

GLOBALIZATION, UTILITARIANISM, AND  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE:  
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ECLECTIC NATURE  
OF THE SENIOR HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
CURRICULUM OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

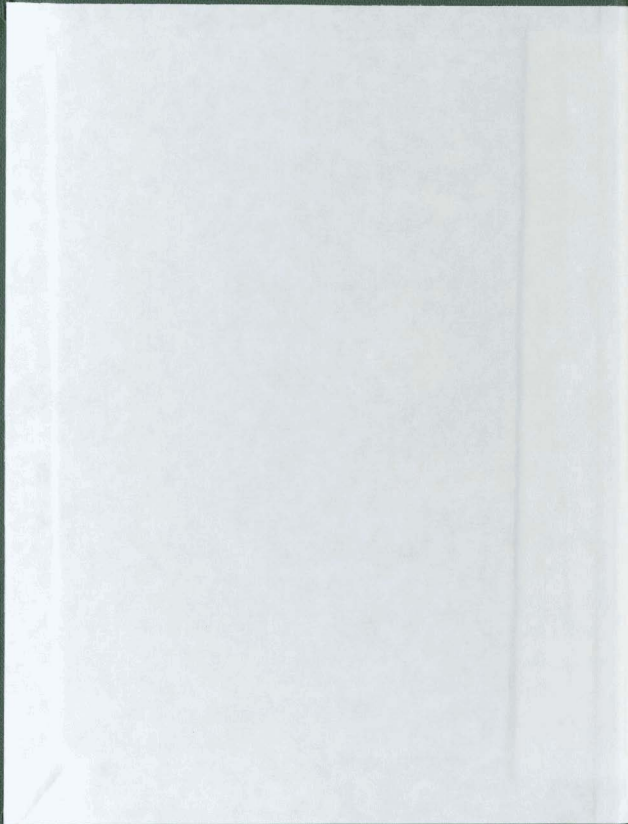
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Globalization, Utilitarianism, and Implications  
for the Study of Literature:  
A Critical Analysis of the Eclectic Nature  
of the Senior High English Language Arts Curriculum  
of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation

by

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## **Abstract**

The decade of the nineties has been one of change in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, a change which has permeated the entire socio-economic fabric. Within this context the educational system has attempted to adjust accordingly to provide programs which would enable graduates of provincial schools to be competent and competitive in the global realities of our province.

One of the more notable changes has been the move to provide courses of study which are global in nature, either by offering global studies, inserting units with a global focus, or infusing existing curricula with global elements. This change serves to enhance the literature component of the English language arts curriculum as literature is especially well suited to the infusing of a global perspective. The global orientation of the Atlantic provinces' senior high English language arts curriculum is notable in terms of its philosophy, stated curriculum outcomes, and program design.

Yet, simultaneously, the English language arts curriculum has a utilitarian focus in which emphasis is placed upon promoting information technology in response to the perceived importance of technology in the society of the twenty-first century. The end result is a potential threat to the study of literature as the technologies may be given greater emphasis while literature is used only for its utilitarian worth of promoting literacy among students. This, too, is evident in the philosophy, curriculum outcomes, and program design.

The eclectic nature of the English language arts curriculum provides an interesting study of how differing perspectives help determine the emphasis of the curriculum. However the senior

high English language arts program is interpreted, the current design of the curriculum is a marked shift in focus from traditional perspectives of literature study, a factor which will impact dramatically upon how students in the secondary schools of Newfoundland and Labrador experience literature.

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## **Chapter 1: Contextual Overview**

### **Introduction**

Benjamin Franklin's eighteenth-century adage of the certainties of life included death and taxes, but is not entirely accurate unless one adds change to the list. Change has been a part of the human experience since the inception of life on this planet and much of the trials of life are the result of attempts to adapt to or avoid such change. In this century the world has seen major changes in the physical, political, social, and technological world. Stark images of depleted tropical rainforests, a crumbled Berlin Wall, a re-defined family unit, and the emergent global village are all illustrative of rapid changes which are occurring. And within this milieu of transformation lies the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, equally as affected by change as any other corner of the planet.

The closing years of the twentieth century have brought tumultuous times to the society of Newfoundland and Labrador as massive and dramatic changes have occurred throughout the socio-economic fabric of this province. Negative factors, such as the moratorium on the cod fishery and the resulting crisis to the future of outport communities, are juxtaposed against bright economic prospects, such as mineral deposits at Voisey's Bay and oil resource development on the Grand Banks. Within this context is an education system, itself in a state of flux, struggling to provide a learning environment more in tune with a rapidly emerging global marketplace on the doorstep of the province. The impetus for change in education, despite the various and conflicting views on how change should be implemented, has been a genuine desire to empower students to operate competently and competitively in the global marketplace. One such educational endeavor to provide this type of student has been the recent interest in global

education.

In this province, the Newfoundland and Labrador Global Education Project, entitled *Sharing the Planet*, was developed with the specific aim of "preparing students for citizenship in the globalized society of today and tomorrow" (*Sharing the Planet*). Courses were developed both on the secondary school level and at the university level to foster and nurture global awareness in both school students and teachers. Consequently, schools throughout the province have been presented with the opportunity to globalize the curriculum by either offering courses specifically devoted to global issues, inserting units within existing courses, or infusing the principles of global education into course objectives.

In 1993, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador joined with the other three Atlantic provinces to produce a common curriculum for the Atlantic region which would meet this objective. The result for the English language arts curriculum has been a revised program at the senior high level which is essentially global in its design and intent.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Recent initiatives in education in Newfoundland and Labrador have been driven by the desire to develop an education system which is more in tune with the socio-economic realities of our province and to prepare students to function effectively within this context. Consequently, the entire system is undergoing massive changes, from the philosophical and administrative structure to the curricula taught in the classroom.

An assessment of the secondary English language arts curriculum developed by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation clearly shows that the desire to make students more

globally competent is evident in the philosophy and design of the program. This is a positive feature as English language arts has the potential to expose students to a multitude of learning experiences which leads to a deeper and richer understanding of others and of self. This is particularly true of the literature component.

However, the senior high English language arts curriculum as presented also has the potential to have the opposite effect for the study of literature. Rather than bring the curriculum to life and offer invaluable learning opportunities for students, the program could become more utilitarian than humanitarian, thereby limiting the effects of globalization. The desire to produce a curriculum more reflective of the educational needs of students has resulted in a program which could be interpreted as having a singularly narrow focus, the desire to produce graduates competent in a variety of literacies, with a particular emphasis upon information technology. Such an approach to English language arts is detrimental to the study of literature.

It is the eclecticism of the duality of aesthetics and utility so clearly evident within the senior high English language arts curriculum that provides the impetus for study. The humanistic philosophy of global education, coupled with the economic bent of utilitarianism, provides an intriguing opportunity to examine the underlying philosophical intent of curriculum developers and the potential impact this may have upon the study of literature.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of education in Newfoundland and Labrador, as outlined in the *Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador* (1984), is to enable students "to achieve their fullest and best development both as private individuals and as members of human society" (p. 3).

Explicitly stated here is that the development of the individual is as important and as much a priority of the education system in this province as is the preparation for one's role in society. The worth of the individual is not subsumed by the need of the socio-economic system. Yet, changes occurring in the English language arts curriculum may be perceived as driven toward equipping students to contribute to the economic plan for this province, rather than developing students with a vision of what the future could become.

The *Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador* (1984) document also states that students ought to "understand, appreciate and benefit from what is good and valuable in . . . literature" (p. 6). Clearly the value of literature to the individual is without question, especially as it contributes to personal and social development. A global approach to the study of literature has the potential to open the student to the vast plethora of influences which have combined to create the unique mosaic that is the cultural heritage of residents of this country and this province. Nowhere is a curriculum area more conducive to the philosophical underpinnings of global education than the study of literature. Literature enables one to better understand others through an examination of their modes of thinking, perspectives, and worldviews. This has great potential as Newfoundland and Labrador rapidly becomes entwined in the fabric of a global society. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to assess the senior high English language arts program which is being introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador schools today and determine the impact of the eclectic nature of the curriculum upon the literature component.

### **Context and Significance of the Study**

That the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is subject to the effects of the global

marketplace is indisputable. Our society has been inundated with structural changes this century in the move from British colony to Canadian province. The latter part of this century has seen Newfoundland and Labrador evolve into a modern society and, as a result, massive changes have occurred in social, technological, economic, and natural resource development. One of the signs of this change is the degree to which its population has changed from essentially descendants of European nationalities to a more multicultural society. Added to this change are the developments in communication and transportation which have linked us permanently as co-participants in the global community. Resource development, such as the fishery, tourism, and, most recently, substantial petroleum and mineral deposits, have made Newfoundland and Labrador recognized in the international marketplace. All of this together has resulted in substantial social change within this province.

Changes which occur in society have a direct impact upon educational institutions. Anderson (1990b) notes that vast societal changes cause educational institutions to accommodate these changes because "education mirrors society. The primary motors driving educational change are located outside the educational system, in the society at large. Thus, social changes generate educational change . . ." (p. 32). Yet, changes have to be made for the right reasons. Berry and Sullivan (1992) caution that education with the wrong focus may have a detrimental effect: "Educational institutions which prepare people for the present industrial order are part and parcel of the planetary crisis . . . [E]ducation must involve itself in a radical transformative and creative venture" (p. 6). Therefore, care has to be taken in this province to ensure the visionary potential of our students is not limited by undue emphasis on status quo economic goals.

The goal of developing an educational system conducive to the economic needs and

demands of Newfoundland and Labrador has been at the forefront of provincial government initiatives in the past decade, as is evidenced by the release of a series of important government documents in recent years. In 1985, the provincial government of the day commissioned a study of the economy in this province with explicit instructions to determine what was needed to stimulate economic growth. The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, chaired by Dr. Douglas House, released its final report in 1986, including a subsidiary report on education entitled *Education for Self-Reliance: Education Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment*, hereafter referred to as the House Report. Since its release, subsequent government economic initiatives have been driven by recommendations within this report. Two important documents were released in 1992: *Change and Challenge: A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* and *Our Children, Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education*, the final report of the Royal Commission on Education, chaired by Dr. Leonard Williams. Resulting from the Royal Commission on Education have been further documents regarding educational reform, specifically *Adjusting the Course, Part II: Improving the Conditions for Learning*, in 1994, and *Directions for Change: A Consultation Paper on the Senior High School Program*, in 1995.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment stressed two important factors for education in this province. First, it was noted that there does exist a strong connection between education and economic development. Secondly, the education system in place at the time was deemed inadequate to meet the needs of its clientele and the demands of an emerging global economy. These two major factors have implications for this study.

The link between education and economic development is that properly educated individuals result in higher productivity. In fact, this notion was so strongly believed that one of the areas of inquiry for the commissioners was to "evaluate the adequacy of education and training programmes and institutions in meeting the current and future demands of the labour market" (Cited in *Education for Self-Reliance*, 1986, p. i). The House Report goes on to add that education "is important, not just for training people for jobs, but for improving the human resources of our society for successful economic development and employment creation" (p. i). From this it can be reasonably derived that a major thrust for education in this province ought to be to produce individuals capable of contributing positively and effectively in the socio-economic fabric of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the House Report stresses that, regardless of the aspirations of the education system, inadequacies in the system occur in both the areas of means and ends.

Irrelevance of curricula is cited as part of a problem of alienation within Newfoundland and Labrador schools. The House Report identifies a lack of connection between curriculum content and local community as much of the material in courses comes from other parts of Canada and North America which are not particularly suited to the Newfoundland and Labrador context. This results in a sense of alienation for the student in the classroom as the focus of study is often foreign to his/her sense of community; this alienation is widespread in the schools of this province, ranging from the gap rural children experience to the chasm that exists for native children, and contributes to student lack of interest, low performance, and high dropout rates (pp. 57-58, 115-116). In its summary of recommendations, the House Report offers a possible solution to this problem when it calls for a revamped high school program in curricula and course content

which would challenge and enrich all students (pp. 119-120).

A second area of system inadequacy occurs at the end of the educational process whereby students have been trained to fill a role in a traditional environment. The House Report writes of education:

It should be considered as not simply a matter of preparing people for a particular style of working and living, or training them to fit a specific niche within an industrial system, but rather as a way of improving the quality of the human resources of our society (p. 9).

But the House Report does state that the ultimate aim is to prepare students to be capable of working effectively within local economic parameters (p. 11). The emphasis is placed upon improving the quality of life for the individual initially and the community ultimately. Obviously this apparent contradiction indicates that "improving the quality of the human resources" is a way of preparing individuals "to fit a specific niche" in the economic community.

The provincial government has seemingly accepted this thesis as is evidenced by the release of two important documents in 1992. In June of that year, the government first issued an economic agenda in *Change and Challenge: A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. This document is not designated simply as a proposal, but an action plan. The Premier of the day, Clyde Wells, in the Foreword of the document, states that the "action items in this document are not merely philosophical observations or even statements of intent; they are commitments by Government based on specific decisions" (p. iv). The document opens with a statement of vision:

Our economic vision for Newfoundland and Labrador is that of an enterprising, educated, distinctive, and prosperous people working together to create a competitive economy based on innovation, creativity, productivity, and quality (p. v).

Education is highlighted as the key to economic development and the production of individuals capable of operating effectively and efficiently within such an environment. And, as a means of achieving this goal, changes have to occur within the education system. As suggested by the House Report of 1986, the means of achieving a better education system is through changes to the curricula which would provide educational opportunities that are "more focused, more relevant, and more challenging" (*Change and Challenge*, p. 25).

In 1992, a second government document was released, this one offering a more detailed and pertinent analysis of the education system in this province, the Report of the Royal Commission on Education, entitled *Our Children, Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education*, hereafter referred to as the Report. The gist of the Report and its desire for meaningful change to the education system are also reflective of the ideas generated in the House Report of 1986 and have driven changes which have occurred since then.

The Report summarized its view of the connection between education and social change when it writes:

Perhaps more than any other institution the education system is tied to the society and the world which shapes it and which it, in turn, comes to define. Education does not and cannot exist in a vacuum -- or an ivory tower -- oblivious to change, because it *is* such a fundamental cornerstone of our society and therefore of the legacy we leave to coming generations (p. xviii).

The Report goes on to say:

Schools do not exist in a vacuum; children also, who are growing up in a milieu of constant change, are being buffeted by this environment. The education community is thus faced with a critical choice: it can drift along with the tide or steer a course through it. The first choice means trusting the future solely to the elements of chance. The second requires a determination to help shape what the

future will be, even if it means initiating substantial change now (p. 28).

The apparent intent is for the education system to become more sensitive to the developing needs of its clientele as societal expectations and demands change, thereby making the educational system more relevant. Tye (1990a) talks of a similar theme when she discusses what she terms the "deep structure of schooling", or how societal perceptions determine what schools are supposed to be and how that determines what a school does. As Tye (1990a) notes, "[t]he deep structure changes very seldom, and only when the society at large is already leading the way" (p. 36). The shift in Newfoundland and Labrador society to a more global orientation and the need for our education system to reflect this is an example.

The global characteristic of our province is recognized by the Royal Commission on Education. Many of the changes in society are described as "changing population characteristics", a "heightened awareness of the rights of individuals and groups", "increasing global interdependencies", and "increasing cultural diversities" (pp. xv, 27). Concern is expressed in the Report that students in Newfoundland and Labrador are not being prepared adequately for the new challenges in society or to take their productive places in the new economy. Here the connection between education and economic goals is stated overtly, providing direction for curriculum development in this province.

Becker (1990) writes that effective citizenship, or individuals who contribute positively and meaningfully to society, must have a global perspective and be well informed and concerned about the issues related to the condition of our planet. He notes that global dynamics impacts all of humanity and must be addressed within schools: "Given this circumstance, the global dimensions of current curriculum offerings need to be improved and expanded" (p. 68). Although

writing about the American educational system, Becker's comments ring true for our provincial context as well:

Preparing students for living in a more pluralistic, intertwined international system requires new competencies and skills that are interdisciplinary and not culture and time bound. Students need to be exposed to information from a variety of cultural, ideological, and gender-related perspectives. They also need opportunities to learn skills that will enable them to analyze problems, evaluate contending policy positions, and take effective action to change conditions that threaten life on planet Earth (p. 70).

Subsequent reports since the 1992 Royal Commission Report have stressed this need. There is now a concerted effort to provide an education system which is more relevant to the current global context in which Newfoundland and Labrador must contend. The development of students with a global outlook and the capability of operating in a global context is paramount for Newfoundland and Labrador schools. In this context, promoting global education within schools and throughout the curriculum areas is not only applicable or desirable, but necessary. As is noted in the Report:

The education system here, or anywhere that adequately prepares youth for the future, cannot be compromised by an insular view of the world. We must construct bridges, not perpetuate social or intellectual isolation (p. xviii).

Bridge construction is a primary aim of global education.

*Adjusting the Course, Part II: Improving the Conditions for Learning* was released in February, 1994. This document provides a blue print for curriculum changes which are presently underway and continues forging the irrefutable link between education and economic development:

A strong case can be made that reaching higher levels of educational achievement can, in itself, yield considerable economic and social gain. A highly educated society is likely to be more adaptable to changing economic conditions, less likely

to be content with low levels of economic activity, less dependent on social programs, and generally more self-confident and self-reliant (p. 5).

There are also elements relevant to global education which are highlighted in this section.

It is noted that goals for the revamped education system would be an emphasis on achievement and intellectual development. The term "achievement" is also meant to include "understanding broad concepts, ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge, ability to think critically, and understanding the processes involved in generating, locating, and utilizing knowledge" (*Adjusting the Course*, 1994, p. 2). Other goals occur in the personal and affective levels: "These include self-esteem, ability to live and work independently and in cooperation with others, respect for those of different race, religion, gender, or ethnic origin, and development of ethical and moral values" (*Adjusting the Course*, 1994, p. 2).

From these goals, expected outcomes include "high self-esteem", a natural accompaniment to "high levels of academic achievement". Secondly is "increased adaptability or independence" deriving from "the ability to locate and utilize knowledge or from knowing how knowledge is generated". This would also lead to a third outcome, a commitment to "lifelong learning". A final outcome would be "increased tolerance and respect for others", "associated with the development of analytical and critical thinking capacities because these, in turn, have to do with rationality, open-mindedness, willingness to suspend judgement, and similar attributes which broaden an individual's view of the world" (*Adjusting the Course*, 1994, p. 2).

These goals are anticipated to be "developed through study of the major subjects of the curriculum" (*Adjusting the Course*, 1994, p. 2). Also, although referring to intellectual capacities and readiness for learning, the comment regarding providing an environment for all students is

another global characteristic: "As a final note, it must be recognized that schools must be inclusive environments, in which provision must be made for all students" (*Adjusting the Course*, 1994, p. 3).

*Adjusting the Course, Part II* (1994) stresses the need for a more relevant curriculum content and indicates that a "comprehensive review of the senior high school program will be conducted" to ensure desired goals are attained (pp. 17-19). This stems from the acceptance of curriculum as the primary means by which change may be realized: "The curriculum is the vehicle through which the desired outcomes of schooling are conveyed. The curriculum represents the required body of knowledge, skill and understanding which students are expected to acquire during their school years" (p. 15).

*Directions for Change: A Consultation Paper on the Senior High School Program*, released July, 1995, marks the beginning of change in the curriculum of this province as Newfoundland and Labrador is merging its current program with other Atlantic provinces to develop a common curriculum. Within this document it notes how *Adjusting the Course, Part II*, stresses the need for students in this province to prepare "for their future roles as contributing members of the global society" (pp. 1-2). As a result of this, courses with a global focus are being scheduled for both the social studies and literature domains. A new course, Global Literature 2204, is being developed with the potential for a second course being developed should interest warrant (pp. 65-67). This shows the recognition of global education as important to students in this province as they prepare to operate within the global economy. As well, the study of literature from a global perspective is now being recognized and accepted as an integral part of curriculum.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Although this is a study of the senior high English language arts curriculum, the focus is upon the impact of globalization upon the study of literature. As such, other components of the language arts curriculum are not within the scope of review. That is not to suggest that other components of the program are not valid or worthwhile in their own right, but the emphasis is solely upon literature.

The globalization of any curriculum area is accepted as perfectly valid, even laudable. In fact, the area of literature is ideally suited for a global approach. The concern here is not that the English language arts curriculum has been globalized, but that, rather than enhance the literature component, the senior high English language arts curriculum as is currently presented has the potential to be detrimental to this area of study.

Finally, another limitation upon the study is the bias of the writer as a teacher of literature. The assessment of the English language arts curriculum is based upon the premise that the potential exists for the study of literature to become weakened and students will not be offered the opportunity to experience what is great and worthwhile in literature. An emphasis upon utilitarian concerns would pose a great risk to the aesthetic appreciation of all that great literature has to offer.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of courses with elements of global education in Newfoundland and Labrador is a product of the times. The impetus for change in education has been driven by a desire to make all areas of the province economically viable. From the Royal Commission on the

Economy in 1986 to the curricular changes a decade later, endeavors have been made to make the education system more reflective of the social and economic realities. One of those realities is the manner in which this province has been drawn into the interdependent fabric of the world as nations now operate and conduct business on a global scale. Consequently, an education with a global focus would better prepare individuals to function within such a setting.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction**

Global education is a relatively recent approach to learning which has come to prominence with the increasing interdependency of nations. As a result, the literature on global education is not extensive. Part of the problem, as outlined by McCabe (1997), is the matter of definition: "A single, professionally accepted definition of this perspective does not exist" (p. 41). Yet, there are clearly identifiable characteristics of global education which can be gleaned from the writings.

### **A Review of the Essential Elements of Global Education**

A reading of the literature concerning global education identifies distinct characteristics which are central to a global approach to curricula. These characteristics operate not only as signifiers of this mode of thinking, but also as crucial elements of instruction. The essential elements of global education may be categorized into three divisions: humanitarian characteristics, proactive learner outcomes, and innovative instructional approaches.

#### **1. Humanitarian Nature**

The descriptor "humanitarian" implies a concern for the well-being of all of humanity. This applies to the global approach to education as a central goal is the improvement of the human condition, both in terms of the individual and interpersonal relationships. Three elements which illustrate this are the commitment to holism, multiculturalism, and inclusion.

**a. *Holism***

Holism derives from the philosophy that all of life is interconnected. Miller (1988) provides a detailed analysis of the holistic view of the world and the role of man within it. In his discussions, Miller outlines the basic nature of the world as a series of systems, which he terms the "interconnectedness of reality", and the need for humanity to become more aware of its role within this reality. Hanvey (1982) and Pike and Selby (1988) expand upon this concept of the world by illustrating how our lives are caught up in the systems of nature, economics, politics, and culture which impact upon us. By understanding these systems, or at least becoming aware of their influence upon us, we begin to understand more completely the true nature of our existence.

Anderson (1990b) writes that scholars from many disciplines are now viewing the world from a systemic perspective: "Today, many scholars see the social world to be a singular, complex, albeit little-understood, global system. Eric Woff, a prominent social anthropologist, says, 'the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes'" (p. 30). Menchions (1997) expands upon this idea and places man squarely in the center of this reality, thereby identifying an obligation between the individual and his/her environ: "There is a role for me, and I am an integral part of the whole" (p. 47).

