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ABSTRACT

    This edition of "Noteworthy" stresses the interdependence of rural schools and their communities, and offers ideas for developing both. Americans are becoming more open to school-community cooperation and to expanding the school's mission to include community development. Such cooperation involves communication among community leaders, local business people, the media, the school, and its students. Each of these parties has a defined role to play. Students should be encouraged to study the community to learn about its economy, about research methods, and about themselves as citizens. The results of students' research can then be used to make decisions and chart plans for development. A "blueprint" for studying the community is offered, beginning with simple observation and interviews. Other "blueprints" include strategies for school-based entrepreneurship, schools and community development, community input and investment, and integration of community material into school courses. Several examples are offered of schools that improved their programs by using the communities as their focus of study. A sample community survey and a sample business plan are provided. The document concludes with more ideas for developing schools with a vision toward the 21st century, and a projection of what schools might be like in the year 2000. (TES)
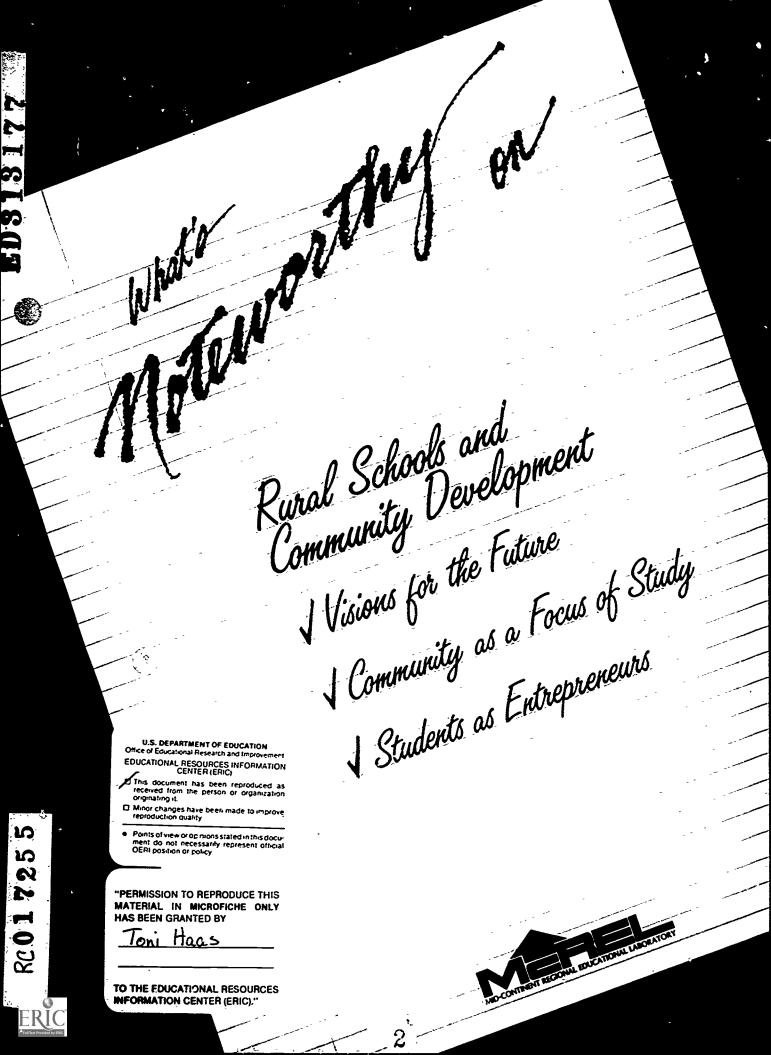
What's Noteworthy on

Rural Schools and Community Development

✓ Visions for the Future

✓ Community as a Focus of Study

✓ Students as Entrepreneurs

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Dear Colleague,

In the six years since the National Commission on Excellence in Education said "the nation is at risk," we have been engaged in the most serious and sustained bipartisan drive for school renewal in our history. McREL believes teachers are the key to significant change in the way we think about and prepare for America's future. This issue of *Noteworthy* is dedicated to the teachers and school administrators of America who search for ways to redesign the schools from the inside out.

It begins with a new vision for Rural America and its schools that emerged at McREL's international School Year 2020 conference. What follows is about the often overlooked strengths of rural schools. They are a strong resource and, in fact, essential for rural revitalization.

The rest of this *Noteworthy* is devoted to practical information: blueprints of how to involve the community and find out what opportunities for community service and economic growth exist; how students can use what they've discovered to start small businesses with help from the school; how teachers can redesign existing classes to include more real-life, relevant information and experiences for students; and how other teachers have transformed their teaching practice using the community as a focus of study. Sprinkled throughout, you will find sample documents, real "hands-on" activities and experiences from many schools, all invented by teachers much like you.

McREL serves North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. More than 93 percent of the schools in this region are rural and/or small. This issue is focused on such schools because they represent most of our clients; they have long been ignored in the educational debate; and they offer, we believe, promising laboratories for change. It may be that rural schools have a distinct advantage in redesigning a school structure that can be more promising for all students—one in which instruction is less fragmented and more personalized, one in which there is a stronger connection between classroom learning and the real world. There is no "one-best" solution, but we think that many of the ideas presented here are equally applicable in every educational setting. This *Noteworthy*, then, is dedicated to sharing ways that teachers and administrators can continue their efforts to make schools better places for students and adults to learn and grow while making direct contributions to their communities.

Sincerely,

C. L. Hutchins

Noteworthy

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This Noteworthy is a production of McREL's Rural Institute.

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Rural Communities and Their Schools: Creating a More Promising Future

Introduction

Since the turn of the century, urbanization and industrialization have dominated American society. In fact, many people assumed that it was only a matter of time before improved transportation and communication would result in a homogeneous urbanized society. Acting on this assumption, public policy has tended to respond with programs that are more in tune with urban than with rural needs. Rural society, however, has not disappeared. Not only have substantive rural and urban differences persisted, but diversity within rural America has grown.

A consequence of the urbanization mind set has been the perception that rural areas were less desirable places to be. The good life was to be had in the cities. It was in the urban areas where one could achieve success. With urbanization came the adoption of the mass-production factory model of schooling, a model that requires large numbers to operate efficiently and effectively, numbers of specialized teachers to teach the increasing number of specialized courses. Since rural schools are smaller than urban and suburban schools, by definition the bigger-is-better philosophy results in rural schools seen as being second best.

By and large, the factory model of schooling has served the country well, preparing the work force required to manufacture and process the goods needed by an expanding society. The larger society's benefit, however, came at the expense of rural communities. Here, local tax dollars and the most precious resource, the community's youth, are fed into the system. The school is considered a success if the graduates leave the community to find work or continue their education, for the most part, never to return. Obviously, if this flow of resources is only one way and continues over time, the community dies. A combination of public policy and private choices in the context of urbanization have conspired against a vital rural America.

Times are now changing. The age of industrialization is, we are told, either coming to an end or has already ended. In its place we are moving into an information/service society. One of the characteristics of such a society is that employment opportunities of the future will no longer be place bound. Given a technological infrastructure to transport information, one can make a decision about where one lives largely independent from what one does for a living. And, considering that the quality of life continues to decline in the cities, more and more individuals are likely to chose a rural life style.

A rural work group at McREL's recent conference on Education In The Year 2020 engaged in some informed speculation concerning what rural education might look like 30 years from now. Believing that the future can be shaped, just as the present has been shaped, by those who came before, the group developed a series of propositions that begin to sketch a more positive future for rural America. As a way of framing the discussion which follows, we offer these propositions for your thoughtful consideration.

Members of the Rural Work Group, School Year 2020: October 3-8, 1988, Snowmass, Colorado

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Preamble

"Metropollyana" is the belief that everyone eventually will move to a city and live happily ever after. We reject this misguided belief. Instead, we believe that:

In the year 2020, our societies will be even more dependent on a balanced distribution of population and a healthy, diverse rural sector.

Urban and rural economies, communities and schools are highly interdependent and, thus, continuing urban/rural rivalries are inappropriate and mutually destructive.

Neither rural decline nor rural rejuvenation are inevitable. Each is the consequence of an intricate system of public policies and private choices.

Rural rejuvenation begins with an acceptance of the unique problems and opportunities inherent within our enormously diverse rural sector—and a societal commitment to such rejuvenation.

