his teaching colleagues to be troublesome at times although he acknowledged that this is partly due to his newness in the position. "I have to mediate between teachers on a daily basis." He emphasizes, however, that in the last few months this relationship is improving. The remaining four appreciate and relish the solid professional and personal relationship they share with their colleagues. All participants acknowledge, nonetheless, that at times they "are caught in the middle of parents and teachers, or students and teachers" all demanding equal support. In their role as mediator, principals have to delicately handle these disputes although all maintain that they give their teachers their full support trusting their professionalism and integrity.

However, if the situation is not handled professionally or effectively, a break down

in communication could be the result. Teachers expect total support from their administrators more or less in exchange for their undivided support. "A teacher has to know that you support them, even when they've made an error."

Goldring (1986) recognizes that the principal must deal with loyalty conflicts between fellow teachers and parents especially when the demands of both are in conflict. Waller (1965) and Lortie (1975) note that outside the classroom, teachers want administrators to help alleviate their frustrations by dealing with difficult parents and students. Sackney (1980) supports this view when he proposes that teachers want their principals to support them and ask for their advice or suggestions when making decisions. Pigford (1988) also notes that the principal is the one often sought for support. Furthermore, Leithwood, Cousins, and Smith (1990) document that two thirds of problems the typical principal encounters "revolve around the internal workings of the school, its staff and clients" (p. 12). Mackler (1996) notes that one of the four significant issues for principals is the relationships with colleagues.

Mackler also notes that a second significant issue for administrators is the power and authority to perform their job. Sackney (1980) purports that most principals who seek this position usually do so because they want to guide the school in the direction they think schools should aspire. Bridges (1977) notes the limited powers of the principal, specifically "... his powers are often more limited than s/he anticipates" (p.206).

Principals have some influence but they do not have unlimited right to transfers or dismissals of incompetent subordinates nor can they veto the appointments of new teachers

(Sackney, 1980). According to Sackney's socialization dilemma, principals begin to realize quickly how little power they actually have.

Interestingly, one of the teaching principals interviewed acknowledges that he is very much a part of the interview process. He selects applicants to be interviewed and asks pertinent questions during the interview itself. The final decision on teacher appointments rest with him. He appreciates having the final say and suggests that the board has given him this authority because the teacher has to have such a close professional relationship with him as there are only two and a half teaching units allocated for the school. Specifically, John says, "I have the final say . . . being able to work with this person makes my job easier."

Additionally, a second principal adds that as the community where he lives and works is relatively isolated and accommodations are difficult to come by, he more or less had an impact on who would be hired for the position. The only available housing for the teaching staff is a one bedroom apartment attached to the school. The school board had really no other choice but hire his wife who is qualified for the position for the one half unit. He thinks that had his wife not been qualified as well he may not have been considered for the job.

A second administrator is frustrated with the limited decision making authority he is given. He pointedly states that he has been given "an authoritative position with no authority." The school board overrides any decision he makes although they appear to be collaborating with him which increases his frustration and exasperation. A third principal feels far removed from the decision making at the board level and does not feel involved in the

decisions that are made for her school. She realizes that she is given courtesy authority; the board expects her to approve any decisions they make without any real input or objection. Her authority is therefore qualified and limited. Furthermore, Barth (1980) contends that principals rarely control their tasks, their time, or their location.

Privacy is an issue for only two of the teaching principals. They state that a lack of privacy is a major disadvantage with working in a rural setting. These two individuals live and work in the same community. One of these two specific principals resents to a degree that anything good or bad that occurs in his life is public knowledge. "I have no privacy here," according to David. Furthermore being from the same community is another disadvantage in that the community knows his history as well. The second individual who cites this as a challenge adds that he is able to leave the community on weekends which helps alleviate the sense that his privacy is not his own. Although he has an excellent relationship with the community and is accepted by them, he acknowledges that he needs this separation at times for his own benefit. Cross, Brandy and Gleadow (1990) note a lack of privacy as one of the major disadvantages in teaching and/or administrating in a rural school.

Three of the remaining teaching administrators live at least a thirty minute drive from their school so privacy or a lack of it is not a major issue of concern. They are far enough removed from the community that their privacy is guaranteed. They reiterate, however, that they also covet their privacy. The community has certain expectations in respect to the comportment and moral values of their principals and while the principals accept this and follow it, there is still considerable stress with this expectation.