The holistic view of life has implications for learning as well. Moore (1992) writes of the inherent desire for wholeness within humanity, in which "[w]e are invariably uncomfortable with fragmented existences, tolerating them if we see no alternative, but looking out for wholeness all the same" (p. 24). The connection between holism and global education is made by Dhand (1991) when he states that global education is a holistic approach as a primary goal of global education is to unite humanity into a cohesive unit. Urso (1990), as well, highlights this connection: "[I]n the

words of one teacher, 'Global education is important because it provides a holistic approach, where children are educated not only in academics, but also as contributing members of our society, our country, and our world'" (p. 103).

Miller (1988) concurs with Moore's commentary on the fragmentation of our daily lives: "In our world we compartmentalize to the extent that we no longer see relationships" (p. 1). It is through the need for these relationships that Miller provides a definition of holistic education:

The focus of holistic education is on relationships -- the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationships between various domains of knowledge, the relationship between the individual and the community, and the relationship between self and Self. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these relationships so that he/she gains both an awareness of them and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where it is appropriate (p. 3).

The importance of the holistic approach to education is apparent in this definition. The emphasis is upon the development of self who, when equipped with appropriate skills, is able to make a difference. For the curriculum, holistic education attempts to connect the individual with the subject matter, thereby making the material less abstract and more relevant to the student (Miller, 1988). The end result is provided by Urso (1990) when she states that the holistic nature of global education is that it focuses upon educating the whole student, the heart as well as the mind (p. 103). This recognition that the individual has to be the focal point of the learning process Pike and Selby (1988) refer to as student-centered or learner-centered education. Here the humanitarian concerns are clearly stated; the focus is upon developing the whole child, an individual in tune with the systemic nature of the world who is capable of reaching out to effect change where necessary.

**b. *Multiculturalism***

Multiculturalism, or the recognition of diverse cultural groups within society, is a second element of global education. Singer (1994) notes that multicultural education has as its basis the concept of "multiple perspectives", believing that the contributions of all peoples to society must be considered. The advantages of multiculturalism is that it "allows students and teachers to explore similarities and differences in human experience" and provides "an expanded and more detailed picture of the social, cultural, and intellectual history" of our society (p. 286). Writes Singer: "But by embracing a multicultural perspective, educators are making a statement that we take the divisions in . . . society seriously and that we are committed to bridging them" (p. 288).

The connection between a multicultural approach to education and global education is also presented by other writers. Tye (1990a) and Tye (1990b) note that cross-cultural and multicultural awareness are elements of global education. It is a natural extension of the goal of developing an appreciation for and understanding of individuals with differing cultural histories. Cole (1984), as well, stresses the strong connection that exists between multicultural education and global education because it enables students to understand diversity while exploring commonalities. The end result is a reduction in stereotypical thinking which helps solidify cross-cultural communication. Price (1992) concurs with this sentiment, adding that the ability to overcome stereotypical thinking in educational institutions will result in greater return on the investment in the intellectual and moral development of our youth.

But three areas of caution are noted with regard to multicultural education. Starr and Nelson (1993) warn of a need for a distinction to be made between multicultural education and global education. For them, global tends to be more universal in orientation while

multiculturalism may have the tendency to focus more narrowly upon local or national conditions (pp. 12-13). Therefore, the impetus upon the global teacher is to avoid the narrow pitfall of nationalistic or regional agendas and focus upon a truly global perspective.

Secondly, Noseworthy (1992) cautions that care must be taken with a multicultural approach for a different reason. She advocates the positive aspects of multiculturalism, emphasizing the need to view it in a positive light. Noseworthy believes the concept of "tolerance" is woefully inadequate because that, too, tends to limit the contributions of the variety of cultures in this society: "'Tolerance' implies putting up with something unpleasant while the multiculturalism of Canada must be viewed in a positive light, celebrated and enhanced" (p. 21). Consequently, multicultural studies have to be centered upon experiencing the differences of culture, not merely studying them.

The concept of a multicultural perspective is presented in another differing light by Hillis (1993). He warns that a narrow perspective is potentially dangerous: "Teachers should recognize that the mainstream curriculum is both a product and a perpetuator of dominant group hegemony" (p. 51). There has to be a broader, more inclusive approach to education which recognizes and promotes the contributions of all members of society. Hillis notes that a multicultural perspective should be viewed as a manner of seeing, not a teaching method; this is what he believes to be fundamental to schooling in the twenty-first century. He adds that such a perspective should have a transforming effect rather than being merely an additive to the curriculum: "Schooling that is productive and transformative presents students with material from diverse viewpoints and teaches them to construct their own interpretations of social reality" (p. 52).

Multiculturalism is a societal reality. Singer (1994) writes: "Culture is a dynamic force

that is reshaped through experiences generated in political and social struggles and through group interaction" (p. 285). And the interactions of diverse cultural groups around the world are creating a global culture. Anderson (1990b) notes the homogenization of a global culture as many countries are rapidly developing pluralistic societies linked to other nations by commonality of language, religion, race, or culture. However, she notes, this does not eradicate the "rich array of distinctive regional, national, local, ethnic, and religious cultures" (p. 16) which exists. Therefore, in the global community, societies are being transformed and shaped into cultural entities molded by the interactions of a plethora of cultural attributes and perspectives. All of this has an impact upon the Newfoundland and Labrador context as our society is quickly becoming more culturally diverse and economic and technological developments draw our residents into greater contact with our global neighbors.

**c. *Inclusion***

Shoho and Katims (1997) define inclusion as "creating learning communities that appreciate and respond to the diverse needs of all students" (p. 29). The impetus here is not upon identifying those with differences, but in creating an environment in which all feel welcome and of value. Global education is an instructional approach which seeks to include all learners in the educational process; this includes those with cultural differences and physical and learning differences.

The case for inclusion of all cultural groups is apparent from the emphasis placed upon multiculturalism in global education. The value of learning about and experiencing other cultures is only enhanced by representation of such groups within classrooms. Noseworthy (1992)

reinforces this when she comments on the need for inclusion of immigrant students into the curriculum and classrooms of schools in this province. This, she notes, brings much information and insight into the wide variety of cultural experiences the world has to offer, much more than prescribed texts could. In addition, parents of immigrant students are eager, too, to share their experiences, stories, and knowledge with others, a ready resource in the surrounding community. Writes Noseworthy, "[w]hat better way to enhance global awareness than to seize the opportunity for cross-cultural understanding first hand" (p. 20).

But inclusion in the global classroom is also for differences in physical capabilities and learning capabilities. Write McMackin and Bukowiecki (1997):

By increasing our awareness and modifying our curriculum, instruction, and assessment for students with varying needs, we can help ensure that all students will be provided with equitable educational opportunities and will find success in an environment that promotes diversity (p. 38).

This success is documented by Shoho and Katims (1997); the benefits of inclusion include greater sense of empowerment for individuals, increased sense of worth, greater sense of acceptance, and lower sense of alienation (pp. 33-34). One of the means of achieving this is through the implementation of cooperative learning groups which reduces the sense of competition and increases the opportunity for success for all participants (Popp, 1987, p. 150). As Lehr (1984) indicates, the sense of community developed enables students to learn together, rather than try to out-do each other.

The value of inclusion is summed up by Singer (1994): "Gender, race, ethnicity, . . . physical ability, and religion -- the shared group experience and the private personal experience -- all contribute to the way that people see the world" (p. 286). The real value of inclusion is the

shared experience it brings to the classroom. The classroom then becomes the true microcosm of society through which students are able to develop an appreciation for diversity and of others.

## **2. Proactive Learner Outcomes**

As with any philosophical approach to learning, global education has specific goals it wishes to achieve. These outcomes are attitudes, traits, and skills which are developed within students as they participate in set learning activities. Included are the development of perspective consciousness, cognitive skills, and action orientation.

### **a. *Development of Perspective Consciousness***

Perhaps the most readily apparent element of global education is its focus upon the development of perspective consciousness; this is the realization and acceptance of more than one point of view regarding any given topic. Specifically emphasized is the recognition that one's own perspective is just one among many and, as such, is valid only as another perspective, not as the sole arbiter of truth. Urso (1990) provides a definition for perspective consciousness:

[M]oreover, global education emphasizes the need to develop 'perspective consciousness', which generally means that we can recognize the existence of more than one valid point of view, and that we learn to see the world from a number of different perspectives (p. 102).

Such an approach to education has a profound impact upon how classes, schools, indeed systems of education, operate. An acceptance of this approach implies that there exists a conscious awareness that students have to develop an acceptance that their points of view are not necessarily always correct. Write Vann and Kunjufu (1993): "Schools are powerful institutions.

They teach, socialize, and indoctrinate. They can dispel myths or perpetuate them" (p. 491). Consequently, schools that strive to develop perspective consciousness have as a major goal a desire to produce students who have a high level of acceptance of individuals with alternate opinions.

Tucker (1990) provides an insightful thought regarding perspective: "The educational problem, however, is that you cannot really develop a profound self-knowledge without an understanding of others, especially their point of view toward you" (p. 115). Such a perspective indicates the true value of developing perspective consciousness; an understanding and acceptance of others translates into an understanding and acceptance of self. This is reflective of the holistic flavor of global education.

But the ultimate goal with the development of perspective consciousness is a greater understanding and appreciation of others. This extends to others of differing opinions, religions, cultures, countries, or races. Herrera (1992) writes that, in order for meaningful interaction to occur among peoples, there must be certain elements present. The larger group must have respect for all members of the social group and an "uncritical acceptance" of the varied ways of living has to take place (p. 177). The mutual appreciation of each other's humanity places all members on an even plane.

The mutual appreciation proposed by Herrera (1992) has to be developed within students in schools of today. Too many of the courses offered by schools in Newfoundland and Labrador fail to reflect the true nature of the society in which we live. As Price (1992) notes, schools have to "respond flexibly and creatively to students' needs" (p. 211). The problem is that materials used in schools are not reliable as "texts are rife with glaring omissions, cultural stereotypes, and

misrepresentations of . . . histories" (p. 209). Carter (1990) concurs with this and writes that the times dictate that

we consider the perspective of those indigenous to the cultures of all stakeholders, understanding that a specific point of view is often shaped by the viewing point. We must accept the interrelationship of our futures and share the responsibility to prepare students to critically assess information gathered across time and cultures . . . (p. v).

From this perspective, it is apparent that all voices within society must be heard to provide a fair, balanced, and honest reflection of the true make-up of our cultural histories.

Specifically, an ethnocentric approach to the study of humanity is detrimental to a global perspective and the development of perspective consciousness. Vann and Kunjufu (1993) note that a Eurocentric view of the world is not truly reflective of the multicultural mix of peoples and cultures. Too often the curriculum deals with the contributions of the dominant groups, practically ignoring the significance of the minority groups. Wood (1991) concurs when he writes that the education system has an over-reliance on American and northern-European points of view which "distorts our view of the globe we inhabit" (p. 10). He adds:

Global education can no longer be viewed as a secondary consideration; we must recognize that it is central to developing graduates who can cope creatively with the modern, interdependent world. Our task is to develop individuals who can understand and resolve a multi-dimensional issue in which there is right on all sides (p. 10).

This is the reason why the development of perspective consciousness is so important to global education.

#### ***b. Development of Cognitive Skills***

Global education requires individuals to do more than learn facts or information and store

them away. An essential component of this approach to education is the call to action. However, to make the involvement of individuals effective, there is a need for the development of adequate cognitive skills to make informed choices. This is achieved by the development of critical thinking skills and an emphasis upon problem-solving in global instruction.

Critical thinking is defined by Case and Wright (1997) as "the thinking through of any 'problematic' situation where the thinker seeks to make a judgement about what it would be sensible or reasonable to believe or do . . . by making appropriate use of intellectual resources . . ." (pp. 13-14). The definition highlights three important features: "thinking through" a situation, making a judgement, and using "intellectual resources". All of this implies the development of a cognitive ability to evaluate data, the willingness to take calculated risks, and the acquisition of skills. These are essential criteria for critical thinking.

Howard (1992) emphasizes the need for developing such cognitive skills when he writes that critical thinking skills are of utmost importance for the youth of today and tomorrow. Such skills form an integral part of a system of education:

The primary goal of global education is to help our students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to live in a world which faces great economical and ecological challenges . . . . That requires confidence in one's ability to find solutions. Such confidence can only come from practiced problem solving, an ability to see issues from other perspectives and an opportunity for success in small everyday matters (p. 20).

Boston (1990), too, forges a connection between critical thinking and perspective consciousness, uniting two of the most central elements of global education. He notes that "exploring the concept of multiple perspectives develops critical thinking and can lead to richer, more respectful discussion of issues" (p. 92). This notion is continued by Lamy (1990) when he

states that the skills of critical thinking and comparative inquiry are central to the teaching of global issues (p. 54). Adds Lamy, "[a] global education program must prepare students for the future by introducing them to a wide range of analytical and evaluative skills" which will enable them "to understand and react to complex international and intercultural issues" (p. 55). This is an absolute necessity given the increasing cultural diversity of our society and the continual integration of the Newfoundland and Labrador economy into the global setting.

Moore (1992) brings to the picture an enlightened version of high-level thought which must be instilled in students. He notes that too often creativity is thought to belong to those artistically inclined, but all of us have the ability; the task is to find that within us to make us more aware of connections and interrelationships which, in turn, would make us more positive contributors to society (pp. 25-26). Such creativity belongs not solely to the field of art, but to the world of science, social studies and, without a doubt, to the world of communications. Imaginative and compassionate responses to individuals of different cultural, religious, or social backgrounds would alleviate much of the tension and misunderstandings which occur in today's society.

This is a theme expressed by other writers, such as Becker (1990) who writes of the need for "teaching high-level thinking skills" in an ever-changing, complex, technological era (p. 81). Here Becker recognizes the need for individuals who are aware of the complexity of today's world and are equipped with the necessary skills to adapt to and successfully operate within these confines. Similarly, Lamy (1990) continues to stress the importance of developing critical thinking abilities in students, emphatically stating that "it should be the goal of every global education program to prepare students to critically assess information gathered across time and

cultures and then formulate an agenda for policy action" (p. 55). Here the systemic interrelationships which are intermingled throughout the area of global education become apparent. Lamy's statement reiterates the need for the defined process to education as students collate data; contributions from a variety of experiences and perspectives are compiled for "comparative analysis" (1990, p. 61); and when evaluated within the framework of the critical mind, there emerges an impetus for action.

**c. *Development of Action Orientation***

Lamy (1990), in his summary of the need for perspective consciousness, writes, "[t]eachers and their students must be prepared to see each issue from a variety of worldviews and then, after this critical assessment, make their choices" (p. 63). From this one can assume that another element of global education is a desire to inspire its participants to action. Kirkwood (1990), in a discussion of global education activities in Dade County, Florida, states that students were to think global, but act local (p. 154). The emphasis is upon acquiring the prerequisite skills to enable one to try and effect change where it is most readily apparent, within one's own surroundings. As well, the fact that skills are involved leads one to assume that action must occur for skills are developed for use in achieving a desired aim.

The idea of action as crucial to the success of global education is noted by Pike and Selby (1988) when they state that students of global education have to be made aware that actions they make locally have implications, sometimes on a global scale; any or no action has repercussions. The message is that individuals have to be encouraged to at least make the effort. In connection with action is a further aim of increasing an awareness of the need for becoming more effective

participants in decision-making and involvement (p. 35). "Non-participation and inaction in the global system is not possible", write Pike and Selby (1988), for "knowledge, attitude, and skills" impact our actions and decisions (p. 70).

The notion of the interrelationship of skills and action is examined by other writers as well. Lamy (1990), in a review of Hanvey's conceptualization of global education, acknowledges that a sound global education program "must introduce students to strategies for participation and involvement" in issues, for "[c]omprehensive global education efforts should emphasize the relationship between global issues and local concerns" (p. 55). In this way students have the opportunity to practice skills acquired and explore attitudes and opinions developed. Lamy (1990) goes on to write that a major focus of global education has to be the formulation of a plan of action; knowledge, skills, and awareness is not an end in itself, but a means of achieving ultimate goals (p. 55). Using this as a guide, one can then make the assumption that action is not haphazard nor piecemeal, but a focused, concerted effort methodically arranged to achieve a specifically delineated goal. Such an approach quickly reveals the degree to which the development of appropriate cognitive skills play a central role because, without the necessary skills, actions may be ineffective.

The end result of instruction from a global perspective is "social activity" designed to counter injustice and inequities (Miller, 1988, pp. 17-18). Although gleaned from a discussion of holism, an obvious connection exists with the notion of action as an important element of global education. The result of a holistic approach to learning is to try and make a difference, to try and rectify perceived wrongs, which is action. Menchions (1997) reiterates this theme, too, as he comments on the systemic nature of the world and how education should be relevant to students.

Without meaningful attachment to the material under study, effective learning and a desire to act will be negated.

### **3. Instructional Approaches**

Global education is indeed a systematic method of providing learning experiences to participants. In fact, clearly delineated modes of instruction are the means by which terminal educational objectives are met. The literature on global education reveals three distinct methods of instruction: resource-based learning, cooperative learning, and an interdisciplinary approach. These elements are succinctly outlined by Tye (1990c) when he writes of the goals of global education:

We see global education as a movement with the potential for promoting . . . interdisciplinary planning and teaching, the development of critical thinking abilities, the use of the community as a learning laboratory, cooperative learning, and intrinsic motivation of student learning (p. 2).

As well, all learning experiences ought to be evaluated through the use of flexible assessment and evaluation techniques.

#### **a. *Resource-Based Learning***

"Global education that taps into the local community is global education at its best", writes Anderson (1990a, p. 125). Such an observation places global education solidly in the camp of resource-based learning. This is a continuation of the notion of connections between local and global settings, except here the emphasis is placed upon utilizing the resources at one's disposal. Anderson continues, stating, "[i]t enhances student learning about 'things global' by providing

opportunities to explore global events and trends in their local manifestations. Hence, the impersonal and complex global issues are made more concrete and personal" (p. 125). This enables students to operate in "an accessible laboratory" to explore "universal processes and conditions" (p. 125). Therefore, the concept of resource-based learning which has become an important instructional approach in this province becomes a complementary instructional approach for global education.

Resource-based learning means information comes from a variety of sources, including the students themselves. This challenges any traditionally accepted notion that information comes only from the prescribed curriculum materials or the teacher. Writes Tucker (1990), "much of the content of global education enters the classroom through students. Student beliefs, knowledge, and experiences are increasingly important aspects of global education as our classrooms become more international and multicultural" (p. 113). This connects with the humanitarian nature of global education as the emphasis is placed upon developing students who are more understanding and culturally aware.

Students who are skilled in resource-based learning also make independent learners and competent problem-solvers who are adept at utilizing the resources around them. This is another major aim of global education. The idea of improved analytical skills is reinforced by Tye (1990a) when she emphasizes the need for globally aware students to make use of the resources within their surrounding communities, referring to this practice as a "natural expression of global awareness education" (p. 45). Students exposed to practical opportunities to experience successful problem-solving situations become more adept at finding adequate solutions to challenging and complex problems. Kirkwood (1990) writes that participatory skills, along with

student inquiry and reflective thinking, make global education an exciting educational approach (p. 155). However, resource-based learning can only occur if those responsible for instruction are prepared to develop such instructional approaches. "Teachers who work to incorporate some global awareness into their teaching tend to make greater use of community resources than has been customary . . ." (Tye, 1990a, p. 45).

Another advantage of the resource-based learning approach is the links forged between school and community. This is expressed by Urso (1990) as an off-shoot of the relationship between global education and the community. Each member and many groups of society have much to offer and are willing to contribute. This, in turn, provides an invaluable resource to students and ties the school closely to the community (p. 103). Such positive relationships provide healthy environments in which meaningful educational experiences occur. This is illustrative of the concept of community support fostered by global education as examined by Anderson (1990a) in which the interrelationships among school, community, student, and resident are interrelated to such a degree that divisions and lines of demarcation become blurred. In such an environment learning opportunities are optimal.

**b. *Cooperative Learning***

Cooperative learning emphasizes the need for individuals to work together at problem-solving tasks. In brief, such an approach stresses the need for communication, cooperation, and mutual respect. Becker (1990) recognizes the need for strong communication and social skills if one is to be competitive in such a fluid social environment. For him, cooperative learning strategies are essential elements of global education programs:

Cooperative learning methods assume heterogeneity and emphasize interactive learning opportunities. They are better designed to cope with the diverse needs of students and the requirements for success in an interdependent world. Cooperative learning is an important element of global education (p. 81).

This is further expanded by Dhand (1991) when he states that global education requires quality learning experiences and this is where the role of cooperative learning strategies come into play. The benefits of this instructional approach go beyond individual students to include others. According to Dhand (1991), cooperative learning is

the most powerful way to increase achievement, enhance self-esteem, promote positive attitudes toward teachers and school, develop respect for other students, facilitate cognitive development, and increase intrinsic motivation and student's ability to interact and work with other students toward common goals (p. 78).

This is important for global education because, in addition to the characteristic of cooperative learning benefitting all learning levels, research has shown it also results in an improvement of tolerance (Dhand, 1991, p. 79). However, again, Noseworthy's (1992) concept of tolerance must be kept in mind here to realize that the ultimate goal is not mere acceptance, but a genuine appreciation for others.

Tye (1990a) writes that cooperative learning is an essential element of global education: "... I can hardly imagine how teachers could introduce global perspectives into their curriculum without using some forms of small-group work" (p. 45). The apparent connection between global education, cooperative learning, and student development is made. This is further explained by Miller (1988) as he notes the importance of cooperative learning to holistic education, a component of global education:

The holistic curriculum should foster connections between student and community. The most immediate community for the student is the classroom, and cooperative education with its emphasis on learning teams attempts to foster community within

classrooms (p. 114).

Cooperative learning is better, he adds, because students learn better in group settings; a sense of belonging, a vital part of holism, is violated by isolation (Miller, 1988, p. 115). This view of education also has strong overtones of resource-based learning in which the sense of community plays a vital role in the learning process.

The connection to cooperative learning, as well, is evident here as a holistic approach requires a variety of instructional techniques: "Real-life issues can best be taught from a holistic perspective, bringing the various disciplines to bear on one issue and incorporating many modalities of learning, such as simulations, role playing, experiential learning, and integration of the arts" (Urso, 1990, p. 103). Cole (1984), as well, notes that global education does indeed require a cooperative approach with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes (p. 154). This, for him, could be acquired through further in depth study among the various disciplines within schools, making global education interdisciplinary in nature.

c. ***Interdisciplinary Approach***

A complement to resource-based learning is the interdisciplinary nature of global education, as is noted by Anderson (1990a) when she writes that a resource-based approach promotes cross-curricular activities. Any instructional approach which utilizes the vast array of resources within the surrounding community naturally ventures beyond the restricted confines of specific curriculum areas and becomes interdisciplinary. Tulk (1992), as well, emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of global education: "The approach of infusion across the curriculum serves as an umbrella for co-operative learning, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving,

conflict resolution and information management" (p. 17). This summarizes the crucial aspects of global education.

Becker (1990) advises that an interdisciplinary approach is often the best:

The many opportunities available to integrate an international perspective into existing, discipline-focused courses should not blind us to the fact that many of the issues and events that demand our attention lend themselves to interdisciplinary approaches (p. 80).