In practice, rural rejuvenation hinges on the quality and direction of human resource development initiatives. Thus, the quality of rural education today and in the future will be a key determinant of the quality of life for everyone in the year 2020.

Proposition I

Rural schools and communities have distinctive characteristics that must be preserved, and built upon, as we move toward 2020. These include:

- human scale institutions;
- strong school-community connections;
- close relationships with the natural environment;
- non-bureaucratic decision-making processes;
- traditions favoring cooperation, adoption of new technologies, an "integrated systems approach" and entrepreneurship; and
- widespread opportunities for individuals to be leaders and to make a real difference locally.

Proposition II

In the year 2020, rural communities will have become the fastest growin᠁ ᠁tes for technology-based enterprises and, therefore, rural schools will have to be societal leaders in the promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship and technological sophistication.

Proposition III

In the year 2020, rural schools will face significant enrollment pressures because of the continuing inmigration of metropolitan families seeking a safer, more nurturing environment for their children.

Proposition IV

In the year 2020, rural schools will derive their curriculum from their communities and will rely heavily on experiential education. In turn, rural schools will serve as the focal point of community service and development. Thus, rural schools will be at the heart of strong villages—yet these will be global villages. Rural learners will use technology to access world-wide sources of information and instruction—while compensating for their geographic isolation through electronic linkages with individuals and communities across the globe.

Proposition V

The overall interdependence of the urban and rural sectors of society will be reflected in educational policy, practice and finance. Fulfilling the needs of rural learners will be decoupled from the economic status of communities. Rural educators and advocates also will share equitably in all decision-making processes.

Proposition VI

Rural schools will become the nation's premier laboratories for educational innovation and improvement. The "pre-industrial" orientation—and human scale—of rural schools gives them a major advantage in realizing the best visions of "post-industrial" education.

Rural Communities: The Present Reality

The concept of community has many different dimensions and different meanings. It is the place where we live, and it is a group of people who hold to similar values. Community is where we work and where we play; where we educate our children; where we go to the doctor; and where we attend church. It is where we produce and purchase goods and services. If we are to move toward the vision of rural communities and schools laid out in the above propositions, we must begin with where we are today.

Rural communities exist in many forms, sizes and overlapping configurations. For instance:

- The Sheephorn community, a collection of ranches, is defined by a high mountain valley in Western Colorado with only a single access. Ranchers help each other with spring branding before the cattle are herded out to summer range. Neighbors gather on Saturday night to visit and "share a bottle." The one-room school, which used to serve as the focus of the community, was closed in the late 50's during the last wave of consolidation, but some dimensions of "community" still remain.

- In Rutland, South Dakota, population 45, a small K-12 school still exists, rising three stories above a cluster of houses like a mother hen over her chicks, providing the focus for community activities and serving as one of the last bits of glue that keeps the community together. The businesses along main street are all boarded up. Shopping, dentists and doctors are available in a regional service center 20 miles to the north.

- Buffalo, South Dakota, population 456, is 70 miles from the nearest town of any size. Main street is still populated by viable businesses. The community is more self-contained in the sense that a greater number of functions expected in a community setting still exist. The school, with an enrollment of 393 students, has developed innovative programs, including mobile vocational education laboratories shared with neighboring districts, to provide a quality school program.

- LaJunta, Colorado, a regional service center 80 miles from a metropolitan area, is even more self contained. Its isolation, its economy and its culture make it clearly rural although the school enrollment, 1,998, places it close to the upper limits of what is generally considered to be a small rural school. In fact, it is eight times as large as the median size school for the seven-state region served by McREL. While the community has lived on the edge of experiencing hard times, it has its own community college which has been instrumental in attracting small industry.

The adequacy of a community still tends to be defined by the extent to which the many functions and dimensions of community are fulfilled. However, as society has become more and more specialized, more and more trade-offs must be considered. There are products to be purchased and services to be performed that can only be found in a limited number of places (for example, organ transplants). And while local communities were at one time more economically self sufficient, it is now accepted that they are a part of a regional, if not international, economy. A reaction to the fragmentation of self-sufficient communities appears to be a growing desire to find ways of creating new order in our lives, to re-establish a sense of coherence in how we live. How do we stay connected to our neighbors when our lives go off in so many directions? And, a larger question, if communities no longer exist, what then happens to the fabric of society?

The one constant as society has changed and population shifts have taken place, has been the public school. To be sure, as rural people migrated to towns and cities, schools were consolidated. District boundaries were redefined, often after bitter fights; but more than any other single social artifact, school boundaries continue to define rural communities. There is also a growing realization of the interdependance of schools and communities. Quality schools are needed for healthy communities. If communities do not remain healthy, there will be no students to be educated by rural schools.

While there is great diversity in rural America, some generalizable characteristics emerge from the small size and isolation, which dictate the social structure. Social interactions are more intense, more tightly linked in rural areas because there are fewer people and because they know they will continue to rub up against one another. Relatively few people means that one meets the same people in a variety of settings: at school, church, the local gas station, stores and the doctor. Rural people tend to be polite and friendly because they have found that is the best way to assure continuing and smooth interactions, unlike city dwellers where rudeness to a stranger has no predictable future costs.

Rural residents tend to be generalists. Sparse populations mean that it is necessary to be competent at a number of tasks, a "jack of all trades" rather than a specialist. Farmers are agronomists, nursery owners, small businesspeople, mechanics and part time vets. The owner of the local restaurant may be the cook, menu planner, public relations expert, human relations manager, supervisor, accountant and waitperson.

People carry their jobs with them as they move through communities. The teacher in a rural school is identified as the teacher at the grocery and Bridge Club, not just at school. Organizations in rural areas depend on personal connections; and communications tend to be verbal, informal and direct, rather than bureaucratic, formal and written. Who says something is as important as what is said.

Immigration and settlement patterns suggest people in rural areas are more alike, share traditions, cultures and values more than urban dwellers. They are likely to respond to change in slow and considered ways. Consensus is important and rural residents are likely to take the time that consensus building needs.

Finally, spiritual values are important and material values less so. Rural people know one another and identities are not a function of the brand of clothes one wears or the car one drives. Rural people take pride in "making do," in self sufficiency; and displays of wealth (or other indications that one is "better than" one's peers) are considered tasteless. Behavior is valued more than possessions, and the lower density means that individual behavior is noted.

Rural Communities: Resources for School Improvement/ Rural Schools: Resources for Community Renewal

Rural schools and rural communities share common problems. Both are short on resources. In a society in which service delivery system models assume large numbers, both rural schools and rural communities are at a disadvantage. To create a more promising future, they will need to rely on the resources each can bring to that future.

As indicated, rural schools have historically been an economic drain on rural communities. Public education designed for an industrialized society has resulted in a negative impact on the rural communities that supported that education. What is needed is schooling that will also contribute to the future of rural America. Schools are frequently the largest enterprise in rural communities. They have the largest budget which, if they choose, could contribute to the local economy. They have the largest concentration of human resources, both in terms of a well educated staff and a cadre of students with energy and a curiosity to learn if properly challenged. These resources could contribute to the data collection and analysis needed for planning the future of rural communities. A fuller discussion of how this might work can be found in the article, "Blueprint for Schools and Community Development."

Rural communities, in turn, offer ideal laboratories for student learning. As curricula have become more and more specialized, they have become more and more abstract. Text books, at best, are poor replications of the stuff of the real world that needs to be learned. Rural communities present the world of economics, government and social structures on a scale that students can get their heads around. The environment provides an ideal laboratory for studying science, the ecology of living things that can never be reproduced in a classroom laboratory. Because rural schools are small in size, the logistics of learning from the real world, using the community as the focus of study, is possible. As students grow to understand their community, attitudes change and opportunities surface that will enable at least some of the young people to stay in their communities or return, if they choose. We cover this notion in more depth in the article, "Blueprint for Studying the Community."