Stress and consequently frustration appear to be the resulting issue of all the challenges mentioned. Although all five participants cite numerous interruptions as a cause for concern, all took this in stride and dealt with it effectively. However, a lack of resources, or limited resources, and insufficient teacher allocation units increased not only their teaching duties but also their stress levels and feelings of frustration. Jacobson (1990) offers that isolation and limited resources do make obtaining good programs very difficult.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) in their study of 21 western states in 25 different school districts discovered that the teaching principals did face significant day to day challenges thereby increasing their stress level and frustration. This increased stress is further compounded, by the need to realize that "children all have their own history, problems (emotional or financial) and academic challenges" (Gardener, 1996, p.6). According to Paul (one of the participants), "we offer a curriculum but how can we improve student achievement if these issues are not addressed? Often it primarily becomes the responsibility of the principal."

Duke (1988) asserts that principals are "expected to be all things to all people" (p.310). Successful principals, in particular, feel an obligation to continue playing this demanding role and experience guilt when they are unable to do so (Duke, 1988). This challenge is further defined by the understanding that "school administrators are responsible for providing and improving the educational opportunities for students" (Gardener, 1996, p. 6.).

This study concluded that the teaching principalship consists primarily of challenges

with some positives. However, it is fair to add that these challenges are largely intrinsic to the situation. Gardener (1996) notes that "instruction and curriculum development as well as pupil and staff personnel responsibilities dominate the job description of the principal" (p.6).

The objective of researchers, school boards and university programs, therefore, is to determine ways of alleviating or lessening the often burdensome responsibilities of teaching principals. The concluding chapter provides several recommendations to help both prepare and aid the teaching administrator in his/her dual role.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

The idea of the rural teaching principal has altered remarkably from its original conception. According to the five individuals who participated in this study, the teaching principal has considerable administrative duties in addition to his/her teaching assignment. All teach more than 40% of the time and two of the participants teach every period in their school's scheduled timetable leaving little or no time to handle administrative matters. These two administrators specifically are not allotted administrative periods within their cycle because their student enrollment is under 50 pupils. Reports are therefore written and mailed or facsimiled prior to classes, during their lunch break, immediately after school or in the evenings making their days considerably long; at least 10 hours and as much as 15 hours on a given day.

Two individuals specifically work and reside in the rural communities where they teach. The remaining three participants live within a thirty minute drive from the school in a larger community but are nonetheless connected with their school's community. Each community where the respective schools are located have a population within the parameters suggested by Lewis (1990); all are under twenty-five hundred residents. The student enrollment in the schools is primarily under one hundred.

The advantages noted by several of the researchers in the literature are reiterated by the five participants. They do like the school and community where they teach and administer, they enjoy the relationships they share with colleagues and students and they

appreciate the support they receive from the community in their endeavours (Grady, 1990; Hutto, 1990). They acknowledge that urban administrators may not experience these advantages being in a larger setting.

They also acknowledge, however, that the challenges tend to out number the advantages although they remain in their positions. Job security was noted as one of the major advantages by four of the participants. Job security was given greater consideration because, in today's increased inflation and difficult economic times, it is no longer guaranteed. Time was noted as a challenge by all participants as their roles tended to conflict with each other on occasion, especially frequent interruptions, numerous meetings, teacher or student concerns (Pigford, 1988; Grady, 1990). One participant shared his community involvement, specifically coaching and being master of ceremonies, whereas the others maintain that their involvement was primarily through school functions.

Lack of privacy, increased workload and responsibilities as well as the escalating stress and consequent frustration were also noted (Cross, Brady & Gleadow (1980). Isolation and inadequate support services, as suggested by Chance and Linden (1988) and Jacobson (1990), were discussed.

With the realignment of the school boards, the restructuring of the school system, and increased class size and course load, the teaching principal has a great responsibility in the rural school and with it an even greater challenge juggling his/her combined roles.

Interestingly, all participants felt they were ill prepared for their dual role and felt better preparation would decrease the high teacher/principal turnover rate in rural schools.

Several recommendations were garnered from the principals from advising potential teaching principals to avoid this profession altogether to knowing what the position entails prior to accepting it. All participants acknowledged that better preparedness could be improved by both university programs and the hiring school boards themselves.