However, Lyons (1992) makes a stronger case for an interdisciplinary approach when he writes, "the global perspective approach is to identify and develop a number of key concepts and issues and to infuse both concepts and issues into the existing content areas and cross-curricular activities" (p. 10). For Lyons, it is not enough to recognize the manner in which global concepts can be taught, they have to be infused into existing curricula and across curricula to make them relevant and poignant.

But for some educators, an interdisciplinary approach is not merely an option for instruction; it is an absolute imperative in today's educational institutions. Writes Tye (1990a), an interdisciplinary approach to global education is essential: "None of the contemporary problems and issues that cut across national boundaries can be studied by using one discipline alone" (p. 45). Boston (1990) continues, "[t]he interdisciplinary nature of global education content can help unify traditionally fragmented departments, grade levels, and programs around a common purpose" (p. 92). As such, cross-curricula approaches help create a sense of holism in education.

Tye notes (1990c) that it is accepted that global education is a social movement and, as such, its desire is to have particular attitudes, knowledge, and skills instilled in its participants. Its interdisciplinary characteristics are outlined when Tye writes, "[n]either do we wish to confine

global education to social studies. Rather, global education calls for the infusion of a global perspective into *all* curriculum areas" (p. 5).

Anderson, Nicklas, and Crawford (1994) state that global education is clearly interdisciplinary for it "draws on the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences" (p. 3). They continue their discussion of their framework for global education:

Not only does the framework *allow* for cross-curricular and interdisciplinary attention, it *demand*s it. All curriculum areas and educational institutions must be involved if our progeny are going to be able to meet the challenges that we, their ancestors, bequeath to them (p. 4).

**d. *Flexible Assessment and Evaluation***

Devising a finite definition of evaluation is a difficult task as it may represent many things to many people, as is shown in the differing and evolving profiles of evaluation which have been developed. Clark (1986) notes that the purpose of evaluation is to determine the instructional needs of students, not just reporting results. Another definition, presented by Glasman and Nevo (1988), includes the aspect of judging the merit or worth of an exercise. However, the most inclusive definition is one put forth by C. E. Beeby (1978, cited in Wolf, 1990), which defines evaluation as "the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence, leading, as a part of the process, to a judgement of value with a view to action" (p. 3). This particular viewpoint of evaluation is important because it recognizes the fact that a critical component of the evaluation process is the evaluator's interpretation of data collected and, also, that the resulting finding requires some action upon the part of the evaluator. From this perspective, evaluation is transformed from a mere compilation of a series of numbers determining where an individual falls in relation to an arbitrarily assigned grading scale or a pre-determined norm, to a means of

informing an individual of how he/she is progressing in the course of study. The evaluation process then firmly places the student in the forefront and zeroes in on specific areas that need attention to enable him/her to successfully complete the designated objectives. For Pike and Selby (1988), a student-centered method of evaluation is ideally suited to the aims of global education.

Evaluating the progress of students is a necessary component of the educational process, but has been misused and often misunderstood by both students and evaluators. Wiggins (1988) writes that grades are too often composed of vague criteria, leading to confusion among both teachers and students so that the exercise becomes meaningless. Assessing student progress is a tricky business and a balanced approach is essential. Miller and Seller (1990) classify evaluation into two distinct characteristic types: scientific and humanistic. The former is the type in which student progress is monitored according to strict terms and the accumulation of a set score is easily devised by dividing each task into a specific percentage of the entire grade. Test scores are an important component of this grade. Humanistic evaluation also includes the compilation of grades, but takes into consideration other pertinent information as well, such as the individual student's actions, interests, efforts, and attitudes. The evaluator employs a more subjective approach to the task and information used is more qualitative than quantitative.

Wolf (1990) notes that it is important to use a variety of techniques to ensure evaluation validity and reliability. Here he stresses the idea that, unless a variety of data collecting methods are employed, the evaluation process is not accurate and a true assessment of the student's progress has not been provided. Doll (1989) adds that evaluation methods should be accomplished with "imagination, skill, and appropriateness", consisting of "numerous and various

media, some of which may have to be invented" (p. 246). Doll's use of the words "appropriateness" and "invented" show his line of thought in that the form of evaluation must conform to the needs of the particular educational experience, not the reverse.

Doll's concept of conformity to student needs is reiterated by Goldberg (1992). Goldberg notes that adults have myriad ways to express themselves, but student expression is usually limited. Throughout the literature there are numerous ways indicated as completely viable means of evaluation. These include writing assignments, projects, assigned work (both classwork and homework), and journals. Activities such as mock trials, drama, and field trips are also ways of capturing learning in action. Student contributions through self-assessment and peer assessment can be used to provide an insight into how the students themselves feel they are progressing. This could be beneficial to teachers as a means of evaluating teaching strategies as well. Teacher-student and/or teacher-parent discussions can also provide invaluable information into student comprehension. Radford (1990) promotes observation as a very important method of assessing student progress, so important "its mechanisms need to be identified and appropriate strategies investigated" and training in this skill ought to be part of professional development (pp. 37, 39). All of these humanistic methods of evaluation are valid and useful provided they are presented in a balanced manner and not one or two methods become the sole means of evaluation. The emphasis upon a humanistic approach places such evaluative methods within the scope of global education.

### **Rationale for a Global Approach to the Study of Literature**

The blending of the principles of global education and the objectives of literature study is

of optimal value for schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. Literature has as its focus the values, ideas, and soul of a people. Global education, in its simplest sense, is a means by which differing cultural groups come to understand and appreciate each other. Therefore, the study of literature provides a great medium through which one can fully appreciate the culture, customs, and spiritual life of humanity. The understanding of humanity is important because, as Rigden (1997) states, times may change, but humanity remains the same. Pike and Selby (1988) succinctly summarize how the literature discipline is an ideal curriculum area in which to explore global issues:

The enjoyment and study of literature offers a powerful means of developing self-awareness (including a recognition of the assumptions lying behind our worldview), sensitivity to different perspectives, an appreciation of the rich and dynamic cultural traditions within and beyond our own society and a more vivid understanding of the human implications of global issues (p. 235).

Becker (1990) extends upon this idea of a need for a broader understanding of the human experience: "Students and teachers alike need to learn how to interpret human interactions in a larger context, including a wider range of human experience" (p. 71). Through the contention of a need to interpret, the concept of the development of stronger critical and analytical skills becomes apparent. Although referring to the study of history, Becker's comments are readily applicable to the study of literature in Newfoundland and Labrador:

Some approaches . . . promote ethnocentrism and are destructive. . . . Such a focus on western culture . . . often undercuts the most significant contributions . . . , the understanding of interrelationships between peoples, countries, and continents (p. 75).

Cole (1984) states that, in order to accept and fully comprehend cultural pluralism, one must become aware of one's own cultural roots and true identity. However, given the ever-increasing

multicultural character of our society, the roots and identity of the cultural heritage of this province are firmly grounded in cultural pluralism. As well, the intertwining of our province within the global village demands a deeper, more meaningful appreciation of cultural groups beyond the Eurocentric perspective.

The idea of using literature to understand others is noted by Flaim (1994). He writes that literature has the effect of enabling people to connect to foreign cultures and people of differing perspectives: "Good stories illustrate human behaviors in various times and places and help students to form connections to those times and places" (p. 225). Enciso (1994) makes a similar observation in a discussion of the effect of studying a particular novel for adolescents. Enciso notes, there developed an "empathy for different people, times, and dilemmas" because "[o]ur cultural references revealed, formed, and reformed our identities in the context of our discussions . . . ." (p. 524). Literature has the ability to enable us to vicariously live out the experiences of others and, by doing so, enable us to develop a deeper, more meaningful connection.

Rasinski and Padak (1990) continue the theme:

In the context of an environment that promotes interpersonal caring, the development of prosocial behaviors and attitudes, selflessness, and citizenship, teachers and children can use literature to explore and act upon their cultural values and beliefs (p. 576).

All of these attributes are aspects of both global education and literature. The ideas of "interpersonal caring", development of "prosocial . . . attitudes", and preparation for action are global in nature. This results in a sense of empowerment for students as the impetus for action and change is provided:

In a multicultural curriculum there are few stimuli with greater potential to move people to action than literature. Because it tells the stories of human events and

the human condition and not simply the facts, literature does more than change minds; it changes people's hearts. And people with changed hearts are people who can move the world (Rasinski and Padak, 1990, p. 580).

The value of multicultural literature is not to be underestimated, particularly in an interdependent world. Writes Tulk (1992),

our youth must develop appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes if they are to function effectively in a world which has limited natural resources and is characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism and increasing interdependence (p. 17).

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is very much part of an interdependent world and we have to recognize that reality. As a result, an understanding of fellow global citizens is essential. Smith and Johnson (1995) write that multicultural literature, in particular, is beneficial because it develops student awareness and acceptance of differences while experiencing different perspectives. It is this experience with diversity which prepares the student for the real life environment in which he/she will work. A fundamental part of this is the ability to empathize. "Empathy with others can be facilitated by understanding the nuances of their ways of thinking . . ." (p. 12), a function of literature, writes Wood (1991).

Kajs (1985) notes that the study of the humanities, especially literature, creates a more fully developed person which many businesses require. The value lies in the development of such skills as creative imagination, effective communication skills, sensitivity to people, and imaginative vision which are essential to the corporate world (pp. 696-697). Moore (1992) stresses the unparalleled importance of the imaginative and creative to society, characteristics we all possess. To help foster that quality in students, Moore believes that "literature, drama, music, art cannot be seen as 'soft' subjects" because, they "nurture the imagination" and allow the individual to

"transcend" the given and develop new and informative perspectives (p. 26).

## **Conclusion**

A program or course which can be termed global has identifiable elements. First, there is an overriding concern for humanity and the welfare of the individual. Secondly, the learner is exposed to experiences which are designed to instill empathy, develop critical thinking, and create a desire to effect change. All of this is presented through innovative learning opportunities and evaluated in a meaningful manner. Global education, a learner-centered approach which has the individual student as the focal point of instruction, pays dividends in the educational process, particularly for the study of literature.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the current study, as indicated earlier, is to illustrate how contending philosophies of education are present in the senior high English language arts curriculum. The design of the study and criteria for analysis show how these differing perspectives are deeply embedded in the curriculum and how both have an impact upon the literature component.

### **Design of the Study**

The current study is a critical analysis of the senior high English language arts curriculum of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation contained within the documents, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*, hereafter referred to as *Foundation*, and *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 10-12*, hereafter referred to as *English 10-12*. Emphasis will be placed upon analyzing the English language arts documents according to pre-determined criteria to assess how the study of literature may be enhanced or adversely affected by the eclectic nature of the curriculum. The study will focus upon how attempts to make the English language arts curriculum relevant to the socio-economic environment of Newfoundland and Labrador have resulted in a curriculum that has both a global and a utilitarian orientation.

The current study is both inductive and constructive in nature. It is inductive because the sum of the parts is reflective of the whole; the analysis of the minute aspects of the English language arts curriculum clearly shows and is representative of the philosophical intent of the curriculum in its entirety. Through close analysis of the varied components of the curriculum, the

competing global and utilitarian characteristics are evident. The purpose of the research is constructive because the intent is not to be critical of the program in a negative sense, but to illustrate that, without specific indication of the aims of the curriculum, there is opportunity for very differing interpretations, consequently the quality of literature study could potentially be enhanced or adversely affected.

### **Rationale for Research Methodology**

*Adjusting the Course, Part II* (1994) states that reform of the curriculum of schools in Newfoundland and Labrador is driven by the desire "to focus on the basic intellectual capabilities which allow individuals best to adapt to change" (pp. 1-2). Change, as has already been noted, is an irrefutable characteristic of life in the global village, therefore, individuals must be provided with the prerequisite skills to enable them to function effectively in this milieu. Consequently, the curriculum of the educational system of this province is under review to prepare students to meet this challenge, a fact which is reflected in the change to the senior high English language arts curriculum.

The research design for the current study is a critical analysis of the senior high English language arts curriculum and, as such, is qualitative in nature. According to Gay (1992), critical research is categorized as the descriptive method which he defines as one which "involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are" (p. 13). This method of research employs an observational approach; the current research purports to do just that, meticulously scrutinize the data emerging from the curriculum materials and assess

findings delineated. Specifically, the hypothesis presented here is two-fold: to determine the degree to which the senior high English language arts curriculum has both a global and utilitarian orientation and to illustrate how the literature component of this curriculum is both enhanced and potentially at risk as a result.

The use of observation in research, notes Gay (1992), is not restricted to human subjects, for "[o]bservation data can be collected on inanimate objects such as books" and includes methods of research like "content analysis", which he defines as "the systematic . . . description of the composition of the object of the study" (pp. 234, 236). This lends credence to the current study as this is a systematic analysis of the composition of the "inanimate" senior high English language arts curriculum.

The choice of the critical research as a methodological approach is chosen cautiously given its nature. First, the critical approach is an intrusive, yet subtle form of study which can be very revealing. Critical research has the ability to expose varying ideas, perceptions, or messages which are buried simultaneously within texts. Harvey (1990) writes of this regarding the nature and purpose of critical research: "[T]he critical analysis must go beyond the appearances and lay bare the essential nature of the relationships that are embedded in the structure" (p. 19). This statement identifies the reality of the situation, that meanings are multiple within texts and critical research must attempt to expose the differing layers of meaning. For the current study this is truly applicable. The gist is that the English language arts curriculum, designed for the student in the twenty-first century, has differing messages and meanings within its philosophy, design, and content.

As well, critical research has a degree of internal conflict as its primary focus may become

mired among the multitude of other concerns which intrude upon the purpose of the study. Because an educational perspective cannot exist in a vacuum, social considerations, whether intentional or unintentional, help determine what it is to be. Such concerns regarding caution of the social influence of texts are noted by Carr and Kemmis (1986) as they espouse the necessity of developing a "systematic understanding of the conditions which shape, limit, and determine action so that these constraints can be taken into account" (p. 152). Harvey (1990) continues the sentiment, but focuses more specifically upon the collection of data: "[D]ata are important in order to ground inquiry but data must not be treated as independent of their socio-historic context" (p. 7). Data and information collected have to be regarded as part of an existing whole in that, in and of itself, it says very little, but, in the context of broader considerations, such as the social implications of statements or speaker bias, it becomes part of a larger message. This is true for the current study. Data collected from the primary documents speaks for itself; however, in the context of the current trends in education in this province, differing messages emerge.

This caution exists for the researcher, too. Just as the approach to educational instruction is determined by social criteria and demands, so, too, is the focus of this study determined by interests of the researcher. For the researcher, bias comes not only within the texts, but also in the approach to text. For the current study, the researcher, as an advocate of the value of literature, has a particular perspective in the approach to the English language arts curriculum. Such sentiments are presented in a discussion of the neutrality of the researcher when Kincheloe (1991) states that researchers have to "reveal their allegiances, to admit their solidarities, their value structures, and the ways in which such orientations affect their inquiries" (p. 36). This is important because, as Cherryholmes (1988) notes, with the failure to identify the applicable

contexts of the language involved, the power and original significance of the diction may be lost or misinterpreted, resulting in an error in communication. Therefore, the researcher has made a concerted effort to remain objective in the analysis of data as a means of opening a debate on a significant educational issue. Yet, notwithstanding any indication of researcher bias, the validity of the current study remains evident in the eclectic nature of the senior high English language arts curriculum and the resulting conflict of ideology.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be collected from the primary documents of the senior high English language arts curriculum: the *Foundation* document and *English 10-12*. As well, pertinent information contained in *Directions for Change: A Consultation Paper on the Senior High School Program* will be gathered.

### **Data Analysis**

Global education is a relatively new curricular focus. It is often considered as an approach to social studies; however, it is the contention of this study that global education is a philosophy of instruction which should not be restricted to one field of study and, as such, is applicable to any and all curriculum areas. Consequently, the review of the literature is focused upon the essential elements of global education that ought to be applied in instruction.

Data analysis for assessing the implications for the study of literature will be organized around specific characteristics of the philosophical perspective indicated. To determine the degree to which the senior high English language arts curriculum may be classified as globally-

oriented, an analysis of the curricular content will be conducted according to the elements of global education as outlined in the literature review. A detailed assessment of the philosophy of the curriculum will be organized around the subheadings of the humanitarian nature of the curriculum, specified goals, and the means of achieving the indicated goals. Assessing the stated curriculum outcomes is to be arranged through a discussion of essential graduation learnings and delineated curriculum outcomes. The design of the program will also be evaluated to ascertain the degree to which the senior high English language arts curriculum is indeed global as presented in the primary documents of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education noted above. This will be achieved through an examination of the instructional approaches, essential components of the curriculum, the organizing strands, and methods of assessment and evaluation.

The utilitarian perspective will be assessed in a similar manner, focusing upon the philosophy, indicated curriculum outcomes, and design of the program to illustrate how the same content can be viewed from a differing perspective, thereby placing the role of literature in a paradoxical position. Philosophy of the curriculum will be assessed in terms of the commitment to the development of literacy, mastery of language skills, and use of outcomes as a means of guiding instruction. An assessment of the curriculum outcomes themselves will be developed through an examination of the essential graduation learnings and the general, key-stage, and specific curriculum outcomes for English language arts. Assessing the utilitarian emphasis of the curriculum within the program design will focus upon the contending roles both literature and technology play within the curriculum documents.

## **Limitations**

The study has a very limited focus. The emphasis is upon the literature component of the curriculum, consequently, other aspects of the program are used for illustrative purposes, but are not emphasized. However, this is not to suggest that all aspects of the curriculum are not of value. As well, the intention of the study is not to unduly criticize the English language arts curriculum nor detract from its merits. The emphasis is upon how viewing the curriculum from differing perspectives clearly illustrates how caution has to be taken to ensure that the value of literature study is not diminished in the quest for other goals.

## **Conclusion**

The choice of methodology for this study provides an opportunity to clearly illustrate the conflict within the English language arts curriculum. By focusing solely upon the primary documents of the curriculum, the degree to which aesthetics and utility vie for prominence becomes more readily apparent and the potential impact upon the study of literature is even more discernible.

## **Chapter 4: Assessing the Global and Utilitarian Duality**

### **Introduction**

The senior high English language arts curriculum is eclectic in its nature. On the one hand, it is committed to the goals and ideals of global education which focuses upon the individual. Simultaneously, there is a concerted effort for the curriculum to meet anticipated economic demands in the twenty-first century where the emphasis is not so much upon the individual as what that individual can contribute to society. The duality of this aspect of the character of the curriculum is to be examined through an analysis of the philosophy of the curriculum, the role of curriculum outcomes, and program design.

### **I. Assessing the English Language Arts Curriculum from a Global Perspective**

Re-structuring of the education system in Newfoundland and Labrador has occurred in conjunction with other Atlantic provinces, resulting in a common curriculum throughout the region, a curriculum which is essentially global in nature. Part of this process has been the desire to clearly delineate what the end product of the secondary education process is to be, the graduate. A second component has been the development of a program designed to meet the variety of needs a group of learners represents, including a model for assessment and evaluation to provide direction and information as to the degree of success individuals have experienced with the indicated curriculum outcomes.

Analysis of the senior high English language arts program will be considered in terms of the principles of global education as outlined in the literature review as a means of determining the degree to which the program has a global focus. Consequently, the humanitarian nature, specified

goals, and means of achievement of the stated goals, necessary components of any globally-oriented course, are to be assessed in collaboration with the philosophy of the program, curriculum outcomes, and program design as delineated in the *Foundation* and *English 10-12* documents.

*English 10-12* states that the study of literature is central to the senior high English language arts program: "Creating, interpreting, and responding to literary texts are essential experiences at the centre of *English 10-12*" (p. 117). The *Foundation* document stresses that organization under the strand headings of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing are for convenience, but "it is important to recognize that all these language processes are interrelated and can be developed most effectively as interdependent rather than discrete processes" (p. 12). Consequently, literature experiences are interwoven throughout the organizing strands and discussion of those strands is illustrative of how literature is enhanced through this relationship.

## **I. Philosophy of the Program**

The senior high English language arts program for schools in Newfoundland and Labrador is global in its philosophy. *English 10-12* states that the English language arts curriculum has been developed with the intent of "responding to continually evolving education needs of students and society" (p. 1). One such need is the evolution of the global community and the demand that students develop skills, competencies, and attitudes that will prepare them to operate effectively within such an environment. States the curriculum guide:

Pervasive, ongoing changes in society . . . require a corresponding shift in learning

opportunities for students to develop relevant knowledge, skills, strategies, processes, and attitudes that will enable them to function well as individuals, citizens, workers, and learners (*English 10-12*, p. 1).

The result has been the development of an English language arts curriculum which is designed to prepare students for their role in a global society. There appears to be a deliberate attempt to develop a more inclusive curriculum that is more global and multicultural in terms of texts studied and issues addressed. A review of the philosophical underpinnings of the senior high English language arts curriculum illustrates how deeply such elements have been interwoven throughout all aspects of the program.

**a. *Humanitarian Nature***

The senior high English language arts curriculum is holistic in its structure with an emphasis upon student-centered instruction and awareness of interrelationships among the organizing strands of the program. Instruction is to be developed with the clear intent of meeting the needs of individual students. Teachers are encouraged to develop learning experiences and make resources available so that "students' multiple ways of understanding allow them to focus on their learning processes and preferences" (*English 10-12*, pp. 8-9). The purpose is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to interact with the curriculum in a manner which presents the best chance for success.

English language arts in the senior high grades is developed around three organizing strands: speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing. This covers the spectrum of experiences to which an individual is exposed as he/she interacts with language and text. As already noted, the organization strands ought to be perceived as

interrelated; the recognition of the interdependence of the various aspects of language study is another holistic feature as holism stresses the interrelationships of life and learning. The *Foundation* document further presents other global elements through the study of the communicative processes of speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing, and other ways of representing: "The application of these interrelated language processes is fundamental to the development of language abilities, cultural understanding, and creative and critical thinking" (*Foundation*, p. 11).

The concept of cultural understanding is global in nature, as well, because an important goal of global education is the development of a respect for and an appreciation of the cultural diversity of our world. In English language arts, this is achieved through the development of respect for diversity within the classroom and a study of multicultural texts. The multicultural characteristic of the English language arts curriculum is apparent in the *Foundation* document. When commenting on the power of language, it states:

Since language is the primary means by which people express their personal and cultural values, it is critical that educators and students be sensitive to personal and cultural differences, respecting, understanding and appreciating differences . . . .  
(*Foundation*, p. 2).

The emphasis here is upon creating within students an appreciation for differences, whether that be in terms of culture, ideas, or values. An integral part of the senior high English language arts curriculum is the development of this sensitivity.

The inclusive nature of this program is clearly stated in the *Foundation* document:

The intent of this curriculum is inclusion. There is a place for the interests, values, experiences and language of each student and of the many groups within our regional, national and global community. The society of Atlantic Canada, like all of Canada, is linguistically, racially, culturally and socially diverse. Our society

includes differences in gender, ability, values, lifestyles and languages. Schools should foster the understanding of such diversity (p. 42).

The clear intent is for all students to have equal access to an education and to have the right to be full participants in the learning process. This will benefit all students as all have something to contribute and each can learn from the other. The development of mutual respect and an acceptance and understanding of others are desired goals. Learning experiences which incorporate differences into the activities will foster critical thinking and the development of perspective consciousness, other elements of global education (*Foundation*, p. 42).