Rural schools have not capitalized on their strengths. Rural students, because they are not redundant, are more engaged in the learning process, in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Recent insights into effective schools from such notable educators/researchers as Ron Edmonds, John Goodlad, Ernest Boyer, Sarah Lightfoot and Michael Rutter, state that the consistent elements of educational excellence revolve around such interpersonal and institutional factors as: (1) strong, positive leadership; (2) high expectations of student and teacher achievement; (3) respectful relationships among students, teachers and administrators; (4) individualized instruction and attention; (5) an emphasis on academic basics; (6) parental/community involvement and support; (7) fair and frequent feedback to both students and teachers on their performance (emphasizing positive reinforcement of success and progress); (8) a friendly, but business like, classroom and school climate; (9) a healthy balance of activities fostering the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of students; and (10) a tolerance for individual initiatives and for trying new approaches to learning.[1] None of the above characteristics are size dependent. In fact, most of them are easier to achieve in small school settings than in large school settings.

Other research by Walberg and Fowler suggests that school size may even have a direct relationship to student achievement. They conclude their study by asking "Why should small districts do well? Superintendent and central staff awareness of citizen and parent preferences, the absence of bureaucratic layers and administrative complexity, teacher involvement in decision making and close home-school relations—these may account for the apparent efficiency of small districts."[2]

A more promising future for rural America will depend upon the quality of its schools. The mission and design of rural schools may well determine the future of rural communities. The remainder of this issue of *Noteworthy* speaks to how rural schools and rural communities can work together for the betterment of both.

[1] Ernest L. Boyer, *High School* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Ron Edmonds and J. R. Frederiken, *The Search for Effective Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); John Goodlad, *Effective Schools* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); Sara Lightfoot, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Michael Rutter et al., *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Effects on Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[2] Herbert J. Walberg and William J. Fowler, Jr., "Expenditure and Size Efficiencies of Public School Districts." *Educational Researcher*, October, 1987.

Blueprint for Schools and Community Development

Schools and Communities are Interdependent

Rural schools and communities are linked together symbiotically; the health of one is dependent on the well being of the other. In many rural communities, the school district boundaries are the psychological borders of the community. Suggestions to consolidate a smaller school into a larger are countered by local beliefs that, "If you take our school, this town will die." Conversely, the school suffers when a community can't provide jobs for families and they move where there are jobs, taking with them their taxes and students.

Schools and communities are interdependent. This article is about ways schools can use the idea of community development to improve the current education of their high school students and create a more vital community in general. We call this "Community As a Focus of Study." Specific articles follow that deal with components of the program. These include involving the schools and communities in the schools, studying the community, teaching students how to create and operate small businesses and integrating this "real kids doing real work" approach into existing or new courses. School involvement in community development is one of those rare opportunities for enhancing the school's interests and the public good simultaneously.

Community and Economic Development: What is It?

Community: the people with common interests living in a particular area.
Development: to evolve the possibilities, to promote growth.
Economics: of, related to, or based on the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

Community development includes, but is not limited to, economic development. It can be defined as "a process to emphasize the common interests of people and evolve new possibilities for production, distribution and consumption of goods and services."

Definitions are necessary, but not very satisfying, when trying to understand a new concept. The following section will illustrate where the notion of community development comes from and what it means to real people working on it now.

Rural communities have changed. The common interests that bound people together used to come from the common ways they made a living. Diversified economies are now the rule, and many rural Americans commute long distances to work. A sense of community must be rebuilt, and other common interests (hopes for their children, appreciation for the rural way of life, a desire to create their own destinies) must be emphasized if Rural America is not to empty. As a nation, we can't afford vast, deserted areas between snarled urban sprawls.

Ideas about development have also changed. "Smokestack chasing" was the preferred development strategy of the seventies. Economic development councils blossomed across the country and dedicated people put in long hours and spent significant amounts of local resources to attract industry. Alas, to little avail. The same manufacturing plants that moved from the Northeast to the Southeast in search of lower wages have now moved offshore. Industrial parks stand deserted across the land, and tumbleweeds blow past streets and sidewalks leading nowhere. In the current economy, growth is predicted to take place in small businesses serving market niches. A stronger economic base and healthier community are more likely to come from developing existing resources, rather than trying to acquire new ones.

Education, in the broadest sense, is critical. Development experts know that retraining is essential to develop needed skills in people now in the work force. Training for future employment needs is also necessary. In addition to their role of preparing students to get jobs, schools can play a powerful role in revitalizing rural communities and their economies by teaching students how to create jobs. In this way, schools and communities learn, along with their students. Community development is an educational process through which a community learns to survive. The members of a community, including students, recognize their responsibility and power to create the future. "Thinking globally and acting locally," schools help design activities that enhance common interests, provide missing services and products, and foster norms of public service.

Rural Schools can Help

According to Jonathan Sher[1] (1987), President of Rural Education and

Development, Inc., "The idea that education is connected to economic development has become one of the cornerstones of the educational reform movement in the 1980's." Rural schools bring unique (and often overlooked) resources to community development efforts.

- Each faculty member represents a source of talent and knowledge which can, and often does, extend far beyond the classroom.
- When enthusiastic, energetic volunteers are needed for community projects of all kinds, the school can provide them from their rich and readily available youth resource.
- Schools are a significant physical presence and a major public infrastructure investment. In many rural communities, they are the only public space. School buildings, facilities and equipment may be made more affordable through cooperative purchases and maintenance, as well as cooperative use.
- Services provided for students such as career counseling, skill assessment and vocational training can benefit adults in the community as well.
- The purchasing and payroll power of the school is considerable. In many rural communities, the school has the largest and most consistent payroll. If all school supplies were purchased locally, the school could likely be the largest local buyer of such items.
- In addition, an often overlooked resource is the financial capacity schools have to draw outside dollars into the local economy from private, state and federal sources (Sher, 1987).

Conversely, education can be better served when the community is actively used as a resource by the school. A curriculum that includes an emphasis on understanding and strengthening communities can provide a transfusion to a community that feels defeated and discouraged. Teaching students how to create jobs can transform an economically anemic community. The sense of community becomes stronger and warmer as residents discover even more interests in common, by working for the common good. Finally, the education of students is enriched as they learn how to effectively "give something back" to the community, and that they can really make a difference.

> All folks living in the Lyman, SD school district were invited by Cris Anderson, the Superintendent, and Ron Stonebeck, the band director, to join a community chorus. The 200 people who responded rehearsed <u>The Battle Hymn of the Republic</u> and streamed down from the stands at halftime on a crisp, fall evening during Lyman's homecoming football game. The band played and the voices thundered in the cool air. As the music hushed, fireworks exploded from a nearby hillside. That evening was one everyone in Lyman's school (370 students, K-12) will never forget.

Community Development Enhances Education

The role of the school in American society is to educate young people so they become informed voters and productive workers. This was a simpler task in simpler times, when rural populations were so small that most people personally knew the candidates for local and state offices, and productive adulthood meant growing into jobs in agriculture or taking Dad's place logging, in the mines or fishing. Times are now more complex. Rural, small schools have been urged and required to reflect a "one best system" model. As a result, more and more of the curricula is standardized and concentrates on larger units of analysis, farther away.

Eliot Wiggington says, "students must have a firm understanding of the contemporary institutions that shape our lives. They must know the inner workings and ultimate purposes of our political systems. They must have an understanding of themselves as members of a society with a history and a future."[2]

Schools need to know about their communities if they are to assist with community development. Knowing comes from research, in this case, and not just from "being there." Students are taught to gather information from existing sources (census data, material available from state, county and municipal sources) and from original sources (community surveys they design and conduct, interviews with residents). What happens is a reaffirmation of the research on attitude change: the more they learn the prouder they feel about who they are and where they live.

"I used to think this place was the pits, that nothing ever happened here. I was sort of ashamed to say I came from way out in the sticks. Now I know how this part of the country got settled. My family was part of that and it was really hard times. I'm pretty proud of coming from that kind of stock. Not just anybody can make it out here."

As students learn more about their communities, the chances increase that they may wish to remain, or leave for a time and return when they are ready to raise families. A personal investment of time and energy brings with it a commitment to success and an interest in seeing that success happens. Understanding and involvement make the difference between young people who see their communities as places of the future and those who see them only as launching pads.

School leaders, convinced this is a viable approach to enhancing student learnings, begin by mobilizing community leadership.

The articles, "Blueprint for Studying Your Community" and "Community as a Focus of Study" both have more ideas and examples of how students' education is enhanced by a "real life" community study approach. "Blueprint for Entrepreneurship" explains student-created small businesses, and "Blueprint for Designing Courses" shows how to integrate this approach into existing or new courses.