Only one individual noted that his undergraduate courses dealt with the multi-graded situation often found in rural settings as well as the role of the teaching principal in this environment. There was no separate course which dealt with these issues, however. The university had revamped its graduate program and while courses such as Current Issues in Rural Education were available, they were not compulsory requirements for the degree. This individual thought that requiring students to do one course dealing with rural education would be beneficial to all even if they never teach in a rural setting; being able to comprehend or relate to the situation is educational in itself. Requiring courses such as these both at the undergraduate and graduate level would ensure all future teaching principals have prior knowledge of the position as school boards sometimes wave the Master's degree requirement providing the individual agrees to pursue the degree at a future date.

Two of the remaining participants who had acquired a Master's degree added that there was no reference whatsoever to the rural teaching principalship in their courses and any reference to the principalship always noted urban non-teaching administrators. Only one participant who is still in the process of completing his Master's degree noted that there was one course at the graduate level which related to rural issues, particularly the multi-grading situation although not to a great extent the concept of the teaching principal. He took this

course out of interest and as an elective--it was not a requirement for his graduate program. A solid recommendation would therefore be to require all graduates, especially those in Leadership or Educational Administration, to pursue a course such as current issues in rural education or a similar one. Additional courses to choose from would also be beneficial. Instead of eliminating the former principalship course at the graduate level, for example, it is suggested that adding a course such as the rural principalship would be advantageous.

A third recommendation would be to include the "rural experience" as part of a graduate course requirement. All participants agreed, however, that this would be extremely difficult to organize and do because of the numbers of graduates, accommodations and so on. Instead of scuttling the idea, another possibility would be for the school board to provide a one week on-site in service for those taking over a rural teaching position for the new school year prior to June. The new principal would shadow the leaving principal for one week to ascertain the duties and responsibilities involved in the position and would be able to ask and receive any pertinent information that would make his/her transition easier and problem free. Another possibility would be to exchange jobs for one week (if possible) thereby alleviating the necessity of allocating funding for a substitute teacher to take over for the new teaching principal. One of the participants stated that someone really needs to spend a week to get an idea of what is involved with this position.

A fourth recommendation is to increase the allotted professional development days from two to four a year for teaching principals within districts. Teaching principals would be able to get together with other professionals to exchange methods, to benefit from the

knowledge and expertise of other more experienced rural teaching principals. One participant noted that she was given one in-service day with another teaching principal prior to fulfilling the position and she was ill prepared for the duties that awaited her; her one day only scratched the surface. Another noted that at principals' meetings in general, small schools are left out of the discussions and are made to feel inferior or inadequate because they administer fewer students. In order to obtain materials for his school the principal has to be vocal and not easily intimidated. He acknowledges that there is a little of the "old boys network" at play here; younger principals are merely tolerated.

A fifth recommendation would be to have several schools within a district administered by one principal. The principal would be solely responsible for the administrative duties and responsibilities of several schools. While the principal would have limited contact with the schools, teachers, students and community, the teachers would be free to concentrate on their teaching responsibilities and improving contact with students, parents, and the community.

The school board could also set up a network of sorts for their teaching principals to communicate to each other concerning a pertinent issue. While Stem~Net and e-mail are commonplace today it is difficult to get on-line and some administrators are uncomfortable with computers. If a web page or bulletin board was arranged for teaching principals they would be able to communicate with other professionals when isolation puts them at a disadvantage. Although Stammes (1991) noted in his study that many administrators do not use computers, more and more are logging on. Of the participants interviewed, only one

suggested that his exasperation stems from his intimidation of computers and/or instructors.

There are many possibilities available through the use of computers. New teaching principals could be partnered with an experienced administrator for one year to guide the newcomer through the daily trials and tribulations accompanying this position. Knowing that there is support when needed would greatly alleviate some of the frustration associated with the rural teaching principalship.

Another recommendation was to take principals out of the formula for teacher allocation altogether thereby ensuring administrative time during the day to organize and manage the school. Another possibility would be to reduce the amount of teaching duties a principal performs, setting a maximum at 30 or even 40% as opposed to 60 or 100%. All of the participants are teaching a considerable amount of time; from 43 to 100 percent. In fact, two principals are teaching 100 percent of the time. All teaching principals have stated a lack of time to accomplish tasks as being one of the major challenges, if not the greatest challenge. A method to attract and retain teaching principals in rural areas would undoubtedly be increased incentives or benefits. Muse and Thomas (1991) noted a high turnover rate in rural areas while Jacobson (1990) suggested several reasons for this high turnover rate; professional and geographical isolation and limited resources being two of them. Muse and Thomas (1991) noted that rural areas often became the "stepping stone" or "proving ground" for positions in urban centres. If more incentives were available, the high turnover rate may be reduced considerably. Better bonuses may be a possibility; two of the participants mentioned the relatively insignificant bonuses they received. They felt that the

teaching principalship encompassed two jobs and they were being paid only one hundred and sixty -five dollars bi-weekly or roughly five thousand dollars a year to perform the second job. Other jobs provide overtime packages but these individuals are set at a salary and small bonus and are paid for forty hours a week when they really work 50 to 80 hours a week.