A positive feature of the literature component of this curriculum is the realization of the many silent voices in current senior English high curricula. *English 10-12* notes that teachers need to "balance traditional works with more contemporary ones, including works that bring new or previously neglected voices into the classroom" (p. 148). A primary concern is that all voices are heard and given place as equally important to others. This emphasis upon inclusion operates on many levels. Gender equity is important: "It is important that the curriculum reflect the experiences and values of both female and male students and that texts and other learning resources include and reflect the interests, achievements, and perspectives of males and females" (*English 10-12*, p. 4). This is a method of developing perspective consciousness across gender lines.

The curriculum is also designed to meet the needs of students with special needs. For those with language or communication difficulties, "[t]eachers should adapt learning contexts to provide support and challenge for all students, using the continuum of curriculum outcomes statements in a flexible way to plan learning experiences appropriate to students' learning needs"

(*English 10-12*, p. 6). For example, students with hearing difficulties may require adaptation of outcomes for speaking and listening to the specific needs of the individual. Similarly, gifted and talented students may require changes to existing outcomes to meet their special needs: "Teachers should adapt learning contexts to stimulate and extend the learning of these students, using the continuum of curriculum outcomes statements to plan challenging learning experiences" (*English 10-12*, p. 7). Flexibility in outcomes, teaching strategies, and choice of texts are avenues to explore to enrich the curriculum for gifted students (*English 10-12*, pp. 7-8). As well, cooperative learning groups offer excellent opportunities for gifted students to develop to their full potential: "Gifted and talented students need opportunities to work in a variety of grouping arrangements . . ." (*English 10-12*, p. 8).

The curriculum is also intended to meet the needs of the students who, too often, do not show great interest in schooling or are unmotivated, tardy, or absent from classes. The challenge is to make such students feel part of the curriculum by presenting texts to which they can relate and learning experiences which are motivational and relevant. But nothing less is to be required of them: "Teachers need to have high expectations for all students and to articulate clearly these expectations" (*English 10-12*, pp. 9-10).

A supportive environment is to be established for the study of English language arts, an environment in which all participants feel positive about themselves. The learning experiences and opportunities are to be enriching for all and each is to feel he/she is contributing to and receiving from the learning opportunities presented (*English 10-12*, pp. 10-11). In a climate which is "interactive", "collaborative", "inclusive", "challenging", "relevant", "inquiry based", and grounded in resource-based learning, students feel valued and part of the learning process: "In such

environments, students will feel central in the learning" (*English 10-12*, p. 12). Such is the aim of global education and its commitment to inclusion and holism.

**b. *Specified Goals***

The development of perspective consciousness, or the ability to recognize and appreciate other points of view, is crucial to a global perspective. In the English language arts curriculum this is necessary as the value of multiculturalism is stressed; the importance of developing perspective consciousness is paramount to the study of multicultural literature:

In reading, viewing, and discussing a variety of texts, students from different social and cultural backgrounds can come to understand each others' perspectives, to realize that their ways of seeing and knowing are not the only ones possible, and to probe the complexity of the ideas and issues they are examining (*English 10-12*, p. 5).

Through this students are able to come to understand how cultural groups differ, yet how all share common concerns.

This element is highlighted for Level III students as they are to make "formal presentation in the global context" to "identify the communicative differences in contexts of culture and dialect" (*English 10-12*, p. 44). The "culture and dialect" aspect clearly indicates that differences in locale and communication modes are to be understood and appreciated, indicative of the global emphasis upon understanding others. This is true for Level I, as well, as they are to work with speech events from the "local, regional, national, international" scene (*English 10-12*, p. 46). Note how the focus spirals outward from local to global, echoes of the concept of thinking globally, but acting locally.

Reading and viewing, one of the organizing strands of the curriculum, is to introduce

students to "a wide range of cultural experiences" and to enable them "to see the social implication of texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 54). From this it can be reasonably determined that an important focus is upon broadening students' awareness of the culture, beliefs, and worldviews of others. This is a global element. As well, the connection and contribution to society is identified in the focus upon "social implication".

The teaching strategies suggested also indicate global elements. Students are to be encouraged to develop a more open attitude toward topics of discussion and to learn to challenge the status quo. Ideas, attitudes, and perspectives in texts are to be critiqued and challenged to determine author intent and foster an understanding of how people use language for a variety of purposes (*English 10-12*, p. 62). For example, students are to conceive of the world as "an emerging text" which may be viewed in "social, economic, historical, psychological, political, or geographical" contexts; consequently, students are "to read and view text from the position of a global citizen" (*English 10-12*, p. 68). Within this context students are to keep in mind differing points of view and cultural perspectives as they "continually examine the universality of issues that are part of the human condition" (*English 10-12*, p. 68).

Students continue the global element of developing perspective consciousness and an appreciation for differences and for others as they develop respect for differing opinions, a desired characteristic of this curriculum. This is developed through response to literature and other forms of media noted throughout the document (*English 10-12*, p. 64). The development of perception extends to the students themselves as they are encouraged to "recognize their own bias and the bias that may be present in texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 66). This is meant to develop an understanding of their own methods of thinking.

The development of critical thinking skills is another vital component of the English language arts curriculum. The importance of developing critical thinking skills is noted:

At all levels students need to reflect on their own language use and on the ways in which others use language. They need to grapple with the problems of understanding how language works, what effects certain language has, and why. This sort of inquiry challenges their thinking about language (*Foundation*, p. 39).

The notion of challenge is extended: "Experiences that challenge learners are essential to language development. Students need to experiment with language and try out new ideas" (*Foundation*, p. 38). The value of the challenge is explained in terms of possible outcomes. It is especially noted that students need not fear making mistakes because, "[i]f they are at the limits of their knowledge and abilities, they will make mistakes" (*Foundation*, p. 38). Preparation for taking on one's role in society must empower students to deal with the aspect of risk-taking and the possibility of mistakes. Students are to be taught that this is part of the learning process.

A further global element is noted in the learning experiences for literature as students are to be engaged in discussions which enable them to explore their own ideas against the backdrop of those of their peers (*English 10-12*, p. 148). This is connected to the interrelated language processes which are "fundamental to the development of language abilities, cultural understanding, and creative and critical thinking" (*Foundation*, p. 11). Other positive features include global traits, such as encouraging critical and personal responses to literature because they develop creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills (*English 10-12*, p. 149). This, in turn, leads to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

c. ***Means of Achievement***

A course with a global focus will achieve its goals through a commitment to resource-based learning, cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary studies. All three of these elements are found in the senior high English language arts curriculum.

At the outset of the *Foundation* document, the global element of resource-based learning is indicated: "This document offers a vision of what the learning and teaching of English language arts can become when well supported by the education system and community . . ." (*Foundation*, p. 1). The reference to the support of the community indicates a desire for the community to become involved in education, including the availability of resources. This is reiterated when the document suggests that students should be immersed in learning activities "both within the classroom and in broader social contexts" (*Foundation*, p. 2). The role of the community is to become actively involved in the life of the school, inviting students to participate and contribute to community groups or activities. As well, individuals are to make themselves available for assisting within the school wherever possible, thereby making a strong connection between what occurs within the school and the life beyond the walls (*Foundation*, p. 43). The implications are that learning cannot be confined to the classroom, but takes place within the realm of students' influence.

The rationale for resource-based learning is given in the following statement: "The wider community offers students multiple opportunities to construct meaning, to communicate in public contexts for a range of purposes and audiences, and to use knowledge from different sources" (*Foundation*, p. 38). Through this holistic, student-centered approach to learning, students are to use a "wide range of print, non-print and human resources" to meet the "varied interests,

experiences, learning styles, needs and ability levels" of students (*Foundation*, p. 39). Resource areas range from print materials, such as textbooks, to the technology based resources, such as multimedia units and the internet, to the human resources of the surrounding community (*Foundation*, pp. 39-40).

Cooperative learning techniques are also highly recommended, identified in *English 10-12* as interactive learning situations. An array of groupings, from small group to whole class, from cross-ability to cross-age, is suggested as "[s]uch interaction allows students to explore their own ideas, get feedback, build on insights of others and construct knowledge collaboratively" (*Foundation*, p. 40). The benefits are summarized as follows: "This curriculum emphasizes interactive learning in an environment that fosters development of the abilities to communicate effectively and to think critically both within and beyond the classroom" (*Foundation*, p. 40). As already noted, the development of critical thinking skills is an important aim of global education.

Cooperative learning and critical thinking skills, combined with a degree of competency in the use of technology, is also an important aspect of the English language arts curriculum: "English language arts learning environments are characterized by an emphasis on inquiry, interaction and collaboration, challenging learning experiences supported by a wide range of resources, including technology" (*Foundation*, p. 38). The use of technology is further stressed as a significant part of the English language arts curriculum when it is recommended that, "to the fullest extent possible, include experiences which build students' confidence and competence in using a range of information-retrieval and information-processing technologies" to meet student needs in an ever-increasing technology-based society (*Foundation*, p. 40).

The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum is also apparent in the *Foundation*

document:

Teachers in all subject areas, therefore, need to understand the role played by language in learning and to apply that understanding in the language experiences and learning environments they create and structure for their students (*Foundation*, p. 45).

Suggestions are made for teachers of courses, such as science or history, to design learning exercises so that the relevance of the English language arts curriculum is readily apparent as it is used in other curriculum areas (*Foundation*, p. 45). The intent is for students to see the relevance of the English language arts curriculum to all aspects of their learning and to enhance the holistic concept of the interrelatedness of the learning process.

The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum is specifically noted in the organizational approaches. It states in *English 10-12*, "[i]t is also important that, wherever possible, learning in *English 10-12* is connected and applied to learning in other subject areas" (p. 118). Whole group learning is important for providing instruction and direction, but also to "challenge the imagination, stimulate reflection, and develop a sense of inquiry" and "develop critical thinking" as a variety of ideas are expressed and evaluated collectively (*English 10-12*, p. 119). The development of reflective students is one of the primary goals of this curriculum, but also of global education. Small-group work is valued for its ability to develop a sense of interdependence, a goal shared by global education. There is the additional development of "skills, abilities, and attitudes" conducive to group work; this is indicative of global education as students are taught to "participate, collaborate, co-operate, and negotiate" in the classroom setting (*English 10-12*, p. 119). In the area of independent learning, it is recognized that "learning is both personal and individual", therefore, students are to be encouraged to "make personal

choices in selecting topics, issues, and curriculum areas . . . to help them grow toward autonomy" (*English 10-12*, p. 120). The development of autonomous thinkers and independent learners are desired goals of global education.

## **2. Global Elements in Curriculum Outcomes**

Curriculum outcomes are the attributes, attitudes, skills, and knowledge base an individual will have acquired upon completion of a prescribed learning component. Within the *Foundation* document, there are several types of curriculum outcomes identified: essential graduation learnings, general curriculum outcomes, key-stage curriculum outcomes, and specific curriculum outcomes.

### **a. Essential Graduation Learnings**

Essential graduation learnings are defined by *Foundation*: "Essential graduation learnings are statements describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school" (p. 5). These are the particular qualities a graduate ought to possess upon successful completion of the schooling process. By definition, the essential graduation learnings echo some of the aims of global education. The basis of global education is the acquisition of a body of relevant information to provide an informed, knowledgeable individual. As well, global education stresses the absolute necessity for skill development which will enable the individual to manipulate and use the information gained in a positive manner. The fostering of a positive, proactive attitude is another goal. Consequently, a tentative connection to global education is apparent. However, a closer examination of the six essential graduation learnings

reveals more fully how closely the two are aligned.

The first of the essential graduation learnings listed, aesthetic expression, states that students are to develop the ability to "respond with critical awareness" to a variety of art forms and develop clarity of expression through art (*Foundation*, p. 6). One of the primary goals of global education is the development of critical thinking to enhance the understanding and awareness of others and of global issues. As well, the ability to clearly express one's opinions and views is also highly valued.

The citizenship requirement indicates that graduates are to develop the ability to "assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context" (*Foundation*, p. 6). The connection to global education is readily apparent here. The obvious citizenship meant here is that of planet earth if one is to develop the understanding of and ability to evaluate global issues and interdependence. As well, the emphasis is placed upon both local and global concerns, with the apparent desire for individuals to think global, but act local.

Thirdly, students are to master the ability to communicate in a variety of means and to communicate effectively. As well, the emphasis is placed upon thinking and learning as crucial components of education. Global education, with its emphasis upon meaningful exchange between individuals, clarity of understanding of issues, and dialogue, shares this common attribute.

Personal development emphasizes the aspect of continuous learning, a prominent feature of global education. It is imperative that proactive contributions to society are based on the actions of individuals who are current in knowledge and thought.

Like critical thinking, problem-solving is a major component of global education. The

emphasis here is upon "strategies and processes" which are used to "solve a wide variety of problems" (*Foundation*, p. 8). Social issues are becoming increasingly complex, therefore a mastery of problem-solving strategies is essential.

Individuals able to operate competently in a global context have to be comfortable and proficient in the use of modern technology. It is the advancement of technology which has led to the rapid globalization of society in Newfoundland and Labrador. Consequently, the emphasis placed upon the use, understanding, and application of technology as an essential graduation learning is in line with global education.

From the brief analysis of the essential graduation learnings, the current educational focus in the Atlantic provinces is essentially global in nature. The concern is placed upon producing students that have the necessary knowledge base, thinking skills, and personal attributes to make a proactive contribution to the local, regional, and global world in which they live.

**b. *General/Key-Stage/Specific Curriculum Outcomes***

Curriculum outcomes have also been developed for individual courses, including the senior high English language arts program, to guide students through the school system and enable them to acquire the essential graduation learnings. The primary stage is the general curriculum outcomes which outlines the overall intent of curriculum developers and provides an overview of the general aims of the English language arts program. Key-stage curriculum outcomes have been identified, outlining specific goals for grade levels 3, 6, 9, and 12, which help determine student achievement of curriculum content throughout the schooling years. Finally, specific curriculum outcomes are designed to provide a clear focus throughout the senior high

English language arts program: "Specific curriculum outcomes are statements that identify what students are expected to know and be able to do at a particular grade level" (*English 10-12*, p. 23). An analysis of the curriculum outcomes indicates how global elements have been incorporated within the English language arts curriculum.

The various curriculum outcomes for senior high English language arts, general curriculum outcomes, key-stage curriculum outcomes, and specific curriculum outcomes, have been organized around three strands which summarize the oral/aural, visual, and kinesthetic manner in which humans communicate. The three strands of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing will be used as a means to organize analysis of the curriculum outcomes.

**Speaking and Listening:** The category of speaking and listening focuses on the oral and auditory components of the transmission and reception relationship which occurs in spoken communication. As such, the emphasis is placed upon clarifying the roles of both the encoding and decoding of the transmitted communique (*English 10-12*, p. 17). All the outcomes identified in this section indicate global elements.

The general curriculum outcomes indicate that students are to develop the ability to "respond . . . critically" and to "interact with sensitivity and respect" (*English 10-12*, p. 17). These correspond with the global elements of critical thinking and humanitarian concerns. The emphasis is placed upon the student developing the ability to evaluate data analytically, yet, simultaneously, respond in a compassionate manner, treating others with respect and dignity.

The humanitarian element is clearly illustrated in the key-stage outcomes, as well, when it

states that students are to "demonstrate . . . concern for the needs, rights, and feelings of others" (*English 10-12*, p. 18). Specifically, the idea of developing perspective consciousness is also evident when it states that students "examine others' ideas . . . to clarify and expand on their own understanding" (*English 10-12*, p. 18). This implies that one has to accept as fact that his/her personal ideas and perspectives are not necessarily correct; others have beliefs or points of view which may be used to clarify or refute those held by the individual. This is reiterated when another outcome states that students are to "articulate, advocate, and justify positions on an issue . . . , showing an understanding of a range of viewpoints" (*English 10-12*, p. 18).

The specific curriculum outcomes list three main outcomes which serve as a guide through the speaking and listening component of the senior high English language arts program. The first outcome has a holistic goal as students are to develop an awareness of self and build upon personal ideas, thoughts, and feelings. The intent is for students to explore their own ideas against the backdrop of those of others, requiring the individual to develop critical thinking, another global element. Verbs such as "examine", "articulate, advocate, and justify", and "listen critically" are evidence of this (*English 10-12*, p. 24).

The second outcome places an emphasis upon clear lines of communication and critical response to others' ideas. The citizenship aspect of global education is shown through the goal of enabling students to "interact in both leadership and support roles" in group situations (*English 10-12*, p. 25). As well, students are to develop the skill to "effectively adapt language and delivery for a variety of audiences and situations in order to achieve their goals or intents" (*English 10-12*, p. 25). This flexibility or ability to cope with changing needs is another global element. Coping skills for a variety of circumstances are developed as students learn to "give

precise directions" and to "respond to . . . complex questions and directions" (*English 10-12*, p. 25).

The third outcome emphasizes the need for "sensitivity and respect" or an appreciation for others. Students are to "demonstrate active listening", indicating that lines of communication must be kept open in all respects. The humanitarian aspect of the "needs, rights, and feelings of others" is noted, particularly as the student is in "interaction with peers and others" (*English 10-12*, p. 26). The element of choice is also present, as students are to determine whether they should "express themselves or remain silent" (*English 10-12*, p. 26). This, too, is a global element as students are being taught the skill of evaluating data and determining the appropriate response. All of this suggests the element of action as the student is presented with the opportunity to make an informed choice and act upon it, another global feature of the English language arts curriculum.

**Reading and Viewing:** Reading and viewing refers to the literature component of English language arts in which participants are exposed to a variety of texts which may range from books to video to any of the various uses of media to transmit information. The outcomes in this section stress the need for students to fully understand text and to develop personal response to such stimuli (*English 10-12*, p. 17).

The reading and viewing strand contains many of the elements of global education, particularly as it relates to the study of multicultural literature and the development of perspective consciousness. General curriculum outcomes focus on the higher level skills of critical thinking and problem-solving. The use of a directive such as "interpret, select, and combine information

using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies" reflects the commitment to developing such abilities in students (*English 10-12*, p. 17). There is a marked intent to have students "respond critically to a range of texts", indicating a desire for students to become critical thinkers through exposure to an array of writings.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes are also indicators of a globalization of the English language arts program. Students are to "select texts to support their learning needs and range of special interests" (*English 10-12*, p. 19). The concept of individual learning needs has hints of inclusion and holism as students with differing needs are recognized and encouraged to use resources which are more applicable to their specific requirements. When the term "range of special interests" is used, the student-centered approach comes to the forefront. Holistic education focuses upon the needs and interests of the individual as the individual is the focal point of learning. Multiculturalism is another feature as texts studied are to be from "different provinces and countries" and include "world literature" (*English 10-12*, p. 19). But the concepts of critical thinking and problem-solving are stressed the greatest. Students are to "use the cueing systems and a variety of strategies to construct meaning" while they "articulate", "justify", "critically evaluate", and make "informed personal responses" about texts (*English 10-12*, p. 19). There is also the desire for students to become acutely aware of how text is used to construct meaning and promote ideas. Critical response to "complex and sophisticated texts" is to help students understand how texts "produce ideologies, identities, and positions" and "construct notions of roles, behaviour, culture, and reality" (*English 10-12*, p. 19). All of this is illustrative of the commitment to developing critical thinking skills in students.

Specific curriculum outcomes are organized around four guiding outcomes. The first

outcome indicates that students are to work with a variety of texts. Within this there are elements of the posit of thinking globally, but acting locally. Students are to select and work with Canadian and world literature, but also works that are "relevant to their own lives and community" (*English 10-12*, p. 27). The connection to the local community also adds the dimension of resource-based learning as materials taken from familiar surroundings can be easily reinforced and supported locally. The multicultural flavor of global education is also present as students are to develop an appreciation for the "cultural diversity" of texts from other provinces and countries, indeed, throughout the world. The development of perspective consciousness is also an important factor as students attempt to construct meaning "from diverse and differing perspectives" (*English 10-12*, p. 27). This is achieved through critical thinking skills as students "seek meaning" through "analysing, inferring, predicting, synthesizing, and evaluating" information readily available. This is a combination of critical thinking and the acquisition of a base of knowledge upon which students are able to draw to reach the desired conclusions.

The second outcome focuses directly upon the development of critical thinking skills as students are to "interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies" (*English 10-12*, p. 28). The implication is that, in order to make the conclusions, students must have developed a knowledge base and the necessary skills to enable them to reach definitive conclusions. This is clearly a global characteristic. The statement that students are to "research, in systematic ways, specific information from a variety of sources" is illustrative of this (*English 10-12*, p. 28). Other phrases, such as "synthesizing information" and "making meaningful selections for their own purposes", show how students are to become capable thinkers and writers who are able to use a variety of information to produce original work.

The third outcome focuses upon making personal response to a variety of texts. Here, students are to articulate specific points of view regarding content within texts, "citing appropriate evidence" to prove their arguments. Again, students are to do this by developing the ability for "questioning, connecting, evaluating, and extending" upon information and prior knowledge and connecting to personal experiences. A strong connection to global education in this section is the commitment to developing perspective consciousness. Students are to "demonstrate a willingness to consider more than one interpretation of text", "demonstrate a willingness to explore multiple perspectives on text", and to "demonstrate a willingness to explore diverse perspectives to develop or modify their points of view" (*English 10-12*, p. 29). The implication is that students learn that their current points of view are not necessarily the only or correct one. There is room left for acceptance of others' perspectives or even incorporating aspects of others' points of view into one's own.

The fourth outcome focuses upon critical response based upon acquired skill and knowledge. Students are to make inferences and draw conclusions from information presented. There is also a recognition of the power of language and the "diverse ways in which texts reveal and produce ideologies, identities, and positions" (*English 10-12*, p. 30). The all-inclusive curriculum broadens its scope to inform students of ways in which genders and socio-economic and cultural groups are portrayed in media to avoid stereotyping. To achieve this, students are to "consider their own and others' social and cultural contexts"; through this, a greater understanding of "how media texts construct notions of roles, behaviour, culture, and reality" can be developed (*English 10-12*, p. 30). All of this is global in nature.

**Writing and Other Ways of Representing:** Writing and other ways of representing focuses on the third organizing strand of English language arts, the presentation of ideas via writing, scripting, acting, or other forms of media. The outcomes in this section again emphasize the need for students to become competent in the use of a variety of forms of expression as a means of understanding self (*English 10-12*, p. 17). And, while writing and other ways of representing focuses mainly upon the development of critical thinking skills, there is also the intent to ensure clarity of expression. The general curriculum outcomes state that the use of the imagination is important in presenting ideas. Students are to draw on a body of knowledge and use a "range of strategies" to develop effective writings. As well, elements of cooperative learning are suggested as students are to produce work collaboratively, as well as independently (*English 10-12*, p. 17).

Key-stage curriculum outcomes reflect an emphasis upon critical thinking as well. Students are to base their writings upon "their experiences with and insights into challenging texts and issues" (*English 10-12*, p. 20). This suggests that students have a base of knowledge with which to work. As well, students are to reflect upon "the basis for their feelings, values, and attitudes", indicating the holistic consideration of a greater understanding of self. Students are to also produce work that shows an "increasing complexity of thought". In addition, students are to become aware of and proficient with the knowledge that "the construction of texts can create, enhance, and control meaning" (*English 10-12*, p. 20). This has ramifications for empowerment as students become aware of the power of writing and the skillful use of language. The use of technology is also important, particularly as students create works which "integrate information from many sources" (*English 10-12*, p. 20).