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[1] Jonathan Sher (1987) Speech at "Education in Apalachia" Conference, University of Kentucky.

[2] Eliot Wiggington (1985) _Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience._ Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

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Twenty Clues to Rural Community Survival

An Annotated List

1. **Evidence of Community Pride**
Successful communities are often showplaces of community care and attention, with neatly trimmed yards, public gardens, well-kept parks. But pride also shows up in other ways, especially in community festivals and events that give residents an excuse to celebrate their community, its history and heritage.

2. **Emphasis on Quality in Business and Community Life**
People in successful communities believe that something worth doing is worth doing right. Facilities are built to last, and so are homes and other improvements. Newer brick additions to schools are common, for example; and businesses are built or expanded with attention to design and construction detail.

3. **Willingness to Invest in the Future**
Some of the brick-and-mortar investments are most apparent, but these communities also invest in their future in other ways. Residents invest time and energy in community betterment, for example, and they concern themselves with how what they are doing today will impact on their lives and those of their children and grandchildren in the future.

4. **Participatory Approach to Community Decision-Making**
Authoritarian models don't seem to exist in these communities; and power is, in fact, deliberately shared. People still know who you need on your side to get something done, but even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work through the systems—formal as well as informal—to build consensus for what they want to do.

5. **Cooperative Community Spirit**
Successful rural communities devote more attention to cooperative activities than to fighting over what should be done and by whom. The stress is on working together toward a common goal and the focus is on positive results. They

may spend a long time making a decision, and there may be disagreements along the way, but eventually, as one resident put it, "stuff does get done."

6. **Realistic Appraisal of Future Opportunities**
Many of the communities have already learned an important strategic lesson, namely, building on your strengths and minimizing your weaknesses. Few small communities believe that they are likely to land a giant industry. Many of them say they wouldn't want one if it came along, fearing that too much reliance on one industry would be unhealthy in any event.

7. **Awareness of Competitive Positioning**
The thriving communities know who their competitors are, and so do the businesses in them. Everyone tries to emphasize local loyalty as a way to assist local businesses, but many businesses also keep tabs on their competitors in other towns—they don't want any of the hometown folks to have an excuse to go elsewhere. Business and community leaders worry about what they don't have locally and wonder how many people are drifting to other towns to get it.

8. **Knowledge of the Physical Environment**
Importance of location is underscored continually in local decision-making, as business and civic leaders picture their community in relation to others. Beyond location, however, communities are also familiar with what they have locally.

9. **Active Economic Development Program**
An organized and active approach to economic development is common in the successful communities and it involves both public and private sector initiatives, often working hand in hand. Private economic development corporations are common, either as an arm or an outgrowth of a chamber of commerce or commercial club.

10. **Deliberate Transition of Power to a Younger Generation of Leaders**
Young leadership is the rule more than the exception in thriving rural

communities, where people under 40 often hold key positions in both civic and business affairs. In many cases these young people grew up in the town and decided to stay or returned after college. In many other cases, they are people who have decided to make a life in the community even though they grew up elsewhere.

11. **Acceptance of Women in Leadership Roles**
Women hold positions of leadership in these rural communities, and those roles extend beyond the traditional strongholds of female leadership. Women are elected as mayors, are hired to manage health care facilities, develop entrepreneurial ventures, are elected as presidents of chambers of commerce.

12. **Strong Belief in and Support for Education**
Good schools are a point of pride, as well as a stable employment force; and rural community leaders are very much aware of their importance. Residents want their children to get the best education they can afford. Beyond that, the school is often a center of social activity, and sports and other school events are well-attended.

13. **Problem-solving Approach to Providing Health Care**
Local health care is a common concern in rural communities, but strategies for health care delivery vary, depending on community needs. One community decides that keeping a doctor in the town is important; another focuses on emergency medical services; another invests heavily in comprehensive hospital-based services. A health care program, of some kind, is often viewed as essential to the community's health, as well.

14. **Strong Multi-Generational Family Orientation**
These are family oriented communities, with activities often built around family needs and ties. But the definition of family is broad, and it includes younger as well as older generations and people new to the community. In one community, a resident said everyone is

considered a cousin shortly after their arrival.

15. *Strong Presence of Traditional Intituions that are Integral to Community Life*

Churches represent perhaps the strongest force in this regard, and community activities often include or are centered on the church. Schools play a similar role. Service clubs retain a strong influence, and that influence is felt in community development as well as in social activities.

16. *Sound and Well-Maintained Infrastructure*

Rural communities understand the importance of traditional infrastructures—such as streets and sidewalks, water systems, sewage treatment facilities—and they work hard to maintain and improve them. But many of them are also worried that in this area especially they'll need outside funding help to keep up, and they wonder whether it will be available to them in the future.

17. *Careful Use of Fiscal Resources*

Frugality is a way of life in the successful small communities, and expenditures are made carefully. People aren't afraid to spend money, when they believe they should, and then, typically, things are built to last. But neither are they spendthrifts. Expenditures are, again, often seen as investments in the future of the community.

18. *Sophisticated Use of Information Resources*

Rural community leaders are knowledgeable about their communities beyond the knowledge base available in the community. In one town, for example, retail sales histories from the University of Nebraska were studies for trend information. In another, census data were used to study population change. In another, modern computer equipment kept people up to date on financial matters.

19. *Willingness to Seek Help From the Outside*

There's little reluctance in successful rural communities to seek outside help; and many of them demonstrate their success at competing for government grants and contracts for economic development, sewer and water systems, recreation, street and sidewalk improvement, and senior citizen programs.

20. *Conviction that, in the Long Run, You Have To Do It Yourself*

Although outside help is sought when appropriate, it is nevertheless true that thriving small communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. They are not waiting for someone else to save them, nor do they belive that "things will turn out" if they sit back and wait. Making their communities good places to live for a long time to come is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

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Blueprint for Community Input and Investment

Transforming Community: A Shared Responsibility

Expanding the school mission to include community development is possible right now because American society is moving to a new vision. It's a matter of "story." As Thomas Berry says, the old story no longer satisfies. Our culture has been one of increasing specialization and separation. We want a new way of being with one another, less sense of isolation and fragmentation and more sense of belonging, of coherence. Robert Bellah and his co-authors describe it this way in *Habits of the Heart*:

> The profound yearning for the idealized small town that we found among most of the people we talked to is a yearning for just such meaning and coherence. Although the yearning is nostalgia for the irretrievably lost, it is worth considering whether the... traditions that small town once embodied can be reappropriated in ways that respond to our present need.[1]

Community development, as we present it here, comprises two themes: education as a means of increasing options for individuals, and education as a means of improving the common good. The schools are to be partners in community development, for schools and communities are interdependent. Students are taught, as part of their schooling, how to meet existing needs and create employment opportunities for themselves and others, because we believe in the value of work, in the free enterprise system and in the joys of being "one's own boss." In addition, students also discover the responsibilities of decision-making, the complexities of creation and the abrasions that working

closely with and depending on others can bring. Economic development, recirculating money in a community and attracting new money from outside is only part of community development.

The other part is the investment in community. With a more explicit understanding of what we have in common, the goals we seek to attain together and the effect our individual actions have on us as a group, the differences between us that remain become less threatening. A transformed understanding of an investment in social justice is a result of everyday decisions rather than an abstract ideal.

The community needs to be involved with the school in ways other than simply providing an enthusiastic audience for extracurricular activities or room volunteers who bake cookies and chaperone field trips. Both school staff and community members may find this a new idea.

One way to begin is to establish a community-based development advisory committee. This group should be small in number (4-9 participants). Their mission is to advise students and teachers about potential projects and initiate a sense of collaboration between the school and the community. In some communities, a formal structure at this point may be inappropriate, and the next steps may be left to the teachers and students.

This is also the time to build in public accountability. We all work better when our attention is concentrated by knowing we have to make a public report of our progress. Student reports of the work they are doing over the life of their projects are of great benefit to both students and the adults in the community. Students present useful information and are treated respectfully, adults see

students in a new way—as responsible, contributing members of the community. The range of shared interests and sense of community expands.