Other improved benefits could include financial assistance in housing especially renting in remote areas, interest free loans for necessary purchases. In some communities the teacher or teaching principal has to buy all their groceries for the entire year in the fall at a cost of over 5000 dollars as there are no shipments in the winter months. Presently they have to get a loan from the bank and are consequently charged interest. Additionally some administrators require a snowmobile or boat as transportation in other remote areas. Interest free loans to buy these necessities, even second- hand would greatly relieve the added burden of coming into a new position. Grants or bursaries for those completing degrees would also alleviate some of the financial burden involved with continuing education. One of the participants noted that he would complete his degree when finances permitted and while the Department of Education does provide paid educational leave there are only a certain number of leaves allotted each year; not everyone who applies is fortunate enough to receive financial aid.

The greatest area of improvement and possibly the most noteworthy recommendations would be to provide more autonomy for teaching principals in respect to programs, teacher appointments, and allocation of resources. One of the most significant

issues for principals is the power and authority to perform their jobs (Mackler, 1996). One participant has noted that he was given the final decision in deciding the hiring of new teachers as he was a part of the interview team. However, another participant claimed that merely lip service was given to his suggestions and the school board did what they wanted to anyway which may not have been for the betterment of the school and students. Principals need to be informed of pertinent board level decisions and be recognized for their contributions and not too bogged down with endless paper work.

Teaching principals have considerable responsibilities. While the advantages are noteworthy, it is the challenges and obstacles, specifically being able to deal with them effectively, which determine whether or not a principal will remain in his/her position. This study has rendered a lot of interesting points, some of which need to be addressed by the individuals and their school boards, particularly in respect to the amount of administrative and teaching duties involved. Being able to better prepare an individual for his/her role both in the school and the community would help reduce the high turnover rate of teachers and principals in rural areas.

Improved incentives such as better affordable housing and/or improved bonuses would undoubtedly attract individuals to an area perhaps for a longer period of time. In light of the number of school closures facing the province in future years, it would be beneficial to study other teaching principals to determine if the duties and responsibilities have changed, stayed the same or, as the five participants in this study predicted, increased. Research on the effect of school closures on the communities and students and consequently

their school administrators and teachers would be an interesting undertaking. The underlying point which surfaces in this study is the sense of helplessness and frustration experienced by these individuals because they are not well prepared for the sometimes daunting responsibilities that await them. This study has merely scratched the surface on this fascinating topic but has nonetheless revealed the need for further study in this complex, relatively unexplored, area.

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Appendix A

The following is a list of potential questions which will be asked during the interview:

1. What attracted you to the position originally and why did you accept?
2. What was the origin of the teaching principal in your school? Was it always a criterion for the job or did it evolve after some years in the position?
3. Does the small school enrolment and staff mitigate the dual demands of your position?
4. What degree was necessary prior to commencing the position? Are you presently completing an additional degree?
5. Describe your professional preparation for the job. Were there references to rural teaching principals in the courses you completed. To what extent? Was the literature on leadership useful to you?
5. What previous experience did you have before accepting the position? Teaching or administrative?
6. Describe your work setting.
7. Describe a typical day in the week starting from when you arrive at school in the morning.
8. Describe your administrative duties and teaching duties.
9. What are some differences between your dual role and those of full time principals or full time teachers?
10. What supports presently exist or are planning to be implemented to aid you in your position? To what extent are you able to avail of professional development?
11. What are some advantages of being a teaching principal in a small rural school?
12. What are some of the drawbacks?

13. Describe some benefits and privileges of being a teaching principal?
14. What are some obstacles and/or problems associated with the dual role? What problems does the role create ie. teacher evaluation? Are you caught in the middle of disputes between teachers and students? between parents and teachers?
15. What would you suggest to anyone already in a position of teaching principal or anyone planning on becoming one?
16. What is the future of the current position in your school? Do you anticipate facing closure?
17. What are your future career aspirations?
Do you plan on leaving the position and if so what are some reasons for doing so?
18. What are some reasons for wanting to remain in the position?
19. How tiring is this job? How many hours a day do you put in? When do you do the administrative part? Does it have to wait until you get home?
20. How do you see yourself in the first instance, principal or teacher?