Specific curriculum outcomes are organized around three outcomes. The first outcome

speaks of personal expression and the use of the imagination. Students are to reflect upon "the basis for their feelings, values, and attitudes" (*English 10-12*, p. 31), a holistic concept.

Resource-based education is suggested as students are to use a variety of sources and strategies, such as "photographs, diagrams, storyboards", to express meaning. Again, emphasis is placed upon the development of the imagination, a form of critical thinking.

The second outcome focuses upon the collaborative and independent nature of work as students produce various forms of work. Students are to "use effective strategies" to produce "increasingly complex texts". As well, there is the notion of the power of language to "control meaning". Students are to also consider the works of others, including peers, to improve and extend upon their writings (*English 10-12*, p. 32).

The third outcome speaks of the use of a "range of strategies" to make the communication clear. Students are to "use the conventions of written language" in their products and, simultaneously, "demonstrate control of the conventions of written language" (*English 10-12*, p. 33). The effective use of technology is also encouraged. In writing, students are to "integrate information from many sources", again suggesting that such a repertoire has been developed. As well, students are to use a "range of materials" to clarify the intended message, such as charts, illustrations, and graphs (*English 10-12*, p. 33).

The outcomes of the senior high English language arts curriculum contain many of the elements of global education. Given the evolution of Newfoundland and Labrador into a global economy, there is a need to ensure students are being adequately prepared to operate within such an environment.

### **3. Program Design**

The design of the senior high English language arts curriculum is essentially global in nature as well. Elements of global education are present as great stress is placed on humanitarian concerns, development of skills as goals, and the means of achieving these goals. This is evident in the instructional approaches, essential components, organizing strands, and methods of assessment and evaluation.

#### **a. Instructional Approaches**

The senior high English language arts curriculum identifies three options for instruction: whole-class learning, small-group learning, and independent learning. Whole class learning is recognized as an important method to "present strategies, provide information or to communicate directions" (*English 10-12*, p. 118). Through this approach, critical thinking skills and the development of perspectives are important aspects which may be reinforced as varying ideas and opinions are expressed: "It can provide a forum for critical thinking and challenge students to revise and extend their own knowledge base as they encounter the ideas of others and compare those ideas with their own" (*English 10-12*, p. 119). Here the opportunity exists for students to extend their sphere of knowledge and understanding.

Small-group instruction is important because it enhances collaboration and reduces student reliance upon the teacher as a source of information: "Such group work will also decrease students' dependence on the teacher and increase positive interdependence" (*English 10-12*, p. 119). The marked decrease in reliance upon the teacher and increased accountability for self will result in confidence in the student. As well, students "will develop and consolidate the

skills, abilities, and attitudes involved in group processes" (*English 10-12*, p. 119). Small-group learning is encouraged for its reliance upon interaction skills, team-building skills, and language skills. It encourages students to "participate, collaborate, and negotiate", all necessary character traits for successful individuals in a competitive environment. Students also learn to build upon, extend, and modify their own ideas and views as they align them with their peers. Problem-solving capabilities in a collaborative environment and a sense of responsibility are additional benefits derived from the small-group approach. Such attributes are indicative of a global approach to learning.

Independent learning is the ultimate aim as students develop the skills necessary "to help them grow toward autonomy" (*English 10-12*, p. 120). Independent learning is also acceptable as it enables students to explore areas of personal interest; students have the opportunity to test their own potential as they learn to work independently, utilizing skills and techniques developed in collaboration with others (*English 10-12*, p. 120). The combination of the development of collaborative skills and an independent work ethic are global in nature as well.

**b. *Essential Components***

An essential component of the English language arts curriculum is the development of a base of knowledge which provides a variety of opportunities through which students develop skills. Through these experiences students develop a "repertoire of strategies" for listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and other ways of representing. Two areas of focus of the English language arts curriculum are literature and literacy.

That literature is important to the senior high English language arts curriculum has already

been noted: "Creating, interpreting, and responding to literary texts are essential experiences at the centre of *English 10-12*" (*English 10-12*, p. 117). Within this statement are the three central aims of the study of literature: creative thinking processes, exploration of a variety of ideas, and critical response. The global elements of creative and critical thinking and exposure to differing perspectives are evident throughout the literature component.

The value of literature study is presented in a two-fold manner. Its humanitarian aspect is emphasized in *English 10-12*: "Literature shapes our conceptions of the world and is an unlimited resource for insights into what it is to be human" (p. 146). This value is expressed through four means. First there is the aesthetic pleasure derived by the reader from the sheer joy of interacting with text. Secondly, the reader is able to "experience vicariously" worlds beyond self. Thirdly, literature provides the opportunity to explore self and understand what it means to be human. Finally, literature provides the opportunity to hone writing skills as models of a variety of writing experiences are studied.

A second element of the study of literature is the importance of student response, both personal and critical. Personal response allows the student the opportunity to reflect upon the situation presented and connect the situation to his/her individual circumstances. This develops the ability to connect self to differing situations and, by extension, identification of self with others. Identification of self with others leads to an appreciation of their circumstances, an empathic awareness, thereby creating an understanding of others (*English 10-12*, p. 149). Such experiences lead to "the recognition and examination of multiple points of view" (*English 10-12*, p. 117). Global education has as one of its major aims the desire for humanity to become more understanding of one another; literature has the capacity to do just that.

Critical response is equally important for its ability to develop critical thinking skills within the individual, another major focus of global education. "In their response to literature, students can develop their ability to think imaginatively, analytically, and critically" (*English 10-12*, p. 149). This enables students to explore text with a critical stance, examining underlying issues, biases, and differing levels of meaning. Notes *English 10-12*: "It is essential that students have opportunities to examine and critique the properties and purposes of different texts and their social and cultural contexts and traditions" (p. 124). The individual is better able to use personal experiences, ideas, and values to assess the material under study, developing an educated and informed response to text.

The development of literacy skills is another major aim of the English language arts curriculum. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines the term **literacy** as "the quality or state of being literate" and the term **literate** as "having knowledge or competence" (p. 680). The combined meaning suggests the possession of knowledge or proficiency in a given area. The senior high English language arts curriculum guide offers four areas of literacy proficiency: media, critical, visual, and information. The intent is for students to work toward the mastery of all these areas.

Media literacy includes the objective evaluation of the various forms of media which influence popular culture, youth in particular. Through the formal study of the various forms in which information is garnered, students are to develop an ability to analyze and evaluate information which they encounter through the media to examine the "reliability, accuracy, and motives of these sources" (*English 10-12*, p. 153). Students will then develop a sense of self and one's self-worth, considering one's role and potential contributions to society. This becomes an

empowering opportunity to permit students to develop a sense of voice in local issues which pertain to them (*English 10-12*, pp. 153-154). The concept of empowerment is a global element. As well, one of the outcomes of global studies is the ability to think global, but act local where one can make a difference in the immediate sense.

Critical awareness involves preparing students to become critical analysts of the world in which they live, questioning ideas, assumptions, and information to determine the validity and purpose of the message. *English 10-12* states: "Critical literacy can be a tool for addressing issues of social justice and equity, for critiquing society and attempting to effect positive change" (p. 157). The humanitarian concern of the curriculum is clearly stated here as individuals are to develop points of view on social issues and strive to make a difference.

Visual literacy involves empowering students to make educated, yet personal responses to visual stimuli. The responses are to be based on "aesthetic, emotive, and affective qualities" which the individual student perceives. However, the emphasis is placed upon a sense of mutual respect and appreciation for differing perspectives within the classroom as students express personal observations, a climate which will be an invaluable learning experience as various thoughts and perspectives are presented. The emphasis is to be placed upon understanding the creator's technique and intent, developing personal response, and developing visual images through personal response to text (*English 10-12*, p. 165).

Information literacy focuses upon using a variety of technologies to evaluate and produce information. The realization is that, with the rapid influx of technology into our society, students have to become technologically literate to function with a high degree of competency. The research component is indispensable to information literacy. Through the process of theorizing,

investigating, exploring, gathering, evaluating, selecting, preparing, and editing, much is learned. Students have the opportunity to fully explore the wide range of ideas available on any given topic, balance this against personal experiences, and produce original contributions to the field of study (*English 10-12*, pp. 161-165). Here critical thinking skills are at a premium:

Students at these grade levels need to learn creative and multifaceted approaches to research and investigation. The ability to select, interpret, judge, manage, and use information from among the welter of general and specialized sources now available is one of the most essential abilities teachers can foster in students in preparing them both to succeed in the emerging information economy and to participate responsibly in our complex information culture (*English 10-12*, pp. 116-117).

The development of literacy skills, even though presented in the English language arts curriculum, is very much a cross-curricular area of study as they impact upon all discipline areas. Media, critical, visual, and information literacies are skills developed to assess, comprehend, and process the abundance of information to which one is exposed in society. English language arts, in its development of those skills, displays an interdisciplinary focus: "Students in grades 10-12 need frequent opportunities to use language for thinking and learning in order to function effectively as learners not only in English language arts, but in other curriculum areas" (*English 10-12*, p. 114).

### c. *Organizing Strands*

The organizing strands of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing have a global orientation as well.

Oral communication is the most universally used form of transmitting information. From birth the spoken word has meaning and we as humans grow in an environment in which the verbal

response has a world of meaning. Consequently, the senior high English language arts curriculum places great emphasis upon the importance of oral communication, both in the areas of speaking and listening. The power of language and its multiple uses are presented and experienced through both informal and formal exercises.

Types of informal talk take many forms. One type is the opportunity for groups to brainstorm ideas or solutions to problems, enabling students to understand that group effort often produces better results. Opportunity for booktalk is another effective method of developing speaking and listening skills as it enables students to read and select materials they find interesting and wish to share with classmates. Formal talk situations include such forms as interviews, debates, impromptu talks, or oral reports. In this situation students are provided with the opportunity to develop responses to set topics after having had ample time to reflect upon the topic, research information, and prepare a response which follows the rules and guidelines as set out by the parameters of the form of presentation (*English 10-12*, pp. 125-127). In the context of speaking and listening within standardized language, connection of the curriculum to the needs of a global context is noted: "Notions of correctness and clarity are important not as ends in themselves, but as links to a wider social world including global audiences" (*English 10-12*, p. 116). The obvious intent is to prepare students to communicate effectively in the global setting, not simply the local context.

Reading and viewing allows for the interaction between student and text. Through this, individuals are able to relate self to the larger world, bridging the gap between people, arriving at a greater appreciation for others. Personal and critical responses are developed through reaction to the text both from the personal standpoint and through a more analytical perspective (*English*

10-12, pp. 128-137). But the term text means much more than book. Therefore, reading and viewing are equally important; the connection between reading and viewing is inseparable:

Reading and viewing are meaning-making processes. They include making sense of a range of representations including print, film, TV, technological, and other texts. Reading print texts has always been an essential component of English language arts curriculum and of other disciplines and is becoming increasingly important in a complex, global, information-based, technical society (*English 10-12*, p. 130).

As well, "[g]raphic and visual images also exert a powerful influence in an increasingly high-tech society, and students need to learn how the form, style, and language of visual texts communicate and shape ideas and information" (*English 10-12*, p. 130). Consequently, the importance of including a viewing component is noted:

The primary purpose of including viewing experiences is to increase the visual literacy of students so that they will become critical and discriminating viewers who are able to understand, interpret, and evaluate visual messages. Visual images pervade our world, and students need opportunities to study their impact and relevance in context (*English 10-12*, p. 129).

The development of critical thinking skills are core to this program: "Creating or responding to literary text is an aesthetic act involving complex interactions of emotion and intellect" (*English 10-12*, p. 117). Again it states: "Reading is essentially a problem-solving process in which the reader interprets or constructs meaning from a text by applying language knowledge and meaning-making strategies, as well as personal experiences" (*English 10-12*, p. 129). Reading constructs meaning by combining a knowledge base with information in the text and the setting or context of the study of the text (*English 10-12*, p. 130). Response to text is an integral method for developing critical thinking skills and fostering compassion: "Thinking critically about text will help students to recognize and evaluate human experience . . ." (*English*

10-12, p. 136). The importance of an awareness of the power of language and the manner in which it may be used to control and manipulate, a critical thinking skill, is also recognized:

It is important that students have abundant opportunities to draw connections and recognize discrepancies among different texts, experiences, sources, and bodies of information -- for example, texts conveying information that reflects different theoretical, ideological, and cultural perspectives (*English 10-12*, p. 117).

Steps to effective reading include: visualizing, self-monitoring, predicting, think-alouds, and decisions regarding diction (*English 10-12*, pp. 132-134). This is exemplary of a problem-solving technique as teachers are able to model for students methods or procedures by which deficiencies in reading may be corrected.

The global elements of interdisciplinary studies and multiculturalism are also evident in this curriculum. States *English 10-12*: "Instruction should focus on helping students . . . to make appropriate cross-curriculum connections" (p. 129). Added to this is the importance of multicultural understanding: "Students should read a rich variety of texts including . . . contemporary authors who represent a range of cultural traditions" (*English 10-12*, p. 129).

The student-centered approach places great value on making the student feel part of the class and of value. One such method is the choice of reading materials which are suitable and appropriate for the students. Students choose them because they are of interest and they meet individual needs (*English 10-12*, p. 136). The aim is for students to take ownership of the learning process as they engage in learning experiences chosen for and by themselves.

For writing and other ways of representing, students are presented with the opportunity to express self and personal points of view on a variety of topics, through a variety of mediums. Writing is important because it helps in the development of the individual:

As students move toward full membership in the community of writers, they will become less dependent upon the teacher: they will feel a sense of achievement in their work, be able to reflect on their work more knowledgeably, and will take responsibility for their own personal growth as writers (*English 10-12*, p. 139).

The writing process becomes the guideline through which students are instructed on how ideas are to be gathered, prepared, evaluated, and presented. A wide variety of forms of writing is to be utilized, ranging from the poetic to the transactional, and students are to be presented with the opportunity to write for a variety of audiences using a variety of methods (*English 10-12*, pp. 138-145). With regard to writing: "Students will be expected to demonstrate increasingly complex levels of thought and imagination, as well as increasing fluency and competence" (*English 10-12*, p. 142).

Other ways of representing include: visual representation, drama, music, movement, multimedia and technological production (*English 10-12*, p. 143). Multimedia productions will require collaboration among students to create (*English 10-12*, p. 144). Another form of media production is the use of static visual text along with printed text (*English 10-12*, pp. 144-145). The intent is for students to use the vast array of methods of communicating which are available. This approach enables students to use any or all resources available in the community as a medium through which information may be passed on and a determination made as to what degree outcomes have been realized.

#### **d. Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment and evaluation practices as delineated in the *Foundation* document and *English 10-12* reflect global elements, particularly the humanitarian nature of the curriculum. The

*Foundation* document speaks of the need for assessment and evaluation which is more in tune with the needs of students. It states: "As a continuous, co-operative, collaborative, comprehensive process, assessment can be a powerful tool to enhance students' learning when it is an integral part of their learning process" (*Foundation*, p. 2). The implications of this statement is that assessment and evaluation have to have as a priority the improvement upon student learning and must be closely tied to the learning experiences presented. This is holistic in the sense that the needs of the student, the demands of the curriculum, and the resulting assessment practices are all interrelated. This is emphasized in *English 10-12* when it states: "Teachers are encouraged to use assessment and evaluation practices that are consistent with student-centered instructional practices . . ." (p. 169). This is the humanistic philosophy of assessment as indicated by Miller and Sellar (1990).

Consequently, flexibility in assessment is essential to the senior high English language arts curriculum. *English 10-12* reflects this in its introduction to the specific curriculum outcomes when it states that, "assessment practices can and should be designed to provide multiple routes to achievement of the outcomes and multiple ways of demonstrating achievement" (p. 23). The humanitarian concern of enabling students to achieve success takes priority, even to the point of making students actively involved in the assessment process. Students are to become involved in assessing their own progress and achievement of outcomes because, "students need to wean themselves from external motivators like grades or marks. They are more likely to perceive learning as its own reward when they are empowered to assess their own progress" (*English 10-12*, p. 170).

Inclusion is apparent in assessment practices. Cultural diversity is to be accommodated to

ensure academic liability does not occur: "Assessment practices should accept and appreciate learners' linguistic and cultural diversity . . . . Student performance on any assessment task is not only task-dependent, but also culture dependent" (*English 10-12*, p. 171). But inclusion applies to students with special needs as well: "In inclusive classrooms, students with special needs are expected to demonstrate success in their own way". Therefore, "[t]eachers are encouraged to be flexible in assessing the learning success of all students and to seek diverse ways in which students might demonstrate their personal best" (*English 10-12*, p. 171). The end result is a curriculum which is assessed with the needs of the student front and center and which ensures student success within his/her ability and unique circumstance. The goal of the assessment practices is to improve the learning of students and the teaching practices of teachers:

Effective assessment improves the quality of learning and teaching. It can help students to become more self-reflective and feel in control of their own learning, and it can help teachers to monitor and focus the effectiveness of their instructional programs (*English 10-12*, p. 177).

The method of assessment presented in *English 10-12* reveals flexibility; this is demonstrated in a list of possible techniques teachers may access, but are not limited to, for assessment of student progress. Items include anecdotal records, demonstrations, holistic scales, learning logs/journals, peer assessment, self-assessments, or videotapes (pp. 169-170). Such a list provides insight into the vast array of methods by which student achievement of the outcomes may be measured. However, a major focus of assessment is to be upon the use of portfolios: "A major feature of assessment and evaluation in English language arts is the use of portfolios. Portfolios are a purposeful selection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress, and achievements" (*English 10-12*, p. 175). Portfolios are important because they

enable students to become involved in the assessment process, encourage them to become reflective upon their work, and promote decision making (*English 10-12*, p. 175). All of this reflects global concerns of involving students in the learning process, developing critical thinking skills, and making appropriate choices.

The organizing strands of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing are to be evaluated in imaginative and enlightened ways. Suggested assessment techniques for speaking and listening include observation and checklists, journal entries, scales or rubrics, peer and self-assessments, or even the inclusion of audio and/or videotapes. Such a range of assessment practices is required as "[v]alid assessment of speaking and listening involves recognizing the complexities of these processes" (*English 10-12*, p. 171). This has echoes of the creative evaluative techniques suggested by Doll (1989).

Response to text ought to be assessed through both oral and written response. Response logs or journals are also useful tools. In all aspects, students are to reflect upon and generate original thought to their understanding of text and work collaboratively to "explore issues or ideas" as they "demonstrate respect for each other's ideas, attitudes, and beliefs" (*English 10-12*, pp. 172-173). Even in assessment, the importance of reflection, collaboration, and perspective development to English language arts is stressed.

The assessment of student writing is to be focused upon improvement: "The emphasis should be on helping the student to recognize and build on writing strengths and to set goals for improvement" (*English 10-12*, p. 174). Here the clear focus is upon enabling students to achieve success. The aim is for students to become critics of their own ways of expression and find ways to improve upon their communication techniques.

Traditional methods of evaluation, such as tests and examinations are also acceptable methods of assessment, but they are not to be relied upon as the sole means of determining student achievement of outcomes. Notes *English 10-12*: "Traditional tests and examinations are by themselves inadequate instrument with which to measure the learning required by this curriculum" (p. 175). However, such an approach to assessment is acceptable should it be closely tied to curriculum needs and provide students the opportunity to process information. Acceptable types of tests are those which permit student collaboration to prepare and compare possible responses or process questions which require students to utilize the writing process. As well, students ought to be encouraged to create their own questions as ways of assessing their understanding and mastery of the material covered (*English 10-12*, pp. 175-176). The emphasis in assessment is to be upon the skills and abilities the students have achieved, not the amount of information which has been retained.

### **Summary**

The senior high English language arts curriculum is global in its structure, from the philosophical basis to the desired outcomes to the instructional practices, curriculum content, and assessment strategies. The result has been a program developed to meet the increasing need of enabling students to acquire appropriate attitudes, abilities, and skills to compete competitively and competently in the global marketplace. Upon completion of secondary school, students in Newfoundland and Labrador will have been exposed to a vast array of learning experiences designed to instill confidence in their ability to make proactive contributions to the life of this province.

## **II Assessing the English Language Arts Curriculum from a Utilitarian Perspective**

Eagleton (1983), in defining literature, states that it often comes down to "value judgements" and these judgements "have a close relation to social ideologies. They refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others" (p. 16). The implications of this statement is that the literary canon designated as "real" literature must align with the philosophical stance of stakeholders socially, politically, morally, and economically.

As has already been determined, the senior high English language arts curriculum has been globalized to make it more applicable to the perceived socio-economic dictates of Newfoundland and Labrador in the twenty-first century. However, the potential also exists for a negative impact upon literature study given the eclectic design of the curriculum. Despite a commitment to a global philosophy, there is also a clear dedication to a utilitarian approach to education as information technology comes to the fore. In fact, this commitment is prolific in the curriculum, even to the point where *English 10-12* states overtly that students need to become adept "[i]n the use of information technology" (p. 61). This is evident in the philosophy and curricular content of the program.

### **1. Philosophical Perspective**

The *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines a philosophy as "a theory underlying . . . a sphere of activity or thought" (p. 873). This definition is applicable to the development of the senior high English language arts curriculum. The curriculum is designed with a clearly identifiable and specifically stated theory of education, the commitment to utility,

achievable through literacy development, the mastery of language skills, and outcomes-based education.

**a. Development of Literacy**

An emphasis upon literacy development, according to Luke (1991), has to be premised upon some philosophical point of view because "no approach to literacy is neutral. All are utterly implicated in contributing to and perhaps depriving children and adults of power, knowledge, and competence to particular economic and political ends" (p. 135). According to the *Foundation* document, the English language arts curriculum has a specific focus for literacy:

This curriculum identifies the development of literacy as a priority [which] extends beyond the traditional concept of literacy to encompass media and information literacies . . . . The curriculum anticipates that what it means to be literate will continue to change as visual and electronic media become more and more dominant as forms of expression and communication (p. 1).

This statement speaks volumes as to the intent and purpose of the curriculum. First is the commitment to literacy as priority. A singular focus of improving literacy rates and enhancing communication skills becomes a driving force behind all aspects of the curriculum. Secondly, the new interpretation of what literacy means broadens the definition, but, simultaneously, severely limits it. A major focus of the curriculum is to prepare students to participate effectively in the anticipated dominating modes of visual and electronic media in the twenty-first century. The indicated "anticipation" emphasizes that the use of electronic communication devices will only increase in importance, therefore, preparation has been made to develop a curriculum which is in tune with this development.

A curriculum which anticipates a change in a particular area must be designed to place that

form of communication at the forefront of the philosophical aims, instructional outcomes, and instructional practices. A clear mandate of the English language arts curriculum is literacy, preparing students to take their place in a global, technology-based workplace, with the prerequisite skills to enable them to function competently and competitively as contributors to this economy. The skills deemed necessary are those associated with the many facets of information technology.