Students in Custer, SD (population 1,597) conducted a survey for the Custer Chamber of Commerce's application for a Farm Home Administration (FmHA) low-cost housing loan. After gathering the necessary data, students reported their findings to a Chamber meeting open to the community. Their work so impressed Chamber leaders that they, and their teacher Dave Versteig, were invited to become members of the Custer Chamber of Commerce, where they continue to serve on standing committees.

Community and School Leaders

The planners and "spark-plugs" for the notion of including the schools as a resource for community development are models for the rest of the community. It is critical during the process of convening leaders that those who are initiating this activity be positive in their attitudes, extremely enthusiastic about this mutual venture and convinced that their community has a bright future.

Sometimes community leadership is more receptive to this type of activity than the school system. Schools historically have seen themselves performing a necessary service and the need to work with communities for their mutual benefit is a recent shift. The project won't get off the ground unless the school leadership is convinced that their interests are served by becoming community collaborators, and that the project will improve education for the

students. Fortunately, testimony from communities and schools involved is available and overwhelmingly positive despite initial concerns.

> **"The teachers will never go for it and, if they wanted to, their organization wouldn't let them do what sounds like a lot more work."**
>
> Concern over additional or supplemental duties by teachers may worry some administrators, some teachers and some community members. The fact is, not every teacher needs to be involved. There will be one or two enthusiastic teachers who relish the thought of expanding their own professional horizons in this way, even without additional compensation. If new small businesses are begun, shares in the enterprise may be one way to fairly compensate the teachers as well as the students who do the work.

Local Businesspeople

Local businesses often react negatively to the notion of a mutual economic development project because they sense a potential for competition. Additionally, the business community quite often believes that schools have no expertise, no relevant resources nor any mandate to engage in economic development activities. One way to allay fears of the business community is to involve them from the first and address these concerns directly. For example, the board of education can agree to take part in the project only after guidelines that eliminate the potential for competition have been developed. Business leaders can be invited to serve on the development advisory committee. It can be made very clear that the school is not competing with business, but enhancing it.

Businesses can then be helped to realize that they have something to offer and that they can be the best teachers for their communities' future leaders. Business leaders can become mentors to student entrepreneurs. It is important, too, that the business community realize and understand that the very survival of rural communities depends on making the community an attractive place for young people to stay after graduation or to return to when they are ready to raise

their own families. The point can be made that investment in education is closely linked with the economic well-being of the community, and that this project provides options to the more usual phenomena of local schools taking tax monies to prepare students to become workers and taxpayers only in distant places.

> **"Why should I buy that in town when it is a dollar cheaper at the Wal-mart?"**
>
> As the education of the students moves ahead, there is also a role for community education. Many "buy locally" campaigns have been less than effective because the community as a whole was not engaged in understanding some simple economics. For instance, if survival of the community is a goal, then one of the costs of achieving that goal may be slightly higher prices for goods or services purchased locally. The fact is that once additional costs of transportation are included, purchasing locally becomes more economical. In addition, the multiplying effect of dollars that stay in the community more than offsets the savings in buying cheaper goods elsewhere. Community members can be helped to understand that paying higher prices may be a conscious investment they make in order to strengthen the local economy.

Media

It is critical that, from start to finish, media be heavily involved. The media, when included in the earliest stages, can be powerful allies for the projects. Don't overlook the potential of TV, cable and radio coverage. If there are no local county or regional newspapers or publications that give substantive coverage of the community, a local newsletter might be one of the first projects.

While media coverage can encourage participation in meetings and provide on-going reports of progress, the heaviest public relations efforts occur after activities are underway. This is when community members need the most positive feedback. It is also a good time to create a sense of the community as a "committee of the whole" which is vitally interested in nurturing the success of such a project.

> **"What is this going to cost me? We don't need another program that ends up raising taxes. Our school budget is already stretched as far as it can go."**
>
> Concern over taxes rising to accommodate the expense of new projects is common and understandable. In fact, there are no start-up costs associated with this approach, no additional teacher positions required, little new material and no long-term, hidden costs. Projects are self-sustaining and instruction a part of the regular school budget. The difference is one of attitude and mission of the school.
>
> Some schools have provided venture capital for student-owned businesses, others have not. Securing financial resources to fund student-owned and managed businesses is part of the learning process. Our experience has been that funds are not difficult to secure, and they often come from unexpected sources. The Small Business Administration has a pilot program, FASTRACK, that guarantees 80 percent of its loans to students in these kinds of projects. State banking associations in some states are eager partners, there are funds available from the Governor's Office of Economic Development in others, and in one community, an endowment is being created of $100 investments from 80 people and organizations.

Final Concerns and Responses

So far, the notion of schools as partners for community development sounds logical and possible. Who could possibly object to such a good idea? Anyone who has worked with schools or communities, anyone who has worked with others to bring about change, knows that the best idea can run into unexpected roadblocks. This article can't remove all the roadblocks nor can it predict which ones will slow your journey, but we can inform you about three additional issues that have come up in our work around the country.

The key to success is to encourage and assist the people who are most enthusiastic and willing to devote effort and enthusiasm to such a project. Attitudes of community leaders will deter-

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mine their personal involvement. Through this involvement of interested volunteers, there will be a growth of community pride. A personal investment, even if time is the only input, creates a better environment for success.

"It's a great idea. Can we expect to see results by next week?"

Every project takes time, and this one is no exception. Learning about the community, designing community service projects, identifying market niches, researching and writing business plans, securing financing and preparing to deliver the goods and services take time and planning. Teenagers, with their common need for instant gratification, can find the process moving more slowly than they wish. Their sense of urgency is often echoed by school boards with immediate agendas, administrators and others who look for quick results. The time and careful planning required to bring about changes in attitudes and beginning businesses are all part of the learning process; the notion that this is a long-term project should be built in from the beginning.

"Nothing good can ever happen here."

A lack of confidence from the community is a roadblock that can produce sudden death. Constant use of the local media and continual reporting on the progress of each enterprise can prevent this. A lack of confidence may be fostered if press coverage is negative; therefore, it is important that the media be well informed and involved in a positive way. Keeping communication lines open is critical.

The bottom line is that the future and success of communities and schools are interdependent. They need to find new ways to work closely together. The value of active, vital educational programs to a community that wants to progress and stay healthy is limitless, as is what students could learn from studying their own community and starting their own businesses.

"Why should we be part of a project that will be located in the next town?"

The question of ownership and location can be an issue, especially for schools that serve more than one community. Community rivalries on the playing field can extend directly into instructional programs for which collaborative efforts are required. Keeping all interested parties well informed and involved can help to solve these problems. Decisions for each case must be based on the unique characteristics of the situation. Phasing the enterprise is often a useful approach with phase one taking place in one area and phase two in another. However, that is not always possible. It may be that more than one enterprise of this type needs to be created so that a balance is achieved.

Contributions from Students

For the first time since the Johnson Administration a quarter-century ago, the notion of young people serving the country through community service and volunteer work has captured a significant amount of attention on Capitol Hill. Seven bills have been introduced in the 101st Congress, and President Bush earlier focused public attention on the idea in his campaign proposal for a national foundation for youth service. The flurry of legislative proposals assume a federal role in providing organization and financial resources to support voluntarism among the young, but many schools are integrating public service as part of student's education. In Pennsylvania, for example, John Briscoe, director of Penn-Serve, a state agency that coordinates school-based service projects, argues that such programs have contributed to lower dropout rates, higher college-attendance rates and improving student performance. Douglas County, Colorado is considering making public service a part of their graduation requirements. The following list suggests some ways you could adapt to integrate a public service component in your classes.

Students in social problems classes could organize "Meet the Candidates" night and debates for contested seats in local elections.

Students could conduct voter registration drives, first among their peers and then in the community as part of social problems or American history courses.

World history classes could interview older community citizens to discover the reasons families immigrated to this country and the patterns of settlement they followed. Results could be printed in the local paper.

Science classes could organize and coordinate a recycling center and recycling drives.

Agriculture or biology classes could plant trees and provide other landscaping for community beautification projects.

Speech or Theater students could provide oral storytelling and puppet show sessions on Saturday mornings for small children, perhaps at the community library.

Health classes could arrange for first aid and CPR instruction for community members, including other students, increasing the community's ability to respond to health emergencies.