Appendix B

Demographic Information

NAME: _____ SEX: _____

ADDRESS: _____ AGE: 20-30 _____

_____ 31-40 _____

_____ 41-50 _____

_____ 50+ _____

1. School in which you are currently principal _____
2. Community in which school is located _____
3. Number of years you served as principal in your current school _____
4. Total number of years as principal _____
5. Total number of years working in the education field _____
6. Number of years taught before becoming principal _____
7. Position held prior to becoming principal _____
8. Community in which you reside (if different from #2) _____
9. Are you a principal in the same community in which you were raised? _____
10. Did you teach at this school prior to becoming its principal? _____
11. Highest level of education obtained _____

Appendix C

Date
P.O. Box 912
Wabush, Labrador
AOR 1B0

School Board Address

Dear (Chairperson for each board/Superintendent)

My name is Theresa Gale and I am presently in the process of writing a master thesis on teaching principals in small schools under the guidance of Dr. Dennis Mulcahy. The purpose of the study is to assess and analyse the duties and pressures involved with the dual role of teaching principal and how it would compare to their non-teaching counterparts.

The teaching principal has never been studied before in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. At present we have 116 schools in the province whose total school enrolment is less than 100 pupils and it is here one would more than likely find the teaching principal. Therefore, administrators in schools with populations less than 100 pupils will primarily be the subjects of this study.

I am writing to request your permission to undertake such a study within your school district. All subjects and school boards will be confidential and provided with an alias when used in the data and analysis. Participation is strictly voluntary and the participants may refuse to answer any question and they may withdraw from the study at any time. The interview itself will be conducted in person, over the telephone, via e-mail or a combination of all of these. I will seek permission from the participants to record the interview which, after I have finished with the recordings, will then be destroyed or returned to them upon request.

In addition, I will be seeking permission from one of the participants selected to observe them in their work setting. I would like to shadow that person, with their permission throughout one entire day. It is hoped that this will provide me with a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities involved in his/her dual role as a teaching administrator. I understand, however, that I will not be privy to any interviews or conversations of a confidential nature unless s/he wishes otherwise. In this instance a follow-up interview will be conducted and recorded (with their approval) following the job shadowing.

The proposed study has been approved by the Memorial University of Newfoundland's ethics committee.

The findings of this study will be beneficial and made available to your board. Information from the study may be used to demonstrate how the pressures of the rural teaching principalship is distinctive from that of their urban colleagues. School boards may be able to devise procedures to alleviate or help with the challenges associated with the teaching principalship which will serve for the betterment of all stakeholders involved.

In closing, I thank you for your time and consideration in viewing this request. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Dennis Mulcahy the associate dean of graduate studies, Dr. Linda Phillips or myself.

If you are willing to grant me permission to undertake this research, please forward a letter of endorsement and return it in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. I anxiously await your response.

Sincerely,

Theresa Gale

French Immersion/Core/English
Labrador City Collegiate

Phone: 709-944-2231/2232

Fax : 709-944-2652

email: tgale@calvin.stemnet.nf.ca

Appendix D

P.O. Box 912
Wabush, Labrador
AOR 1B0

Participant's Address

Dear Colleague,

My name is Theresa Gale and I am presently in the process of writing a master thesis on teaching principals in small schools under the guidance of Dr. Dennis Mulcahy. The purpose of the study is to assess and analyse the duties and pressures involved with the dual role of teacher/principal in comparison to your non-teaching counterparts.

The teaching principal has never before been studied in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. At present we have 116 schools in the province whose total school enrolment is less than 100 students and it is here one is more likely to find the teaching principal. Therefore, principals in schools with populations of less than 100 will primarily be subjects of this study.

I am writing to request your participation in this study. Please understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question posed that you feel you are unable or are unwilling to answer.

Your participation will consist of an interview either in person, over the telephone or via e-mail of approximately one hour. With your permission the interview will be recorded with a portable recorder so as not to extend the length and to provide me with the best possible data. Once I have finished with the recordings they will be destroyed or, if you wish, returned to you.

Should any additional information be required I will contact you (if possible) through e-mail or by telephone. All subjects and school boards will be confidential and direct identification of the subjects or school boards in any way shape or form will not be used. You will be provided with an alias if it becomes essential to identify a person, school, or community. Please understand that you may refuse to answer any question you wish and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The proposed study has been approved by the Memorial University of Newfoundland's ethics committee.