This commitment to the new literacies offers students "multiple pathways to learning through engagement with a wide range of verbal, visual, and technological media" (*Foundation*, p. 1). Note the focus upon visual and technology media as equal in importance to verbal. Given the stated commitment to an emphasis upon literacy in the various forms of media, technology will have prominence in this curriculum. This raises questions as to the role of literature, except as a means of developing competence in the literacies. It is difficult to envision the traditional approach to literature study within the context of this philosophy in which aesthetics is substituted for a preferred utilitarian approach.

Interestingly, the Statement of Vision defines graduates as "reflective, articulate, literate" individuals (*Foundation*, p. v). It is interesting to note that the intellectual development of the individual is not mentioned as a priority. But what exactly is meant by the descriptors used here? *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "reflective" as "thoughtful, deliberate" and the process of "reflection" as "consideration of some matter, idea, or purpose" (p. 982). "Articulate" is defined as "expressing oneself readily, clearly, or effectively" (p. 76) and "literate" is defined as "educated, cultured" or "able to read and write" (p. 813). The combined concepts provide an insight into the type of student produced; this individual would be one who is able to think

independently and consider a variety of options before making decisions or reaching conclusions; the ideas, insights, and conclusions of the individual would then be clearly articulated to the audience of choice. As well, the desired graduate would be one who is well educated in communication skills and competent in discourse in a variety of settings. Given the emphasis upon literacy and the ability to "use language successfully" (*Foundation*, p. v) in this curriculum, it is highly unlikely "literate" means well "versed in literature or creative writing", an alternate definition provided by *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

In the Statement of Vision, the higher ideal of developing the intellect of the individual is supplanted by the desire to have students "use language successfully". But what exactly is meant by success? What is the measure? Perhaps it is to be assessed in economic terms or employability skills. Note the verb "use"; students are not to "experience" language or "interact with" language, but to use it, implying some definite purpose rather than a skill or expertise which may be applied to a variety of situations. The focus then is upon what students can do, rather than what they can become as intellectuals. There is a desire for students to be prepared to contribute positively to society, with prerequisite skills as a priority.

This anticipation of change in emphasis upon visual and electronic communication from traditional concepts of literacy does not bode well for the study of literature. The globalization of the curriculum means a commitment to developing a program which fits well into producing students prepared for the mechanics of the developing global economy, but what of the character of the product? Without a sound background in literature and the many pleasurable learning experiences which develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and deeper and fuller understanding of self and others, one has to consider the type of individual which is being

prepared to take his/her role in this global society. The issue of developing an appreciation for and understanding of others who are different has to be addressed as Newfoundland and Labrador society becomes more enmeshed in the interdependent fabric of the global village. Experiencing the literature of other cultural groups and coming to understand their way of life, way of thinking, and enjoying the diversity of such is an invaluable contribution to the development of the individual which cannot be diminished nor ignored.

**b.     Mastery of Language Skills**

Mastery of language skills can be viewed as an aesthetic endeavor, but also as a commodity in and of itself. Such skills may be used to create imaginative, literary works or be employed in the pursuit of economic ventures. In *English 10-12*, mastery of language skills is achievable through the four unifying ideas of the English language arts curriculum. There is a progression in these ideas from the personal to the public, culminating in an awareness of the latent abilities of language.

The first unifying idea begins within the individual. Students are to use language to develop creative and critical thinking skills and for communicative purposes, both for understanding self and sharing with others. In the learning context, language has to be viewed as cross-curricular as students are to develop thinking and communication skills in all subject areas (p. 114). The development of these skills prepares the individual to cultivate problem-solving strategies in a variety of situations and share these solutions with others.

Sharing with others is a second unifying idea of the English language arts curriculum. Language is to be used to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes. As

students develop the ability to create original texts, an increase in self-confidence is experienced: "These experiences also build their confidence and competence as thinkers, planners, and communicators" (*English 10-12*, p. 115). Effective communication is also developed through sensitivity to others as students learn to be appreciative of the varied needs, demands, interests, and concerns of their audiences (*English 10-12*, p. 115).

The ability to access, manipulate, and appraise the value of language from a variety of sources is another area of consideration of this curriculum. In this area, students are to acquire facility in the collection and manipulation of information from a variety of resources in their immediate surroundings and beyond. Here the use of technology is important: "Because students participate in complex information-based environments, they need to be prepared to use electronic technology effectively to receive and express ideas and information" (*English 10-12*, p. 116).

*English 10-12* continues:

The ability to select, interpret, judge, manage, and use information from among the welter of general and specialized sources now available is one of the most essential abilities teachers can foster in students in preparing them to succeed in the emerging information economy and to participate responsibly in our complex information culture (pp. 116-117).

Viewed from the utilitarian perspective, this succinctly summarizes the intent of the secondary English language arts curriculum as presented by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation.

The power of language is a fourth unifying idea of the curriculum. This power is to be explored through a variety of texts which will provide a range of experiences for students, including those which are "literary, non-literary, transactional, journalistic, and technical" (*English 10-12*, p. 17). Does the term *literary* refer to literature? The document goes on to define a literary text: "This document defines a text as *literary* when it involves the imaginative treatment

of a subject using language and text structure that is inventive and often multilayered" (*English 10-12*, p. 117). The value of interacting with literary texts is also given:

Experiences centered on interpreting and creating literary text enable students to participate in other lives and worlds beyond their own. Students reflect on their own identities and on the ways in which social and cultural contexts define and shape those identities (p. 117).

Further, a commitment to the study of literary texts is given: "Creating, interpreting, and responding to literary texts are essential experiences at the centre of *English 10-12*" (p. 117). In writing, this is the focus of the curriculum. Here the question arises as to how this aligns with the previously stated philosophy of commitment to literacy. At first this appears to be illustrative of the eclectic nature of the curriculum as it attempts to foster a marriage of the traditional concept of English language arts with the perceived demands of the twenty-first century.

But, even though the document states a commitment to the study of literary text, what is actually intended is far from traditional literature. The term "text" is, in itself, problematic. *Foundation* defines "text" as "any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. In this sense, a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a television program, and a multimedia production, for example, are all texts" (p. 1). Hoagwood (1997) provides a more traditional definition of text:

Traditionally, a 'text' has been understood to be an order of words -- not sounds or scribal marks but abstract entities that can be written (or spoken) anywhere while remaining the same. This 'text' as a verbal structure has been thought to be a vessel for the storage or conveyance of a 'meaning' which is an idea 'in the mind' of the author; this idea or 'meaning' is traditionally valued most . . . (p. 1).

Here conflicting concepts of what the term "text" actually entails is readily apparent.

The definition provided in the Atlantic provinces' English language arts curriculum is both

interesting and distressing. Note the following quotation from the curriculum guide: "To participate fully in today's society and function competently in the workplace, students need to read and use a range of texts" (p. 1). The idea of workplace is identified solely as important to an understanding of a range of texts while all other aspects of life, which are much more numerous than work, are lumped together into that impersonal category of "society". Consequently, it is not a far reach of the imagination to anticipate that the literary text does not necessarily refer to literature in the traditional sense as an appreciation of literature is not essential for the workplace. This is further evidence of the utilitarian function of English language arts being clearly delineated while the role and value of literature is relegated to vague comments and suggestions of possible content areas.

Throughout the underlying principles of English language arts there is constant reference to language development and learning. Yet, there is no direct reference to the value, importance, or relevance of literature to students' intellectual, cultural, and moral development. In fact, the only reference that can be interpreted as referring to literature is a reference to the value of learning language "around stimulating ideas, concepts, issues and themes" (*Foundation*, p. 37). But, here, too, is an emphasis upon language development, a fact which can be viewed as having a utilitarian purpose, as language is a commodity or skill which can be marketed. The development of a penchant for literary study does not have the same overt economic value as aesthetics does not compete with economics in the marketplace.

The importance of the mastery of language is reiterated throughout the section of *Foundation* dealing with the learning environment. The concept of challenging students is stressed, but in terms of language development: "Experiences that challenge learners are essential

to language development" (*Foundation*, p. 38). As well, the value of an inquiry-based approach to learning is couched in terms of language:

English language arts classrooms need to be centres of inquiry where students and teachers investigate their own language learning . . . where students learn to reflect, in a focussed way, on the powers and limitations of language use and usages (*Foundation*, p. 39).

*Foundation* then notes how this leads to the development of critical thinking and evaluation of data: "Critical perspectives also enable students to recognize when others use language powerfully and eloquently to influence and manipulate them as well as to engage and inspire them" (p. 39). Note how the emphasis is placed upon the purpose of language in both instances as a source of power and control, first as a development of one's own ability, then as a manner of understanding how others use language.

Therefore, given the stated desire to develop literacy among students and increase mastery of language skills, coming to terms with the traditional concept of literature is far from evident in this document. The definition of literary text is so vague that any language experience is now acceptable as a literary text and is worthy of study and discussion should it meet instructional purposes. The inherent danger here is that traditional literary works may be relegated to a minor role as teachers endeavor to find materials more in tune with student interests. However, such a focus may only satisfy immediate interests and wishes, thereby failing to expose students to the great works of literature which have influenced our society. The end result is a student population which does not have a sound basis in the literature which reflects the society in which they live. The failure to provide a sound knowledge base and materials which teach about the social/cultural diversity of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador would inhibit the

curriculum from delivering the intense learning experiences it purports to uphold, making the curriculum ineffective. Such an approach to literature is not in line with the goals of a course designed with a global focus.

**c. Use of Outcomes**

According to the documents of the senior high English language arts curriculum, literacy and mastery of language skills are best achieved through a program developed "using curriculum outcomes as a reference point" (*Foundation*, p. 1). This design is indicative of a commitment to a utilitarian, production-line philosophy which has the end product in mind at the outset. Key-stage levels are designed to keep track of student progress throughout the curriculum at grade levels 3, 6, 9, and 12. This is acceptable in itself, but does have overtones of quality control mechanisms used in industry to ensure goals are achieved according to prescriptive measures. It is too easy for the education system to be caught up in this mentality and the curriculum become "part of the machinery".

Such a viewpoint is problematic for the study of the liberal arts generally and English language arts specifically. Language development and creative thinking processes are just that, processes. The question which arises is just how one can state categorically that a given student will achieve a stated outcome within a specified time. For example, key-stage outcomes expect all students to achieve a quantifiable amount of information and/or skills within a specified time period. However, as individuals, students are at differing levels of development physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. The issue of what becomes of students who do not successfully achieve desired outcomes at the key-stage areas has to be addressed. Then, what

becomes of the integrity of the curriculum when students are achieving outcomes at differing times is another issue. Ultimately, students who are consistently underachieving with regard to outcomes are faced with a common examination at the end of Level III. This creates a dilemma for the student, the education system, and the curriculum.

This has implications for the study of literature when students are having difficulty achieving specified outcomes. One obvious result would be the modification of the curriculum to enable that particular student to experience success. Given the stated intention for the English language arts curriculum to be concerned primarily with literacy development and preparing students for the new demands of the twenty-first century, it is quite conceivable and probable that outcomes deemed core to the curriculum would focus upon those developing the practical aspects of this curriculum, namely those focusing upon employability skills. The media literacies and technology aspects combined with basic communication skills seem appropriate. Consequently, the study of literature would not be highlighted as central to the modified course, nor is it easily adapted to the area of employment. The practical application of English language arts would be the preferred approach.

Another issue that arises regarding outcomes is, if learners construct knowledge according to interests, abilities, and personal experiences, as constructivist theory suggests (Sergiovanni, 1995, pp. 191-192), the justification for outcomes becomes more difficult. Education devoted to a specific function, such as literacy development, limits personal opportunities as the curriculum is devoted to a pre-determined agenda. Consequently, the commitment to external wishes of societal expectations may negate that freedom to experience schooling for all that it has to offer the individual.

The Atlantic provinces developed the English language arts curriculum to "improve the quality of education", ensure equity across the region, and "meet the needs of both students and society" (*Foundation*, p. 3). This statement requires closer scrutiny. First, the question of for whom the quality of education is improved and the necessity of a clear definition of educational "needs" is evident. The focus of educational improvement has to be upon the student, not upon what the student can contribute to society. The concept of educational equity is also questionable. How students are capable of receiving an equitable education given that each individual student brings his/her own unique talents, abilities, interests, and histories into the classroom seems to mitigate the concept of equity. Learning experiences may be similar, but education will never be equal. This concept has echoes of the mentality that equal opportunity or equal access will naturally equate with the degree to which learning occurs or the degree of success. But, the human mind is not one that can be filled with knowledge simply by exposure to educational opportunity. Yet, *Adjusting the Course, Part II* (1994) indicates how this philosophy is advocated by the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador:

The underlying assumption that educational achievement is closely linked to effort implies that time is an important element in achievement . . . . These conceptions of time, effort, and perseverance provide the basis for the proposed reversal of the underlying idea that achievement is primarily a function of ability. This . . . leads to the proposition that all children should be able to achieve at high levels, provided that sufficient time is available . . . (pp. 12-13).

Then there arises the question of accountability when outcomes are not achieved. If the teacher or student is accountable, choosing the easiest route to improve student opportunities for success would avoid confrontation from students, parents, community, and the educational system. This could have negative implications for literature study for students that have difficulty

reading, writing, or operating imaginatively. As well, teachers who are not totally comfortable teaching literature and feel greater success can be achieved by emphasizing other areas of the curriculum, such as technology, public speaking, or viewing other texts besides literary texts, may do so and avoid focusing upon literature, thereby failing to provide students with exposure to the exploration of ideas and imaginative use of language that literature represents.

## **2. Utility in Curriculum Outcomes**

The utilitarian approach to the English language arts curriculum is evidenced through the use of outcomes as a means of focusing learning experiences. However, a commitment to utility in curriculum outcomes is more evident in an analysis of the essential graduation outcomes and the general, key-stage, and specific curriculum outcomes.

### **a. Essential Graduation Learnings**

That the English language arts curriculum is utilitarian in nature has already been illustrated. Also noted was that the essential graduation learnings are global in nature, but do delineate a practical application for the English language arts curriculum. The goal of aesthetic expression, although particularly well suited to the study of literature, has expressly stated the aim for the arts to be linked to economic concerns in the form of student abilities, as students are to "demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the arts to daily life, cultural identity and diversity, and the economy" (*Foundation*, p. 6). It is as if a clear connection has to be made to ensure the primary function of the curriculum is not lost as students are prepared to contribute to

the economic life of this province. This is evident as one of the key-stage outcomes for Level III students is the capability to compose "various writing and media productions" (*Foundation*, p. 6), reiterated as a key-stage outcome of another essential graduation learning, communication (*Foundation*, p. 8). Apparently this is an important goal of the curriculum for it to be stressed in the essential graduation learnings.

Personal development provides a clear connection to a global concern of interconnectedness: "Learning experiences also focus on developing students' abilities to meet the literacy demands of the outside world" (*Foundation*, p. 8). But clarification is warranted here to indicate what exactly is meant. The interpretation of the phrase "outside world" is somewhat confusing because, in a global village, is there any place "outside"? The stated emphasis is once again upon literacy and its utilitarian purpose, not the aesthetic pleasures of literature.

Personal development also raises interesting questions with regard to the focus of the English language arts curriculum. First, it states that "[l]iterature . . . and other media can lead to enriched use of leisure time" (*Foundation*, p. 8). Is this a patronizing attitude toward the value of literature study? From this perspective, the value of literature is as a form of recreation rather than providing an invaluable insight into the human condition. If this is so, concerns need to be raised regarding the values we wish future citizens of our society to have and how we teach them. Diminishing the role of literature in the English language arts curriculum is eliminating an ideal mode of transmission for such values.

The aspect of technological competence outlines the significant area of technology the English language arts curriculum is designed to deal with. The vast array of computer usage in the curriculum, database, electronic mail, use of the internet and multimedia productions, are

listed as central to the curriculum (*Foundation*, p. 9). This has ramifications for both the literature curriculum and the role of teachers. With such an emphasis upon technology, the implications for literature instruction brings into question the matter of time and emphasis which may be placed upon literature as opposed to the technology aspect. Also, again, given the expanded definition of what it means to be literate, technology has become very important in this curriculum. This leads to the problem of teachers who are neither prepared nor qualified to provide instruction in technology education. And, as already noted, if a teacher is not trained to provide technology instruction, perhaps that area would be omitted or modified to his/her capabilities. If so, then perhaps a teacher who believes he/she is not qualified to provide instruction in literature could apply the same principle. This then casts doubts as to the integrity of the curriculum with regard to both literature instruction and technology instruction and begs the question as to what area this belongs, English language arts or technology education. Given the stated commitment to the new literacies in the various forms, it is logical to assume that technology is of primary importance to the curriculum.

**b. General/Key-Stage/Specific Curriculum Outcomes**

The outcomes specifically devoted to the English language arts curriculum also indicate the impact upon literature study in a curriculum with a utilitarian focus. General curriculum outcomes, ten statements which outline what students are to have achieved at the end of English language arts study, illustrate this. Within the reading and viewing strand, students are to "select, read, and view . . . literature, information, media, visual and audio texts" (*Foundation*, p. 14). Simultaneously, students are to "interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of

strategies, resources, and technologies" (*Foundation*, p. 14). This has implications in two areas. In the first instance, literature is listed as only one of five essential areas of concentration, allotting literature to just twenty percent of time available for reading and viewing. Added to this are the other areas of time which have to be spent on the speaking and listening and writing and other ways of representing strands. This greatly reduces the opportunity for intensive study of literature.

Reading and viewing focuses more closely upon what may loosely be termed as the literature component of the English language arts curriculum. The first specific curriculum outcome in this strand indicates that students are to work with "a range of literature, information, media, visual and audio texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 52). The concern raised here is that, given the breakdown of the curriculum into three strands, this one strand is further subdivided into five areas, even further reducing the availability of literature to students. Granted, it has already been noted that the three strands are to be viewed as interrelated, but the material still has to be covered. As well, should students have difficulty in one area, such as oral communication, more time may be required in this area to compensate, thereby reducing the time available for other areas of the curriculum. Will such consideration be given to literature for students who have difficulty with poetry or literary devices, such as symbolism, to ensure this is fully understood? It is interesting to note that throughout the discussion for Level I learning activities, literature or literary texts are not mentioned, favoring instead the generic "text" or "print texts" (*English 10-12*, pp. 52-53). This speaks volumes as to the commitment of this curriculum to traditional literature study.

As for the second aspect cited, note that explicitly stated as a curriculum outcome is the

notion of the use of a variety of technologies as a required learning experience, given as specific a direction for study as is literature. One of the key-stage outcomes for reading and viewing refers specifically to the use of technology. It states that students will be expected to "use the electronic network and other sources of information in ways characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure or subject matter" (*Foundation*, p. 25). Note how the only source identified is the electronic network, clearly with the intent to ensure this form of information gathering is stressed.

One of the outcomes states that the use of technologies is a definite aim of the English language arts curriculum. Interestingly, literature itself is mentioned only once in the specific curriculum outcomes, apparently placing technology and literature on equal value. However, throughout the *Foundation* and *English 10-12* documents, the use of technology in its various forms is stressed much more than literature, perhaps indicating the focus of the curriculum given the emphasis upon the literacies perceived as crucial for the twentieth-first century.

Throughout the accompanying vignette for Level I, there is a stress placed upon enabling students to "examine on-line media" and interact with "differing texts: print, multimedia, Internet" (*English 10-12*, p. 59). This is reinforced in the presentation of learning experiences for Level II as appropriate sources of information include "computer data bases", "videos", "visual and multimedia texts", "visual text", and "Web sites"; never is there a mention of literature or books or any of the traditional forms of presentation of information (*English 10-12*, p. 60). The emphasis is always placed upon the use of the new technologies and enabling students to become competent, if not proficient, in the use of technology.

Again the non-print form of the curriculum is presented in the vignette as a way of allowing students to explore concepts studied. For Level I students, a written component can be

turned into a video presentation while, for Level II students, analysis of television programs is a means of understanding how media uses language to disseminate messages (*English 10-12*, pp. 71, 73). The vignette presented offers suggestions for analysis and questioning of the use of media representation and television in its presentation of information. Other various forms of presentation are also indicated, such as novels, art, music, films, or cartoons (*English 10-12*, p. 75). Note how the novel is included in this series, yet it remains just one of many options, given no greater status than any other possible text. The dichotomy of a commitment to traditional literature study or the new literacies is evident in courses designed for Levels II and III which are to have "an emphasis on literary texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 108). However, the teaching suggestions have more of an emphasis placed upon information technology than literature, indicating either contradiction or ambiguity in this curriculum.

It is interesting to note how Level I students are to "write personal and critical responses to literature, popular culture, and media texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 76). Literature is again placed alongside the entertainment industry as equivalent in this document. A concern is that teachers who are more comfortable with "popular culture" or other media forms could omit the literature component if not comfortable with it. As well, these students are "to use drama and visual representing" as a means of presenting their understanding of the world in which we live (*English 10-12*, p. 76). The implications for writing and how these forms are to be evaluated come to the fore here. Questions as to what exactly "visual representing" means has to be determined. Considerations of who decides, identifying the criteria for acceptance, and the resulting impact upon common examinations at the end of Level III have to be addressed. It is also noted that teachers need to design learning experiences which "enable students to create media and visual

texts as well as print texts" (*English 10-12*, p. 80). The use of media and other forms of technology, as important for representation as is writing, has implications for literature and student response to literary stimuli.

Key-stage outcomes "identify what students are expected to know and be able to do . . . as a result of their cumulative learning experiences", denoting a "continuum of learning" (*Foundation*, p. 15). As well, "the ordering of outcomes is not intended to suggest any priority, hierarchy or instructional sequence" (*Foundation*, p. 15). This is reminiscent of the American English language arts program, *Standards for English Language Arts* (1996), which was designed to be fluid and adaptable to a variety of teaching and learning situations. Buhman (1996) said of the English language arts curriculum in the United States:

The standards were never intended as a prescriptive framework. Rather, they were intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive, and to leave room for continual and inevitable growth and evolution which is the nature of language (p. 101).

One implication here for this view of English language arts is that the curriculum is more "suggestive" than "prescriptive". Therefore, where is the value of outcomes? If learning is to be recognized as evolutionary, to suggest that key-stage outcomes could legitimately reflect language development would seem dubious. This has further ramifications for establishing standards and for the implementation of common examinations. This is another example of the eclectic nature of the curriculum which shows apparent conflicts that need to be clarified.

The heading entitled "Using Language Purposefully" (*Foundation*, p. 11) is interesting. What does the word "purposefully" mean? What worth, value, or use is referred to here? This raises the question of whether the use of language has to be utilitarian in order to be of value or if the intellectual and imaginative development of the individual is not of worth in itself. The intent

of the curriculum is to prepare students to operate competently in the new millennium. However, an individual taught to think independently, creatively, and insightfully, well versed in the human condition and what it means to be human, with rich insights into humanity would surely be relevant and of value in the twenty-first century. Curtailing the role of literature in the English language arts curriculum would severely hamper such development within the individual.

### **3. Program Design**

The commitment to the utilitarian emphasis upon information technology, evident in the philosophy and outcomes of the English language arts curriculum, is even more pronounced in the design of the program. Specifically, utility is notable through the roles both literature and technology are to play in the curriculum.