Health, physical education, sociology, marketing or home economics classes could work with the community to develop a community wellness plan. Shop classes could build exercise or fitness equipment and the biology or earth sciences class design and construct a fitness walk.

The biology or earth sciences class could research, plan and create a nature trail. Members of those classes or the speech classes could provide guided trail walks. Journalism classes could develop and produce self-directed trail guides.

Students could organize sports leagues and invite community participation. Students and community members could play on the same teams or could create separate leagues, with interleague competitions at the end of the season.

Talented community members willing to share their skills could be organized into a Art and Craft guild that provides lessons at minimal charge with support provided by students in Art or business classes.

Centennial celebrations are a natural for History classes to research. Information gathered from County and State records and interviews with older citizens is of wide public interest, and

puts the life of the community in the context of the history of America.

Similarly, immigration and settlement patterns and displays of original families and their descendents can be investigated. This information becomes a focus of much community interest as well as a source for articles for the local paper (which could be the responsibility of the journalism, English or creative writing class).

Business or math students could volunteer to assist with income tax preparation for elderly citizens.

Students in business or math classes could develop expertise in filling out and filing life, health and Medicare claims for elderly and/or disabled citizens and provide this service on call or on a regular schedule.

Students in psychology, human development, family or home economics classes could be trained to assist parents of children with physical disabilities with exercise and speech and language therapy programs.

Friendly visitor programs for elderly shut-ins in the area could be a project of individuals or teams of students as part of sociology or psychology courses, historiography or creative writing classes, human growth and family sequences.

History classes might investigate the origins of local buildings and the process for getting them on the National Register of Historic Places. When accomplished, a community celebration could mark the event.

Peer tutoring in every subject area provides an opportunity to deliver a service and hone one's own knowledge. Students could work with their class-mates, with younger students and with community members on specific areas.

Students from every grade and subject could volunteer to operate a "homework hotline" on certain days each week. Students needing help could call or drop in for assistance.

A science or home economics class focusing on nutrition could help the elderly plan menus, as well as help them shop and prepare foods.

Sociology or psychology students studying gerontology could adopt grandparents. They would provide friendship and companionship as well as

help with such things as laundry, shopping, etc.

Students interested in music or drama could organize and perform in a series of monthly concerts/short plays/declamations at nursing homes, hospitals or community senior citizen centers.

In small communities not served by a community newspaper, students could produce a community newsletter with information about local activities.

High school students could be recruited to assist elementary teachers teach science, assist in setting up demonstrations, tutor small groups of children, plan mini-field trips and excursions, etc.

A speakers bureau could be established, using student and faculty talent, to provide speakers for local group and club meetings by the speech classes.

A report on the local environment, with suggestions for improvements, could be the responsibility of the earth sciences or biology class.

Contributions from the School

A community band could include student musicians and provide summer concerts in a local park. Students could be responsible for the music and the stands; instruments could be shared and students and community members could take turns as conductors.

The community library and the school library could share facilities. If there is no community library, the school library could serve that function. Balaton, Minnesota's town library has a table for magazines. Community members bring magazines they have read to the library and leave them for others. The magazines are not accessioned or checked out, so no additional staff time is required.

A community bulletin board could be erected on the school grounds, visible to people driving by, that lists school and community events, as well as personal messages such as "Happy Birthday, Toni Jo."

The school could sponsor a travel fair at which community members are encouraged to bring slides, movies, snapshots and souvenirs from trips abroad and talk about their experiences at

tables set up so people could walk around.

Students who win music and forensic competitions could be recognized at community-wide dinners, along with athletes and scholars and students who seem otherwise undistinguished but make the school a nicer place to be.

The school building could become a community center with recreation leagues using the gym during the evenings.

Hot lunch programs could be expanded to include senior citizens and students could coordinate community volunteers and manage "Meals on Wheels" programs for people unable to come to the school.

School transportation services could serve community members, offering rides to town and home again. School trips to the State Capitol, to regional or state-wide competitions, and even to interscholastic sporting events could be open to interested community members.

Classes in parenting, child care and infant stimulation could be open to students and community members

Schools could set up day-care centers for students with children, faculty and community members.

School classes could be opened to community members. Recreational learning is growing more popular for older people and offering them a place in existing classes could enrich class discussions, as well as send an important message about learning for the love of learning.

Some schools, particularly those where winter weather is cruel, open the buildings in the morning before school so community members can walk. The principal walks with them every morning, getting to know them, suggesting ways they might share their talents and knowledge as part of the school program, and pointing out building needs.

In Kansas, the U.S. Post Office is in Piper School. Community members feel they own the school; they are in and out of it all day.

School classes in business practices, accounting, word processing, entrepreneurship, etc. could be open to interested community members.

[1] Bellah, R. N.; Madsen, R.; Sullivan, W. M.; Swidler, A.; & Tepton, S. (1985). *Habits of the Heart. Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Blueprint for Studying the Community

Most young people learn a great deal about federal and state governments, the history and environments of the country (particularly the East Coast) and international affairs. They know very little about their own home town. The curricula have become more and more standardized. While we say, we believe in local control of schools, you couldn't prove it by the curricula. Many factors mitigate against curricula matched to local circumstances, including the economics of textbook and test publishing, state-wide adoptions of texts in the largest states, state mandates for graduation and nation-wide college entrance examinations. As a result, the curriculum is the same in Buffalo, New York (pop. 500,000) and in Buffalo, South Dakota (pop. 456).

We know more about the U.S. Congress and less about our state legislature. We know almost nothing about the levels of government that most directly touch our lives, how our counties and towns are managed and how local decisions are made. The news we receive on television, in newspapers and magazines is increasingly about far-off events over which we have no control or influence. (Daryl Hobbs, Rural Sociologist at the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, University of Missouri-Columbia)

It is no wonder, then, that our young people look beyond their own communities for building a future. They see no way to earn a living and nothing attractive where they are; their images of the good life are formed by television shows filmed in Los Angeles or New York or Miami. Learning about the community can provide an awareness of options that might otherwise go undiscovered, and the study of the local community provides insights into needs and resources that might otherwise go unnoticed.

As waves of the Information Age wash over the Industrial Age, an opportunity exists to re-examine why and how we teach what we teach. We can meet state objectives, help rural students continue to do well on standardized tests and get into the colleges of their choice and, at the same time, lead them to observe and appreciate their own environments. Focusing study on the community can not only make the curriculum more relevant and help to overcome an existing lack of knowledge, it can also develop a sense of personal commitment to the community through experiencing how the individual can make a difference.

Community study facilitates two basic outcomes. First, it teaches youth about their community's economy and characteristics and their roles as active community members. In addition, students learn how to make practical use of data collection and analysis. The potential outcome is that the student becomes an empowered citizen sensing a personal investment in community progress.

The second outcome is the actual knowledge of the community itself and the use that can be made of this knowledge. New understandings can add to awareness, develop new perspec-

tives from which to make decisions, chart courses or plan development. For this reason, many communities actively engaged in community development employ outside experts to conduct such studies. Seeing the community through new eyes can provide insights that long-time residents might miss.

However, students also have "new eyes," and their energy is legendary and free. Community surveys can make a real contribution to existing curricula in a social studies, geography, English, speech, journalism or business class. In Custer, South Dakota, for instance, students conducted the community survey necessary for the Chamber of Commerce's Farm Home Administration (FmHA) loan application for low cost housing. Community surveys can also help local businesses. In Buffalo, South Dakota, students did a market survey and collected letters of intent to accompany the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan for a local entrepreneur who is going to open a health club.

Community Study Approaches

There are a number of effective methods for community study. Select those methods best suited to your community, the group doing the study and the intended use of the data. Techniques depend on what kind of information and depth you need. Methods and techniques for conducting such studies are described below.

Interviews

A powerful tool, interviews provide in-depth information. A caution is that

interviewees must be selected carefully. A good cross section of economic statuses, careers, age groups, ethnic groups, etc. is important if the interview method is to be useful in accurately making predictions from the data collected. Sample interview forms are included at the end of this article.