The findings of this study will be made available to you on request and at the Memorial University Library. Information from the study can be used to show how the pressures of the teaching rural principalship is different than that of their urban colleagues. School boards may be able to devise procedures to alleviate or help with the challenges associated with the teaching principalship which will undoubtedly serve for the betterment of all stakeholders involved.

A letter from your school board approving and supporting the study has been forwarded to you. Enclosed you will find sheets containing sample interview questions to give you an idea of the type of information I am seeking as well as a fact sheet which will take approximately five minutes to complete with a return self-addressed stamped envelope.

You will be contacted by telephone to arrange an interview at your convenience. Although your participation is voluntary, your cooperation is extremely imperative to the success of this study and would be greatly appreciated. Please take the time to complete the fact sheet and consent form and mail them over the next few days.

If you have any questions, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Dennis Mulcahy, the associate dean of graduate studies, Dr. Linda Phillips, or myself.

As I know you are very busy, I would like to thank you for your contributed support, time and effort to this study.

Sincerely,

Theresa Gale

French Immersion/French/English
Labrador City Collegiate

Phone: 709-944-231/2232

Fax : 709-944-2652

email: tgale@calvin.sternnet.nf.ca

I, _____, consent to be interviewed by Theresa Gale to aid in the completion of her qualitative study on teaching administrators. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I may refuse to answer any question that I am unwilling or are unable to answer. With my permission the interview may be recorded for her convenience which she will destroy or return to me once she has finished with it.

Appendix E

Theresa Gale
P.O. Box 912
Wabush, Labrador
AOR 1B0

Participant's address

Dear Colleague,

My name is Theresa Gale and I am presently in the process of writing a master thesis on teaching principals in small schools under the guidance of Dr. Dennis Mulcahy. The purpose of the study is to assess and analyse the duties and pressures involved with the dual role of teacher/principal in comparison to your non-teaching counterparts.

The teaching principal has never before been studied in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. At present we have 116 schools in the province whose total school enrolment is less than 100 students and it is here one is more likely to find the teaching principal. Therefore, principals in schools with populations of less than 100 will primarily be subjects of this study.

I am writing to request your participation in this study. Please understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question posed that you feel you are unable or are unwilling to answer.

Specifically, as part of my thesis collection I would like to shadow you, with your permission, throughout one entire day. It is hoped that this will provide me with a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities you encounter in your dual role as a teaching administrator. I understand, however, that I will not be privy to any interviews of a confidential nature, unless you wish otherwise.

In addition a follow-up interview of approximately one hour will be conducted. With your permission the interview will be recorded with a portable recorder so as not to extend the length and to provide me with the best possible data. Once I have finished with the recordings they will be destroyed or, if you wish, returned to you.

Should any additional information be required I will contact you (if possible) through e-mail or by telephone. All subjects and school boards will be confidential and direct identification of the subjects or school boards in any way shape or form will not be used. You will be provided with an alias if it becomes essential to identify a person,

school, or community. Please understand that you may refuse to answer any question you wish and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The proposed study has been approved by the Memorial University of Newfoundland's ethics committee.

The findings of this study will be made available to you on request and at the Memorial University Library. Information from the study can be used to show how the pressures of the teaching rural principalship is different than that of their urban colleagues. School boards may be able to devise procedures to alleviate or help with the challenges associated with the teaching principalship which will undoubtedly serve for the betterment of all stakeholders involved.

A letter from your school board approving and supporting the study has been forwarded to you. Enclosed you will find sheets containing sample interview questions to give you an idea of the type of information I am seeking as well as a fact sheet which will take approximately five minutes to complete with a return self-addressed stamped envelope.

You will be contacted by telephone to arrange an interview at your convenience. Although your participation is voluntary, your cooperation is extremely imperative to the success of this study and would be greatly appreciated. Please take the time to complete the fact sheet and consent form and mail them over the next few days.

If you have any questions, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Dennis Mulcahy, the associate dean of graduate studies, Dr. Linda Phillips, or myself.

As I know you are very busy, I would like to thank you for your contributed support, time and effort to this study.

Sincerely,

Theresa Gale

French Immersion/French/English
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I, _____, consent to be interviewed by Theresa Gale to aid in the completion of her qualitative study on teaching administrators. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I may refuse to answer any question that I am unwilling or am unable to answer. With my permission the interview may be recorded for her convenience which she will destroy or return to me once she has finished with it.