#### **a. Role of Literature**

In the English language arts curriculum, the role of literature is stated ambiguously in the section regarding the strand of reading and viewing: "Literature continues to play an important role in the curriculum, alongside a variety of other texts that contribute to the development of literacy and critical thinking in our multimedia culture" (*English 10-12*, p. 128). Although stating clearly that literature is important to the curriculum, the statement then makes a very revealing comment. First, despite the fact that literature is deemed important, it does not hold a position of prominence over any other form of text, placing it alongside film, video, brochure, or even a menu as text of study. Viewing is also an important aspect of the curriculum, equivalent to literature. States *English 10-12*:

The primary purpose of including viewing experiences is to increase the visual literacy of students so that they will become critical and discriminating viewers who are able to understand, interpret, and evaluate visual messages. Visual images pervade our world, and students need opportunities to study their impact and relevance in context (p. 129).

Such opportunities include a range of visual texts, including "still images", "moving images", and "other technological and symbolic displays" (*English 10-12*, p. 130). Secondly, the purpose of literature and the other texts is to emphasize literacy and, given the broad definition in the *Foundation* document, this, naturally, involves those literacies deemed essential for the next century. Again, the curricular emphasis is placed upon technology within a culture devoted to multimedia. Evidently the role of literature is to develop awareness, understanding, and critical thinking skills for the utilitarian purpose of increasing literacy rates, without consideration being given for the value of literature in and of itself.

The purpose of literature is further delineated:

Literature selected for study should offer students a rich range of language models and demonstrate the power of language and the possibilities it offers for communicating ideas and experiences with eloquence and conviction. Such literature will also provide a source for vocabulary, idioms, images, and ideas for students' own writing (*English 10-12*, p. 128).

The ramifications of this statement for the study of literature are far-reaching. Again the utilitarian mindset of the developers of the curriculum is reiterated. Literature is relegated to a medium through which students are able to adapt styles to improve communication. The rich language and free flow of ideas prevalent in literature is exchanged for the value of the writings as teachers of rhetoric and persuasive discourse.

This is contrary to the ideas espoused in *English 10-12* when it states the commitment to literature as an integral part of the English language arts curriculum and its value as a means of

exploring our humanity. Here four aspects of literature are stated: the aesthetic value of literature, the vicarious human experience, the deeper understanding of self, and the models for writing (p. 146). The eclectic nature of the literary experience is not the issue; it is whether the stated purpose of literature is an aesthetic experience or a utilitarian one.

This utilitarian focus is evident in an interesting comment on the approach to literature study stated in *English 10-12*: "Knowledge of literary terminology and techniques is never an end in itself – to identify figures of speech and label literary forms is pointless unless it serves a larger purpose" (p. 147). This "larger purpose" is stated later in the same paragraph: "The focus should be on investigating technical elements in order to deepen students' understanding as they think and talk about their interactions with texts" (p. 147). The question which arises is whether the study of literature in and of itself is a "pointless" venture or if it has to be tied to a specific function to be meaningful. Surely the intellectual development of the individual and the maturation of critical thinking and problem-solving skills are of value in themselves.

*English 10-12* expresses a similar sentiment when it states that "understanding and appreciation of text are priorities over text analysis" (p. 129). One of the core approaches to literature study is the analysis of text, to break it down and see just how the creative genius of the author has made the text work. Now the approach is to be more superficial as students are to focus more upon identifying the gist of the text and moving on, rather than developing a fuller understanding and richer appreciation for the art of the craft.

Even the definition of "text" in the *Foundation* document has serious ramifications for literature study. The term "text", as noted previously, is defined as "any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. In this sense, a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a

television program, and a multimedia production, for example, are all texts" (p. 11). This has deep repercussions for literature. Text is now referring to anything with which an individual wishes to "construct meaning". This leaves the range wide open for interpretation by teachers of courses. Now arises the question of what constitutes required texts for the English language arts curriculum and what is deemed crucial to the curriculum. Further, this brings into question what teachers of English language arts will definitely have to cover. Perhaps the meeting of outcomes only is acceptable. But where is the standard? How is this broad range of options to be evaluated in a common examination? Should this be permitted, the evaluation will have to consist only of open-ended items rather than be text specific. The possibility of literature study in the traditional sense seems remote.

Interestingly, *English 10-12* does refer to the historical traditions of literature when it notes that students are to "demonstrate familiarity with works of diverse literary traditions" from various ethnic, cultural, and gender representatives, "including Shakespeare" (p. 56). Shakespeare is specifically identified, as if to suggest an appeasement of the more traditional aspects of literature without giving due consideration to other writers equally as important, such as representatives of the various eras (ie. Victorian, Romantic, or Medieval periods). As well, writers of native North American, Atlantic Canadian, African, or Asian descent are not specifically identified. If, as *English 10-12* states, texts are to be selected for study "that have historical and social significance" (p. 56), such groups have to be recognized given their contributions to the multicultural society of this province. Identifying one writer only as significant appears to be a continuation of the Euro-centric notion of literary value coming from the Anglo-Saxon community. Surely other cultural groups are of value to students in this

province as they have made invaluable contributions to the literary canon.

The curriculum guide does stress the need for inclusion in the classroom and the development of respect for differing peoples and points of view. However, with literature potentially reduced to the margins of the curriculum, this severely limits the possibility of achieving this as literature is a means whereby a mutual understanding and appreciation for others can be developed. Aims of the curriculum, such as to "challenge prejudice and discrimination" or to "learn about different . . . points of view" (*Foundation*, p. 42), are diminished should literature not be prominent in the curriculum. However, under the current curriculum, the potential exists for teachers to focus upon other aspects of the curriculum which may be deemed more crucial, particularly given the directive as outlined in the Statement of Vision.

The grand purpose for literature is also at stake here in the English language arts curriculum. Literature has the ability to empower the individual, offering deeper insights into the human condition, enabling the individual to have a richer view of self and of others. However, the English language arts curriculum can be viewed as having utilitarian purposes. Writes Higgs (1997) of this dilemma:

In such a technocratic world, education is directed at the attainment of pragmatic ends. And as a result, education is reduced to mere training and vocational preparation, that is, to the technocratisation of the individual person without due regard for a person's quest for self-empowerment as a human being (p. 7).

The commitment of the curriculum to current economic needs with its emphasis upon literacy and technological awareness are indicators of just such an approach to learning.

An interesting phrase is one of the criteria for selecting resources, that is it must "have literary merit" (*Foundation*, p. 54). Throughout the document the literary aspect of English

language arts has been overshadowed by a commitment to the visual and media literacies. What exactly is meant by "literary merit" and how does it fit into a curriculum devoted to developing language skills and technological competency designed for workers in a global context? Once again, this ambiguous phrase is open to the interpretation of the individual teacher.

Another interesting statement is given regarding the contribution of the English language arts curriculum to student development: "The curriculum provides students with opportunities to develop a habit of reading as a rewarding pursuit and to enhance their use of media, visual and audio texts for entertainment as well as information" (*Foundation*, p. 8). Reading is presented vaguely as a "rewarding pursuit", while other aspects of the curriculum, particularly visual and media components, the anticipated important aspects of communication for the future, are to have enhanced use to both entertain and provide information. Obviously the other aspects are of value as they contribute to enabling students to develop marketable skills, whereas literature, as noted earlier, is viewed as a form of entertainment, enjoyment for leisure time. From this perspective, the study of literature may not be regarded seriously. The implications this has for literature, particularly in the traditional sense, and its future as a core element of the English language arts curriculum, need to be addressed. Perhaps literature that is technologically based, such as available in multimedia texts or via the internet, would be considered more acceptable and in tune with the new millennium.

It is interesting to note that the curriculum guide continually refers to "literary, information, media, or visual text", but never to literature specifically (*English 10-12*, p. 56). Is this not an astounding fact in an English language arts curriculum? It seems natural to assume that literature would play a major role in the curriculum, along with writing, and other forms of

expression would play a supportive, but minor role. However, in the new English language arts curriculum, the reverse appears to be true.

By way of illustration, the design of English 10 suggests the eclectic approach to English language arts which is prevalent throughout the curriculum. English 10 focuses upon language, communication, and "the social role of the literary world" (*English 10-12*, p. 110). At first this seems to imply that literature in the traditional form is to play a prominent role in this course. Later it states that an area of emphasis is upon students "selecting and creating written and representational texts and forms to communicate ideas and information" (*English 10-12*, p. 110). This clearly states that writing is important, but what exactly is meant by "representational texts and forms"? It is questionable whether this is referring to the variety of ways which may be used to transmit thoughts and ideas or to student choice. As well, the transmitting of information is noted as being important. Texts which must be used, as defined by *English 10-12*, include a combination of literature, informational texts, business-oriented texts, and texts promoting oral communication (p. 111). Note that, contrary to earlier expectations, literary texts are just one type of a broad spectrum, particularly those with a utilitarian slant.

Writes *Foundation*, "English language arts encompasses the experience, study and appreciation of language, literature, media and communication" (p. 11). What exactly is meant by literature and the working definition used by the curriculum developers is not provided in either of the primary documents. But, supposing it refers to literature in the traditional sense, a simplistic mathematical analysis of time available illustrates potential problems. Given the four areas of focus, that leaves just twenty-five percent of instructional time for literature. Out of 120 hours of instruction for a two-credit course, that results in approximately thirty hours of literature

instruction in one school year, down from the full 120 currently used in the provincial education system. Obviously the opportunity to provide in depth literary study, discussion, and appreciation is greatly reduced.

As well, the view of the value of literature study is evident in the design of courses in the senior high program. In the new senior high English language arts curriculum, pure literature courses become optional and, consequently, beyond the programming emphasis of many schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. *Directions for Change: A Consultation Paper on the Senior High School Program*, a publication of the Department of Education and Training, outlines the new English language arts curriculum. Students are offered the academic courses of English 1201, English 2201, and English 3201. General courses offered for students who experience difficulties with English include English 1202, English 2202, and English 3202. This leaves only three pure literature course available: Global Literature 2204, Theatre Arts 2205, and Canadian Literature 3205. The problem is that, given the trend of teaching unit reduction in this province, optional courses in the humanities are not given high priority. Already choices are offered in the academic and general areas of English study. In addition, choice in science and technology is considered more applicable for students given the techno-scientific focus of education in this province, a factor which has implications for the study of literature.

**b. Role of Technology**

The clear focus upon information technology playing a crucial role in the English language arts curriculum is stated in *Foundation*:

This curriculum envisages a network of material and human resources extending

throughout the school, into the community and beyond to provincial, national and global resources accessible through information and communication technologies (p. 54).

It is somewhat disturbing to have the human element of society reduced to a commodity. The reference to humanity as a resource, as valuable to the desired social aim as its counterpart, material resources, does not elevate the individual. From this perspective, intellectual development is not a high priority, therefore, neither is the study of literature. Clearly humanity, indeed the educational system, is valued solely because of its utilitarian worth.

*English 10-12*, in outlining the intent of the English language arts curriculum, states two important objectives. First, it notes that the curriculum is "responding to continually evolving education needs of students and society" (p. 1). However, the needs referred to are not identified. Nevertheless, a reasonable guess would be the requirement for students to have acquired marketable skills by the end of schooling. An interesting consideration would be to determine which is to be given precedence, the needs of the student or of society. In a similar vein, there is the matter of determining how to address a situation where the needs of students are at odds with the perceived needs of the social group.

Secondly, it is noted in *English 10-12* that there has to be "greater opportunities for all students to become literate" and students have to become prepared "for the literacy challenges they will face throughout their lives" (p. 1). Obviously the overriding concern is with the new literacies that are driving the curriculum. These "literacy challenges" students are to face in the future are technology based and focus upon students developing prerequisite skills to enable them to function competently in the new millennium. The implications for literature given the emphasis upon literacy in general, and the new literacies in particular, are enormous. A commitment to a

radical view of literacy moves the focus away from the printed text to an undefined, ambiguous text, so fluid, it can adapt to any learning situation, yet not have a basis in anything in particular.

Another interesting quotation in the curriculum guide regarding the nature of English language arts states:

The English language arts curriculum engages students in a range of experiences and interactions with a variety of texts designed to help them develop increasing control over the language processes, to use and respond to language effectively and purposefully, and to understand why language and literacy are so central to their lives (*English 10-12*, p. 2).

The concept of control is an interesting one. The premise seems to suggest that language is a variable which, given the proper context and with a degree of manipulation, can produce desired results. Such a philosophical stance seems scientific and clinical which detracts from the power, mystique, and sheer beauty of language. It becomes just another cog in the economic machinery when it is viewed as a means to an end rather than enjoyed for itself.

As well, the underlying principles listed refer predominantly to language development as the focal point of the curriculum (*English 10-12*, p. 3). Never does it refer to the development of literary sensibilities or an appreciation of the contribution of literature to the cultural mosaic in which we live. Also, keeping in mind the vision of the development of the crucial literacies, the language referred to here may be interpreted as the symbolic language of the new technologies.

In a discussion of students who do not perform well in school, either by choice or other social factors, it is stated that teachers still have an obligation to prepare them for the world of work: "Ultimately, the English language arts curriculum for these students should prepare them for the world they will go into after high school completion" (*English 10-12*, p. 10). From this, then, it can be deduced that the English language arts curriculum is designed to prepare students

for employment after completing high school. Therefore, within its content, the curriculum is offering students opportunities to develop marketable and employability skills. This has been a general aim for all students in schools in this province, however, in recent years, post-secondary training has been the norm to prepare for the world of work. This curriculum now suggests that students ought to be prepared for employment *immediately* upon completion of secondary school.

English 1202, 2202, and 3202, designed for students having difficulties with the academic courses or those preparing for employment directly after secondary schooling, has a literacy focus in more of the traditional sense. For example, one of the activities suggested for speaking and listening in Level I is termed "Telephone Skills" and entails "giving and taking telephone messages with specific focus, for example, a career or business context" (*English 10-12*, p. 41). Skills involved include a wide range of business oriented messaging, such as voice mail, information documentation, and speech clarity. This is preparation for individuals to understand the role of communication in the world of business. Other skills, including the use of parliamentary procedure as the correct form for conducting business meetings, preparation of the order of business, record keeping, and familiarity with procedural terminology, such as "quorum" and "table" (*English 10-12*, p. 51), are identified as valuable learning experiences. The emphasis is upon preparing students for the workplace by providing exposure to a variety of activities and skills relative to the business sector of the economy.

This continues into Level II, but here there is a more pronounced emphasis upon technology as central to the world of work. Writing activities are more practical and are tied to "critical analysis of texts of those communities" of "student, family, service and political organizations, and business communities" (*English 10-12*, p. 110). Texts in Level II include a

variety of writing from literature, informational texts, film, video, television, and technologies, such as CD-ROM and the internet (*English 10-12*, p. 111). There is a career focus which stresses "the importance of work for individuals and society" (*English 10-12*, p. 111). The forms of information students are to become adept with are also interesting. It is noteworthy that the forms listed are all practical forms of writing, ranging from encyclopedia entries to memos and brochures to eulogies and obituaries (*English 10-12*, p. 124). Such skills are clearly utilitarian in nature, designed to prepare students for the realities of market demands upon completion of high school.

The utilitarian focus of the study of literature in this sense is solely as a means of developing practical, marketable skills, not developing literary skills nor literary appreciation as a valuable educational experience in and of itself. It does not state anywhere in the document that students are to be exposed to and immersed in the literary culture of society or provided with a solid base of awareness and appreciation of our literary heritage, nor that the study of literature has its own inherent value.

However, the role of technology in the senior high English language arts curriculum is far more ingrained than suggested by the previous illustrations. The list given for use of technology is overwhelming. The items listed as learning experiences which should be presented include use of word processor, construction of data bases and spreadsheets, use of CD-ROM software and laserdiscs, graphic communication software, producing a variety of desk-top-published texts, multimedia, electronic mail, web tools such as listservers, newsgroups, file transfer, electronic bulletin boards, and browsers. All of this is to be manipulated by the student as he/she uses "appropriate technologies to organize and create complex information with multiple textual and

graphic sources" (*Foundation*, p. 40). The list given sounds more like a computer course than English language arts.

The demands of the technology aspect of the curriculum is pronounced unequivocally in *Foundation* when it states that one aspect of the education system's role is to ensure "the allocation of personnel, time and materials, including technology" (*Foundation*, p. 43). It is noted that the teacher's approach and learning experiences presented have to be "consistent with those described in this document"; this includes the use of resources identified as "technology and other learning opportunities" (*Foundation*, p 44). What exactly is meant by "other learning opportunities" is left to the imagination of the reader. Interestingly, technology is specifically identified while every other aspect of the curriculum is reduced to a general phrase or category of "other". It is intriguing that there is overwhelming attention paid to the technological aspect of the curriculum, as if the designers were adamant that this aspect should not be overlooked or diminished by other aspects of the curriculum. Many times throughout the document the reference to technology is highlighted while other aspects of the curriculum are given a more generic reference. Compare this to the number of times literature is mentioned and the word "book" is used and the value placed upon these aspects of the curriculum will become apparent.

Again, the importance of technology in society and, by extension, to the curriculum, is stressed:

Pervasive, ongoing changes in society – for example, rapidly expanding use of technologies – require a corresponding shift in learning opportunities for students to develop relevant knowledge, skills, strategies, processes, and attitudes that will enable them to function well as individuals, citizens, workers, and learners. To function productively and participate fully in our increasingly sophisticated technological, information-based society, citizens will need broad literacy abilities, and they will need to use these abilities flexibly (*English 10-12*, p. 1).

This statement has widespread ramifications for the English language arts curriculum. First, there is the notion of "relevant" data acquisition and skill development. What is meant by "relevant" or the criteria which determines relevance is not provided. Apparently it is determined by societal demands and a "corresponding shift" in education must align curriculum with the trend in society and place emphasis upon technology. Note, as well, the repetition of the word "function" as the stress is placed upon a specific role or purpose for existence. Again, production and participation in a technological world is highlighted as goals to achieve for graduates of secondary schools.

In a discussion of the senior high school learning environment, the curriculum guide lists several characteristics, including the following: senior high schools are "places where resource-based learning includes and encourages the multiple uses of technology, the media, and other visual texts as pathways to learning and as avenues for representing knowledge" (*English 10-12*, p. 12). Note how technology and the visual literacies are stressed and identified specifically along with other characteristics of the senior high school, such as "participatory, interactive, and collaborative . . . inclusive . . . caring, safe, challenging . . . engaging and relevant . . . inquiry based, issues oriented" (*English 10-12*, p. 12). But why list specific objectives of the curriculum along with characteristics? Does it not seem out of context here? Obviously the developers of the curriculum wanted to leave no room for error or misconception of the importance and absolute necessity of providing instruction in this area.

Throughout the *Foundation* and *English 10-12* documents the continual commitment to "audiovisual", "media productions", and "technology" permeates the writing, as if the writers wanted to ensure these aspects would not be omitted from classrooms. This raises the question of where the priority lies with this curriculum, English language arts for personal development or the

new literacies designed to produce individuals prepared to fulfill their roles in the technological economy. From the list of outcomes cited for reading and viewing, "media and visual texts" include "broadcast, journalism, film, television, advertising, CD-ROM, Internet, music videos" (*English 10-12*, p. 27). For reading and viewing, this is as important an aspect as is literature.

Technology is always highlighted whenever there are directions for student involvement. For example, it states in *English 10-12* that students are to "synthesize information from a range of sources, including the electronic network" or to "use the electronic network and other sources of information" (p. 28). Note how technology is always identified while other forms of information or communication are usually referred to as "other". This suggests that technology, above all, is not to be overlooked and the development of technological skills is a high priority in this curriculum.

Writing and other ways of representing indicates the intent of the curriculum to have students become competent in a variety of forms of expression, including multimedia:

With the ever-increasing integration of electronic media, clear divisions between the processes of representing and writing are becoming difficult to define. With access to quality visual text provided by electronic technology, the ability to create in multimedia has become an important element in the development of literacy (*English 10-12*, p. 138).

Clearly, writing remains important to the curriculum: "The writing process as a learning strategy will be fundamental to the students' learning in all aspects of *English 10-12*" (p. 138). However, it is interesting to note how it is viewed as interwoven with the demands of the electronic media.

But there is a concerted effort by the curriculum developers to make technology central to the curriculum. *English 10-12* states that "[s]tudents need to be exposed to numerous media and visual texts" and "need opportunities to create meaningful expression in visual, media, and

multimedia texts" (p. 144). If students "need" to be competent, even proficient in the use of technology, then this is going to become a significant part of the curriculum. This has been cited by the *Foundation* document as an essential for the next century, consequently, information technology becomes a very important aspect of the curriculum.

This has implications for literature. The question remains whether literature should be used to develop ingenuity in students so they become proficient technology users or should the intent be to use the technology to achieve more traditional aims, such as intellectual development. The document takes time to outlay the ways in which visual and graphic art is already in use in literature and texts, therefore students should become comfortable using the medium (*English 10-12*, pp. 144-145). What seems to be expressed here is the intent for English language arts teachers to be responsible for developing in students a knowledge of the utilization of the skills of graphic artists. One problem with producing students prepared to take their place in the world of technology is that it is a form of streaming which prepares students for a narrowly focused world of careers based solely on the doctrines of technology. This is reminiscent of the cautioning of the potential detriment of having a misplaced focus for education as espoused by Berry and Sullivan (1992).

The emphasis upon information technology is readily apparent in the discussion of information, media, and visual literacies. *English 10-12* notes that students today are living in a society dominated by an "information and entertainment culture", therefore "[i]nformation, visual, and media literacy are critical elements of English language arts 10-12"; hence students are to "have opportunities to work with texts representative of popular culture including entertainment texts" (*English 10-12*, pp. 56, 153). This is closely aligned with the acknowledgment of the ever-

increasing economic importance of the entertainment industry in American society (Mandel *et al.*, 1994). As well, the similarities between the *Standards for English Language Arts* (1996), as used in the United States, and the English language arts curriculum designed for Atlantic Canada are striking. In *Foundation and English 10-12*, the connection between what this curriculum purports to do and what economics dictates is intriguing to say the least.

Information, media, and visual literacy are defined in *English 10-12*. The given definitions indicate the importance of technology: information literacy requires the use of "a variety of media technologies"; media literacy includes "mass media, such as TV, film, radio, and magazines"; and visual literacy focuses upon the "static or moving visual image" (*English 10-12*, p. 153). Media literacy is stated to be particularly relevant to youth because it is so ingrained in popular culture. Consequently, students are to be given opportunities to produce and critique media productions. Three areas of focus are identified to ensure maximum exposure. First, a relationship must be forged between "language and literacy development to the media-intensive environment in which most students participate" (*English 10-12*, p. 155). A cross-curricular focus would then enable students to "integrate visual media with other dimensions of the curriculum" while experiencing "'hands-on' activities involving the creation of media products" (*English 10-12*, p. 155). Clearly, the intent is for students to become comfortable and competent in the new literacies of the information age.

There is a progression in the development of literacy and mastery of language skills in the senior high English language arts curriculum. Level I is focused upon preparing the individual to develop skills and confidence to express ideas and opinions in a logical and coherent manner and in a variety of forms, with an emphasis upon oral expression. *English 10-12* speaks of this when

it notes that, for Level I, "speaking and listening are . . . of particular importance" (p. 126). But, despite this, emphasis is placed upon the role of technology as a means of expression for those ideas. Level II has a heavy emphasis upon technology to provide students with practical skills which would enable them to use the technologies which are so prevalent in our society to access information, but also disseminate it. Level III, although more globally oriented, continues the trend and is even more devoted to the goal of developing competence in information technology.