Observation (sometimes called awareness walks)

The data gatherer simply observes the community from as many perspectives and angles as possible. A lot can be learned about local business, for example, by counting the number of businesses, observing their patterns of doing business, noting the types of businesses, etc. To develop a comprehensive view of the community in its entirety, however, a number of significant features of the community must be observed, including local churches, businesses, government agencies, schools, community infrastructure, residential areas, services, etc.

It is also important to observe how these various entities work together or separately to achieve their individual goals. The local chamber of commerce will be very interested in helping plan this sort of activity, and it is a good way to get chamber members and students working together. The social studies class that Curt Shaw teaches in Buffalo, South Dakota has become a member of the Buffalo Chamber; students attend meetings and serve as regular members on standing committees.

Data Collection/Surveys

Probably the most effective method for gathering a great deal of useful information is the survey. In order for the survey to be valid, however, a significant number of surveys must be completed and returned, and the population surveyed must represent all segments of the community. Survey questions must be designed so that they do not lead the individual toward specific answers. There are professionally prepared surveys that can be obtained through a number of agencies (state extension service, community planning agencies, department of commerce). Because much data is already available from the census, state and federal offices and

county governments, students also learn about existing data sources and the uses to which they are/can be put.

Our experience shows that students learn a great deal by developing surveys themselves. A sample survey of community attitudes from Missouri is included at the end of this article.

Outside Experts

A trained professional may provide a more objective view of how this information might be gathered, and professional data gatherers are sensitive to the dangers of their own opinions clouding results. One useful approach is to ask an expert (from a planning office or university) to meet with students to talk about data gathering, observer bias and instrument preparation as part of the learning process. He/she might also agree to review plans and instruments and serve as a consultant to the project.

As a result of conducting community surveys, students will discover new ways of viewing their own community, and the skills they gain in developing and executing the study and reporting on the results are the essence of quality learning.

Agencies and Resources to Aid in Community Study

Designing and executing a study can be a valuable educational experience. However, there are significant sources of existing, available information to supplement the community study, and understanding these sources and the types of information available can also be valuable. Begin by listing what decisions will be made and what information will be useful in making the decisions. Such information might include:

- business activity (business needs, numbers, types, local buying patterns);
- housing facilities, occupancy and vacancy rates, multifamily housing;
- demographic data, tax base, isolation from metropolitan areas, geographical characteristics and land use policies;
- transportation, availability of public transportation, travel time to work;
- available services, infrastructure, power structure and leadership;

- employment statistics, labor force size and growth, economic base by sector, work-force participation by age/sex/ethnicity and projections, training programs for workers, part time and temporary work force, the nature/balance of trade;
- community involvement, community attitudes toward economic growth, assets and liabilities of the community and financial resources within the community;
- education, education levels of the population, illiteracy rates, school trends by age, sex and race/ethnicity, school enrollment projections, school drop-out rates, staff/student ratio, per pupil expenditures and use of technology.

Sources of information for collecting data include:

Voter District. Voting records may or may not indicate the level of community involvement.

County Offices. Information on population of the county, use of property, etc.

Extension Service. If there is an economic development division at the state extension level, they may already have information regarding how dollars are spent within the community, the leakage of those dollars from the community, which businesses appear to be most necessary and which are needed that the community does not have.

Governor's Office. In many states, economic development is an arm of the governor's office. Also, in some states, the governor's office has a special office of rural or local affairs. Either source will have information about incentives for rural development.

Universities. Land grant universities have a particular charge to provide service to all parts of the state. University professors offer help, graduate students' theses and dissertations are free (and often overlooked) sources of information and interacting with university personnel is often good experience for students and teachers.

State Department of Health. This department will have information on the general health of the population and important public health issues such as the quality and quantity of the water supply.

Utility Companies. Electric, water and telephone companies have good in-

formation about population mobility and projections of future service needs. The quality and plans for upgrading telephone lines is particularly important for electronic data transmission.

State Department of Economic Development or Chambers of Commerce. More specific information about the future and current health and adequacy of businesses within the community can be obtained here. In addition, there may be information suggesting the business needs of specific communities.

Small Business Development Centers. On local university campuses or in the state capitol, these offices often have information regarding business potential and prognosis.

School System. School districts will be able to offer pertinent information regarding student enrollment and projections, how much is spent per student on education, the costs to the district of obtaining that education, etc.

County Historical Society. In order to chart a future course, it is necessary to know where the community has been. This group should be able to provide an overall perspective of the community and its growth and change from an historical point of view, valuable if the tenor of the community is to be maintained and important to making history come alive.

Census. This is an excellent source of demographic data. Average age of the community, numbers of families, average salary and, above all, changes from previous census years can provide an overview of community trends that will be useful in determining what course to chart in the future.

Labor Department. Statistics regarding levels of employment and training are critical when making choices about mutual economic development efforts.

League of Municipalities. In many states an organization by this name, or one similar, actively collects data of all kinds about communities within the state.

Regional/Area Planning Commissions. These are becoming more common as communities discover that unplanned growth and no growth at all are equally unsatisfactory, and that enlisting the expertise of professional planners working with committees appointed for this purpose can correct both. In order that their work go

smoothly, a large quantity of data is already collected to help in making decisions. Individual communities can have access to this data.

State Library. There are several excellent resources found here including community historical records, zoning and land use requirements and background of local government decisions.

State Department of Transportation. In order to build and repair roads, demographic data is collected to determine the use. This data, collected by the state department of transportation, is available upon request.

Collecting data that will be put to immediate and obvious use is a much more exciting educational project than abstractly learning about distant events or recollecting what has been gathered many times before. It is an example of one of the fundamental principles of the project, "real students doing real work." The results of the community survey(s) may:

* Disclose market niches in which student-designed, owned and operated businesses can succeed.
* Assist other community organizations and members.
* Change student (and community) attitudes about the place where they live.

Speaking of attitudes, there is nothing more discouraging to anyone than to invest time, talent, enthusiasm and energy in a project in which no one has interest. It is important, therefore, to determine how the information will be used before the survey process begins. It is critically important that once the data are collected they are translated into a meaningful description of the community. At this point, expert help may be required to assist the students in interpreting the data. The data should aid in determining assets and shortcomings of the community; these can be developed into an action agenda to solve problems and plan for the future.

Selling of the value of the study to the community precedes the development; however, there will always need to be a certain amount of continued attention once the study is completed. Because students are required to report their findings in a meaningful way to those who can most use the information (school board, chamber of commerce, etc.), the community will be kept in-

formed, thus giving the students some accountability and credibility for their work. This personal contact, spiced with the enthusiasm of youth, can make great inroads toward collaborative community development. Conducting a study is no easy task, but schools are a prime source of enthusiastic, energetic manpower. It is important to point out to community and school leadership that this type of educational process will help students learn ideas that can be transferred to real life settings. Students focusing on a definite outcome will be more apt to invest time in their own learning. One such outcome is student-owned and managed businesses. We refer to this as an entrepreneurship curriculum, and discuss it in the next article.

Bibliography

The following bibliography contains selections from a resource list originally developed for a course in Community and Community Analysis developed by McREL and Black Hills State College for teachers interested in integrating community study into their curriculum. The three credit graduate course will be available again this summer, June 26-30, 1989. For information about registration, please write or call Jim Doolittle, Project Coordinator, Rural Schools and Community Development Project, Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, Box 218, Sturgis, SD 57785 (605) 347-4467.

Hobbs, Daryl. "Strategy for Needs Assessments." In Donald E. Johnson, et al. (eds.) Needs Assessment: Theory and Methods. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press. 1987.

Clearly and concisely talks about needs assessments with careful attention to whom the information is intended to inform/influence and how that bears on what information is collected, from whom, and how. Suggests that, because information must compete for attention in this Information Age, a strategy that combines technical considerations with purpose is important and shows how to invent a strategy to suit your purposes.

Voss, Paul R., Stephen Tordella and David Brown. "Role of Secondary Data." In Donald E. Johnson, et al. (eds.) Needs Assessment: Theory and Methods. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press. 1987.

Needs assessments and community surveys are primary data that you have collected for your unique and specific purpose. Equally important to include are secondary data, that is statistical information collected for another purpose that can inform your issues. This article shows you and your students where secondary data are to be found and the benefits as well as the problems of using secondary data.

Swanson, Bert E., Richard A. Cohen and Edith P. Swanson. Small Towns and Small Towners: A Framework for Survival and Growth. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications. 1979.