Level I students are introduced to a variety of experiences which range from traditional writing exercises to formal reports (ie. resumes, memos) to developing fliers or visual representations for magazines (*English 10-12*, pp. 94-95), all designed to develop a more broadly based skill-development within students. The role of aesthetics is subsumed by the desire to produce individuals with marketable skills in the new literacies. Teachers of English language arts are to fill the role of graphic artists.

For the "range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing", technology is placed forward as very important. It is suggested that Level I students use, besides the traditional methods of dictionaries, thesaurus, and other reference materials, other forms, such as audio productions, cameras for still photography, "develop a working knowledge of the proper application of the syntax and visual conventions of TV (cut, dissolve, fade, zoom, dolly)", use of word processor, data bases, and the internet (*English 10-12*, p. 100). The vignette further emphasizes the development of the cinematography angle as students would be presented with opportunities to produce imaginative and original photographs, learn skills of video camera use, produce original scripts and films, and learn of the roles of television career areas such as producers, directors, or technicians (*English 10-12*, p. 101). What is being presented is not

English language arts but information technology. Perhaps the original title of Communication is more apt for this curriculum. Clearly the traditional role of literature is not an important one given the commitment to the utilitarian ideal of producing students with marketable skills.

The commitment to technology and other forms of representation are again noted for Level II students. The vignette identifies "electronic journal", "electronic dialogue", "drawing, sketches, map, diagram, chart, graphic organizer, photographs" as forms of visual representation. Also included are the 3-D construction model, and "audio, video, and electronic forms of computer technology" (*English 10-12*, pp. 82-83, 85). Multimedia study extends into developing film, "including camera sequences, sound effects, and voice-over". A variety of activities also include the use of "audio, visual, and print elements to construct their own media productions", "a variety of media and communication purposes", and "use media production skills and technology" to express ideas (*English 10-12*, p. 96). This is clearly outlining the absolute commitment to technology and preparing students for a future in information technology. Such endeavors will require instructors who are knowledgeable in the technology field. Reality suggests that the vast majority of English language arts teachers are not capable of adequately providing quality instruction in this area.

Further, and even more blatant in its dedication to technology, Level II expects students to "construct and edit spreadsheets, use formulas", produce desktop published materials, and become familiar with the protocol of e-mail (*English 10-12*, p. 102). The purpose of spreadsheets and formulas in an English language arts course is difficult to conceive. Desktop publishing ought to be done by technology instructors who are competent in this area. The vignette indicates that students could become even more immersed in technology as they are taught to subscribe to

newsgroups or establish a Website dealing with an issue they deem appropriate (*English 10-12*, p. 103). In the section entitled "Increased Emphasis", defined by *English 10-12* as "elements which should receive particular attention" (p. 109), this course should, aside from using writing and drama to present ideas, also focus upon "information, media, and visual literacy", construct meaning with "graphic communication media and desktop publishing", and utilize "information technologies". Clearly this is beyond the area of expertise of English language arts teachers. Some may be competent in the area of technology for personal and professional use, but teaching it in a formal setting is not within the scope of training for teachers of English language arts.

Level III is totally dedicated to the technologies. Students are to use spreadsheets or data bases "to support an argument or make mathematical projections" (*English 10-12*, p. 104). Admittedly, this brings the interdisciplinary nature of a globally-oriented course to the fore here, but the function of mathematical projections in an English language arts curriculum has to be seriously addressed. Other technologically-based activities include using "HyperCard to produce a simple interactive multimedia program" or having students "manipulate and incorporate file transfer textual documents, graphic, and sound files" or develop "a home page (using the HTML language)" (*English 10-12*, pp. 104-105). This is technical material and must be presented by a qualified instructor, not by an individual trained to introduce youth to the world of ideas and communicative activities. This has strayed far from the original purpose of English language arts into the realm of information technology where teachers of English are preparing individuals for the world of work. In this context, the emphasis is placed upon training, not education.

## **Conclusion**

The English language arts curriculum is indeed eclectic in nature. From the global perspective, literature is focal and has great potential to become a vibrant and relevant participant in the intellectual, social, and moral development of the student. However, from the utilitarian focus, literature has a more practical purpose, the development of an individual prepared to operate competently within defined economic parameters. As such, literature may play a crucial role or may be overshadowed by the techno-literacy of the twenty-first century.

## **Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The senior high English language arts curriculum contains the duality of globalization and utilitarianism; both of these philosophical approaches to education become simply a matter of interpretation. Therefore, what is really needed is clarification to provide unambiguous direction as to the original intent of the curriculum developers. Without such clarity, serious concerns arise which need to be addressed to ensure some reasonable degree of uniformity in the presentation of the curriculum in classrooms throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. These concerns deal with the impact upon teachers, students, and implementation of the curriculum.

### **I Implications for Other Logistical Considerations**

Besides the concerns already expressed regarding the curriculum under study, other logistical considerations raise interesting issues. These concerns may be viewed in five general areas: teacher concerns, student concerns, time constraints, financial costs, and assessment and evaluation. A brief discussion of each of these areas brings into focus legitimate considerations which must be addressed within this curriculum.

#### **I. Teacher Concerns**

A serious issue which requires clarification is that of teacher competence in maximizing the full potential of the senior high English language arts curriculum. Teacher competence refers not to the ability of teachers to perform their duties as per contractual obligations, but to the level of comfort and ability they feel they have to adequately meet the varied demands of the

curriculum. Such areas include the emphasis upon technology, curricular content, and increased workload. Although technology is part of the curricular content, given the degree of emphasis placed upon it within the documents and the uniqueness of its nature, discussion of this will be presented separately.

It is interesting, and disturbing at the same time, that technology is treated as a curricular aim, not as a resource. Although not stated overtly in either the general, key-stage, or specific curriculum outcomes, competence in technology is continually stressed as an essential element of the curriculum. It has become the implied curriculum outcome of English language arts. Ideally, technology should be a means of achieving outcomes in English language arts rather than a specified outcome of this curriculum. This emphasis will be disconcerting for many English language arts teachers.

Perhaps the greatest concern for English language arts teachers will be in this area. Throughout the *Foundation* document and *English 10-12*, it is stressed that students are to become competent in the wide array of technological skills. This is identified as a range of possibilities, such as developing skill in the use of electronic mail, searching databases, accessing the internet, and designing and publishing web pages.

However, such technological awareness is not readily available for all English language arts teachers. The use of a computer for personal and professional needs does not ensure an individual is comfortable in this area of instruction. For example, in *English 10-12* there is a marked identification with technology as students are to "use the aesthetic conventions of audio, visual, and electronic media with competence and originality to effectively express their experiences, ideas and concerns" (*English 10-12*, p. 98). Statements to this effect raise many

questions regarding the implications for teachers not proficient in the use of this technology. If one does not feel comfortable, how is one to feel competent instructing students in this field? One interpretation of this is that teachers of English language arts are becoming media instructors, operating in the fields of computer technology, graphic arts, and media instruction rather than English. This then leads to speculation of the type and quality of training teachers are to expect to enable them to deal effectively with the demands of the curriculum. Ultimately, this leads to the entire gamut of instruction, questioning whether a return to formal studies will be required to adequately prepare teachers to design, instruct, and evaluate aspects of the technology components of the curriculum. Such considerations have far-reaching implications and need to be addressed to ensure the validity of the curriculum.

To perform with comfort and competence, teachers of English language arts have to be introduced to the rules of the technology game. What is protocol for electronic-mail? Are the rules referring to proper grammatical form, such as spelling and punctuation, or organizational dictates, or is it simply to teach students how to use the technology? This needs to be clarified. Consequently, teachers will require intensive in-service of more than one- and two-day workshops to ensure they understand the jargon, demands, and function of technology in society.

In the vignette entitled "Using Technology", *English 10-12* stresses the importance of technology to students by advocating the importance of using e-mail and other technologies for "both global audiences and specific individuals" in "an information-intensive world" (p. 63). This raises the question of the validity of the assumption that society is so information-intensive that everyone must be computer literate in order to function. Technology is being constantly touted as the greatest area of opportunity for employment, so many students opt to follow this route. No

doubt some students are being prepared for specific tasks which they may not relish nor enjoy, but accept simply because it is employment. The reality is that the role of the individual in many technology related occupational areas is as an operator who manipulates controls while vastly fewer in number are technicians who need the expertise.

The curricular content and increased workload for teachers are other concerns. The wide range of possibilities in curricular content has far-reaching implications for teachers as this requires teachers of English language arts to be competent and knowledgeable in the field of drama, dance, visual art, and technology. This can potentially place extreme pressures upon teachers to be knowledgeable in such a wide scope that they become competent in neither area, resulting in a weakened curriculum.

The concept of visual literacy is illustrative of this. Is this not better left to the domain of art study? A teacher trained to expound the values of literature study is neither prepared nor qualified to evaluate or comment upon visual representation. This has ramifications for teacher preparation and assignment to the teaching of English language arts. It appears that the intent of making the English language arts curriculum more encompassing serves to make it so broad in scope that a specific focus is difficult to ascertain and many areas would be dealt with only in a cursory manner rather than in depth. Literature may just be one of those areas as it is not specifically identified as central to the curriculum.

The concepts of student empowerment and ownership of the curriculum, although important and relevant, do require a degree of control to make it manageable, otherwise the demands placed upon the teacher would be insurmountable. For example, it is noted in *English 10-12* that students are to "make choices in selecting topics and curriculum areas" to meet

"specific needs and interests" (p. 107). But, what exactly does this imply? This suggests that students may pick and choose materials they wish to work on as the term "curriculum areas" implies. However, it is not conceivable that teachers can be familiar with the potentially vast array of possible options students may select. Such a workload would be insurmountable and impossible to address in the typical senior high classroom of this province.

As well, the potential exists for the curriculum to become weak in other areas. For example, "*English 10-12* recognizes the importance of giving students options that allow them to approach their learning and knowing in ways that will allow them to unlock their full potential"; consequently, forms of representation "include, in addition to spoken and written language, visual representation, drama, music, movement, and multimedia and technological productions" (p. 143). The intent of the curriculum is for students to have a wide range of possibilities to develop their ideas and insights, but this, too, poses difficulties. At the end of the learning process and throughout the key-stage areas, a criterion-referenced test will be administered to assess the level of student achievement. Naturally testing will be in written form. A concern is that the word "options" may be taken too liberally and greater emphasis will be placed upon the "options" at the expense of required items of study, consequently skewed results. Another possibility is that the criterion-referenced test may detract from the relevance of such a curricular approach as teachers may be inclined to teach for the test.

## **2. Student Considerations**

One issue which has to be addressed for students is the idea of assumed prior knowledge. *English 10-12* identifies several learning activities which are to be based upon prior knowledge.

Various speaking activities are to be developed to enable students to function within differing and challenging situations. For example, in Level II suggested activities include such settings as a model parliament, court room scene, or critiquing media techniques (*English 10-12*, p. 48). The problem with this is that it presupposes both the students and teacher have prior knowledge of such contexts and are prepared to participate within such a milieu. However, reality suggests that many students would not be familiar with parliamentary procedure or proper court room conduct and this would have to be carefully taught and arranged by the teacher. This would require a significant amount of instructional time, resulting in a reduced amount of time available for other components of the curriculum, such as literature.

When referring to the role of the student, students are encouraged to be "exploring different arts and media to seek forms of language and representation that fit their individual learning styles" and to be "selecting the medium or activity in which to demonstrate their learning" (*Foundation*, p. 44). Is this more eclecticism? If students are to select the art form which fits their style, the concept of a common examination at the end of the program does not seem reasonable. The question arises as to what extent students are to be permitted the liberty to express themselves so freely. Difficulties will arise should the form they feel comfortable with is not within the area of expertise of the teacher. How would this then be evaluated? This situation seems unfair to both student and teacher.

Also, student choice of form of expression has to be something from which a solid foundation and background has been developed. However, with the element of choice, students may opt for areas in which they have only cursory knowledge. Compounded with a lack of teacher knowledge in this area, both teacher and student would be placed in circumstances which

would negate the value of the learning experience for all involved. In this technologically based society in which video and other visual media play such a dominant role, the value of literature study is significantly diminished. The students' logical choice will result in little exposure to the value of literature if other "more fun" forms of entertainment are available.

In a discussion of the learning preferences of students, it is noted that students have to find their own way of learning which is most comfortable for them and teachers are to recognize this and work within these parameters. How does this fit into an outcomes-based curriculum? If students are to choose a personal learning preference, how will some outcomes be met? For example, a student strong in visual representation, but weak in writing, may be accommodated in the curriculum, but what does this mean for the common examination at the end of Level III? This is another example of eclecticism. It does state that students need "opportunities to explore, experiment with, and use learning styles other than those they prefer", but it also states that teachers are to "vary teaching strategies to accommodate the different ways students learn" (*English 10-12*, pp. 8-9). This has ramifications for the examination at the end of Level III. The question arises as to whose interests will take precedence, those of the student, teacher, or the demands of a criterion-referenced test. If it is the criterion-referenced test, then the concept of student options and exploration in areas of personal interest and expertise cannot be a curricular reality, at least not to the extent that it becomes a meaningful experience for the student. After all, it is hardly fair to test a student at the key-stage area knowing full well the student is not strong in one area, such as writing, but the area of competence, perhaps oral expression, is not easily tested on a common examination. Such is the eclectic nature of this curriculum.

### 3. Financial Costs

In order to fully participate in the activities suggested in the curriculum and to meet the outcomes as recommended, a considerable amount of funding is required. For example, the *Foundation* document lists appropriate resources which includes an array of technological texts, such as "computer software, audio, visual texts (illustrations, photographs, film, video), information bases, videodisc, laserdisc, communication technologies (Internet connections, bulletin boards) and multimedia", computer networks, electronic mail, list servers, newsgroups, multimedia or hypertext on the World Wide Web (*Foundation.*, pp. 54-56).

Students in schools who must function with small budgets and little technological hardware to fully access many of these items will require funding. However, should funds not be available, what does this mean for schools that do not have the equipment nor the expertise to adequately offer this? The question arises as to how vital the technological element is to the curriculum. If this could be minimized or downplayed in schools without adequate financial resources, does this mean other areas of the curriculum could be treated equally if the expertise is not available? Such considerations open the curriculum to scrutiny as to what exactly is vital and what may be regarded as optional. Potentially, the role of literature within this curriculum could also be adversely affected should a school have an English language arts teacher competent in the technologies, but somewhat insecure in literature. This is an area which needs to be clarified.

Other financial costs are also indicated in *English 10-12*. In a discussion of copyright laws, it is noted that a number of media companies provide a variety of educational packages for a nominal fee, including cable television access and print, and non-print resources (p. 156). However, this cost may become burdensome for small schools which do not have a solid

economic base on which to draw or are operating with severely limited funds, thereby limiting the availability of such resources. Again, it needs to be clarified as to whether such items are essential or optional. If optional, would this decision be based solely on economics or upon relevance to the desired outcomes of the curriculum? Finances should not be permitted to place any school at a disadvantage with regards to enjoying the full benefit of any area of curriculum.

#### **4. Time Constraints**

A review of the outcomes, particularly those regarding reading and viewing, are illustrative of the concerns regarding time constraints in this curriculum. *English 10-12* states that "[s]tudents will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, visual and audio texts" (p. 17). Note how this is mandatory seeing as this "will be expected" of students. Then, considering how the curriculum is comprised of the three organizing strands, consider how much time will actually be available for literature given how reading and viewing is to be comprised of a minimum of five components. There needs to be clarification as to what values are placed upon each domain and what percentage of time is anticipated to adequately cover the required areas of visual, technology, information, and literature. At present, all schools offer literature study from trained instructors and all are required to cover the indicated objectives. But, are all schools required to cover all the stated outcomes in the new English language arts curriculum? If not, what can be omitted? This leads once again to considerations of the potential effects upon the study of literature if an individual teacher may focus upon areas of comfort rather than upon required components within clearly delineated time frames.

Students are to also use "writing and other forms of representation" as a means of expressing thoughts, ideas, and observations. This is somewhat ambiguous as the "other forms" are not identified. Which form takes precedence? Writing? If so, this has serious implications for the earlier stated commitment to student learning preference. As well, the percentage of time to be allocated to each area is not given, nor is there any indication as to whether or not the common examination will be based solely on writing or on the "other forms" as well.

Balance in the curriculum is desirable. Teachers are to consider appropriate emphasis on specific aspects of the curriculum which range from oral activities to access to a variety of texts to writing opportunities to fair assessment strategies. But note how the time is spread across a broad base, resulting in insufficient time in many areas. As well, the texts are to be a variety, including information, literature, media texts and technological texts. Again, the time available for literature study is quickly diminished. Also, keep in mind the earlier emphasis upon the electronic network; where will teachers put most emphasis? Which is of paramount importance? In terms of balance, what percentage of time is considered fair? Is one to be stressed above another? Is technology just an introduction or is competence, even expertise, in this area a desired aim of the curriculum? Many questions need to be answered and clear direction has to be provided to teachers.

There is a commentary included in *English 10-12* which encourages teachers not to be intimidated by technology, but to start small and gradually build as the level of comfort increases. But this begs an explanation. The role of technology as either an essential component or an optional component of the curriculum has to be determined. As well, given the perceived changing definition of literacy, it needs to be clearly stated as to whether or not the technology

component will become essential. Teachers have to be aware if they will be expected to devote a significant portion of time to this section within a specific time span after the program is in place. But if technology is as integral to English language arts as *Foundation* and *English 10-12* intimates, how can teachers justify starting small and growing into the correct proportion of time?

## **5. Assessment and Evaluation**

Eclecticism is again evident in the area of assessment and evaluation. *Foundation* takes great length to explain the vast array of approaches which may be used to assist students in achieving the learning outcomes, even to the point of indicating that more methods of evaluation other than those listed are acceptable, even laudable. Testing as a form of evaluation is considered acceptable, but for specific reasons and not as the sole means of evaluating student achievement. Yet, there is a section of this portion of the document allocated to external assessment and the importance of the external examination as a means of program evaluation. Is this not contradictory? It seems to defeat the purpose if students are evaluated in a variety of methods throughout the schooling years, yet the end result is a formal pen-and-paper examination.

The administration of the common examination is also worthy of note. For students who choose alternate forms of expression, as permitted by this curriculum, it remains to be seen how they adapt to external assessments. As well, the question of whether scaling, as practiced by the Department of Education in this province, will occur should student results not reach expectations needs to be addressed. The extent to which final results are to be based upon this common examination and the percentage value of the examination has yet to be stated. All of this impacts the validity of the curriculum and assessment and evaluation techniques.

The emphasis upon technology and visual representation as put forward by this document must surely be evaluated. But how will this be evaluated formally in the common examination? Or will the examinations be a combination of literature and writing? If so, then the importance of literature in this curriculum is pronounced greatly through formal assessment. Then there is the question of how or if all the components of the three organizing strands are to be assessed in a common examination. Surely speaking and listening and writing and other ways of representing will be evaluated equally with reading and viewing. However, again, the importance of the common examination raises the specter of whether teachers will be teaching for the examination rather than offering students the full benefit of the English language arts curriculum.

## **II Summary and Recommendations for Further Areas of Study**

The cursory overview of the considerations presented in this chapter provides a basis for further areas of study. Summarized there are a variety of issues which need to be addressed more fully to determine the impact of the English language arts curriculum as presented in *Foundation* and *English 10-12*.

The area of teacher concerns warrants further study. The impact upon teachers seems enormous and far reaching, factors which go well beyond the scope of curriculum. The area of teacher preparation must be more closely explored. In order for the English language arts curriculum to be effective, all areas need to be dealt with in a competent manner. For this to be possible, teachers need to be properly trained in the various disciplines and new literacies. This requires time and finances. The question then becomes whether teachers are expected to acquire training on their own or whether funding for this will be provided. Without this, the curriculum

would not be adequately presented in many classrooms.

Also, teacher training initially has to be addressed. If teachers of English language arts are to become information technology specialists, training institutes like Memorial University of Newfoundland need to alter their teacher training programs to ensure teachers graduate with appropriate skills and expertise. Otherwise, preparation of English language arts teachers with a background in traditional concepts would not meet the demands of the new literacies.

Study of student concerns is necessary also. Over time an analysis ought to be done to determine if, indeed, the English language arts curriculum is adequately addressing the career needs of students and economic dictates of the global economy. This must include student satisfaction with the preparation received for the world of work, balancing research from current students, recent graduates, and those with years in the workforce. This would also address the effectiveness of the elements of employability skills within the curriculum to determine if student achievement at secondary school level satisfactorily prepares them for employment immediately upon graduation.

Financial considerations is a definite area for future study. The availability of resources in schools, including both teaching resources and technological hardware, has to be an area of concern. Without this in all schools, the issue of equity in educational opportunity comes to the fore. A school without access to sufficient funding or a severely limited economic base, as are many outport schools, would be at a definite disadvantage in enabling it to present the expectations of the English language arts curriculum to its clientele. The end result is a significant portion of students in this province would not have the opportunity to acquire many of the skills deemed essential in this curriculum.

The issue of time constraints is important for the instructional approaches identified within this curriculum. Any area which lacks sufficient time to enable all students to experience success will have to be given due consideration. This has ramifications for the integrity of the curriculum. A study focusing upon how well the curriculum is performing in schools and the degree to which the availability of time within the instructional year impacts the stated outcomes is important. Such a study would establish the ability of the curriculum to fulfill its mandate within the prescribed time frame.

Assessment and evaluation in the English language arts curriculum is humanistic in the sense that it is to be focused upon enabling students to experience success. The pen-and-paper test, although one method of evaluation, is to be supplemented by a plethora of techniques which would more accurately reflect student achievement. However, a concern regarding the common examination at the end of Level III arises with regard to how well it measures student performance. It seems illogical and ironic that, despite the variety of assessment techniques utilized throughout the period of instruction, the ultimate test is a pen-and-paper test to determine academic achievement.

Questions arise that need to be addressed. The issue of scaling, or adjusting results that are deemed to be skewed, raises the question of integrity, both for the curriculum and for the teaching profession. Raw values for in-school evaluation and common examination results have to be determined, clearly indicating the worth of each contributor to the final grade. However, the whole concept of the common examination, although in line with the outcomes philosophy of education, seems at odds with other stated concerns of student ownership of the learning process and personal contributions to the curriculum. As well, the technological emphasis within the

curriculum has to be addressed; how this is to be incorporated within the common examination remains to be seen. Given the unequivocal commitment to the information technologies within the English language arts curriculum, failure to evaluate progress in this area would be ignoring a significant portion of the curriculum, thereby bringing into question the integrity of the curriculum and the validity of the examination process at the end of instruction. Further study in this area would prove interesting results.

## **Conclusion**

The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation has developed an English language arts curriculum which it deems applicable to the economic realities of the twenty-first century. As such, the curriculum is global because it attempts to prepare students for life in the multicultural, interdependent global village. But the curriculum is also utilitarian in that it recognizes the technological revolution of society and the perceived need for competence in utilizing the information technologies. Consequently, the English language arts curriculum is eclectic in its desire to meet the vast array of communicative needs of students in the classroom. Therefore, clarification of educational goals is required to ensure the full potential of the English language arts curriculum is realized rather than have its effect diminished amid conflicting ideological perspectives.

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