Small towns are necessary to the survival of America. The authors assert, "Only by digging into the structure of the town can one see the real-life options and impacts unfold, challenging previously held ideas about the implications of various actions." The concepts of community values and norms and the main sources that generate them; the social structure and indicators of status and prestige; the local economy and where small towners are employed; what they produce and how the community benefits from business activity; and finally patterns of decision-making and influence are discussed. Each chapter is followed by a detailed discussion guide with many implications for local action.

Butler, Lorna and Robert E. Howell. Coping with Growth: Community Needs Assessment Techniques WREP 44. Western Rural Development Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331. October, 1980.

This brief (22 page) clearly written document presents community assessment techniques that include teaching methods and ways to get students involved using existing information (the census and vital statistics records and content analysis) and creating new information (participant observation, case studies, social network analysis, surveys, key informants, life histories, nominal group processes and the delphic technique) as well as suggestions for advisory groups, task forces, community forums or hearings and community impressions. A table presents the advantages and disadvantages of each technique and sources of additional help are provided. While it was developed for rapidly growing communities, it is equally applicable to all communities searching for ways to conduct community studies and highly recommended.

Lamb, Robert K. "Suggestions for a Study of Your Hometown." Chapter 7 in Pathways to Data: Field Methods for Studying Ongoing Social Organizations. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970.

Discusses readily available sources of information for studying the communities in which we live.

Simon, Jay, et al. "Potential for Retail Trades in Rural Communities." Community Decision Making. DM 3035. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Extension Service, 1987.

Examines how to evaluate a town's potential for retail trade and specifically illustrates how to map the various trade areas in a given community.

Hahn, Alan. Who Decides? Participants in Community Decision Making. Information Bulletin 53. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 1973.

Contains a checklist for studying decision making in one's own community: Who participates? Why? Who are the real decision makers?

Wiggington, Eliot. Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1985.

The best example of community study put into context, with the action steps for teachers that come from using the study of the community as the curriculum.

Nachtigal, Paul. Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982.

Case studies of thirteen rural communities involved in school improvement efforts are bracketed by introductory and ending chapters making sense of what the researchers saw and heard. A readable example of how outsiders see communities and what professional social scientists look for when they analyze the interactions between what goes on in schools and the communities they serve.

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDP) is a regional center for applied social science and community development, cooperating with Land Grant Universities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. They also have an excellent series on small town strategies with such titles as
- Marketing the Uniqueness of Smal' Towns
- Health Care for Western Rural Communities: A Workbook for Considering Alternatives
- Community Evaluation for Economic Development
- Socioeconomic Indicators for Small Towns
- Helping Small Towns to Grow
- To Grow or Not To Grow: Questions About Economic Development
- Identifying Problems and Establishing Objectives
- Understanding Your Local Economy: Economic Base Analysis and Local Development Strategies
- The Aging Population, Retirement Income and the Local Economy.

We can recommend them all, and they are available from Western Rural Development Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OP 97331.

Two more useful sources of information are the Community Decision Making newsletter, published by the University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division, Columbia, Missouri 65211 and the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Milan Wall and Vicki Luther, Co-Directors, 941 O Street, Suite 920, Lincoln, NE 68508.

A Sample Community Survey

This survey is one of many hundreds easily available. We've included it as an example. Others are available from your local extension office, the nearest university, the state economic development office, etc. You will eventually want to design your own form, to capture the information you need and to suit your own purpose. This survey, for example, asks for opinions on retail services, recreational facilities, churches, health services, education, community services industry, and includes three pages of general questions. That may well be overkill. Regard it as a model.

YES	NO	NO OPN	

Retail Facilities and Services

1. Do you think improving the appearance of _____ business buildings would attract more customers?
2. Do you think the sales clerks in _____ are as courteous and helpful as in other towns in which you have shopped?
3. Is public parking in the downtown area adequate?
4. Do you think the merchants in _____ satisfactorily service what they sell?
5. Do you think that legal services in _____ are adequate?
6. Are you in favor of liquor by the drink in _____?
7. Are public restroom facilities adequate in the downtown area?

Recreational Services and Facilities

8. Do you think the existing recreational facilities are adequate for the following age groups? (Answer yes, no, or no opinion for each).

   A. Pre-school

   B. Elementary

   C. High School

   D. Young Adults

   E. Middle Age

   F. Senior Citizens

9. Do you think that the _____ Park Board is providing an adequate variety of organized recreational programs?
10. Would you object if the City Council raised the present _____ per $1000 park tax to finance additional public recreation programs and facilities?
11. Does the city of _____ need a community all-purpose building (for recreation, meetings, etc.)?

YES	NO	NO OPN

12. Do you think _____ needs a swimming pool?

13. Would you vote in favor of a bond issue for a swimming pool in _____?

14. Would you like to see other recreational facilities added to the city park, such as:

A. More tennis courts

B. Volleyball courts

C. Basketball courts

D. Roller skating facilities

E. Bicycle paths

F. Trail bike paths

G. Picnic facilities

H. Improving existing lake

15. Do you think the Little League program should be continued in _____?

16. Do you think _____ needs and could support a movie theater?

Churches

17. Do you think most people in _____ are satisfied with the programs offered by their churches?

18. Should the churches participate more actively in civic and community affairs?

19. Would you like to see more interdenominational services in _____?

Health Services

20. Do you think that _____ needs and could support any of the following community health services? (Answer yes, no, or no opinion for each).

A. Hospital

B. Public Health Services (i.e., well-baby clinics, planned parenthood clinics, etc.)

C. Nursing home

D. Additional doctors

E. Additional dentists

F. Additional nurses

G. Pharmacy

H. Veterinarian

I. More trained ambulance personnel

21. Do you think the drug abuse problem in _____ is more serious than in other towns in the area?

22. Do you think doctors' charges in _____ are excessive?

22

YES	NO	NO OPN

Education

23. Do you think the _____ Public Schools offer as good an education as other public schools of similar size?

24. Are you satisfied with the quality of programs offered by the _____ schools in each of the following areas:

A. General Education

B. Music

C. Vocational education or training

D. Athletic program

E. College Prep

25. Do you think athletics are over-emphasized in _____ public schools?

26. Are you satisfied with the job being done by the _____ school board?

27. Are you satisfied with the job being done by the _____ school administration?

28. Do you think the school lunch program in _____ is adequate?

29. Do you think the school is providing adequate safety patrols at the school crossings?

29a. If you answered "NO" to the above (29), which would you be in favor of:

A. Hiring more patrol officers

B. Having stricter enforcement of existing speed limit

C. Installing additional stop signs

D. Lowering the speed limit in the school zone

E. Placing a student patrol at school crossings

2). Do you think there should be improved coordination between the _____ City Council and the _____ School Board?

31. Do you believe there is sufficient opportunity for students to participate in extracurricular activities?

Community Services

32. Do you think the following services are satisfactory?

A. Police protection

B. Fire protection

C. Streets

D. Street lights

E. Water

F. Trash pickup

G. Electricity

23

YES	NO	NO OPN

H. Telephone

I. Sidewalks

J. Parking facilities

K. Public library

L. Sewers

32a. If you check "NO" to any of the above, please comment on why you are not satisfied in the space below:

_____

_____

_____

33. Would you support a bond issue to improve the water system in _____?

34. Would you like to see the completion of street signs and house numbers in _____?

35. Do you believe that the existing leash law to control dogs and cats in the city should be more strictly enforced?

36. Do you think _____ needs planning and zoning?

37. Do you think city laws and ordinances are adequately enforced?

37a. If "NO," which ones? _____

_____

38. Do you think there is a need for additional rental housing units in _____?

39. Do you believe there is a need for federally-subsidized low-cost housing in _____?

40. Do you think the city should provide for a full-time clerk to facilitate the payment of city fees, taxes, etc.?

41. Would you be in favor of annexations to _____?

42. Do you think there is a need for a day care program in _____?

42a. If "YES," would you use a day care facility if one were started in _____?

43. Do you think _____ needs a building code?

44. If free informal GED classes to prepare you for taking the High School Equivalency Test were given in _____, would you attend?

Industry

45. Do you think additional employment opportunities are needed in _____?

46. Do you think salaries and wages in _____ are fair in comparison to other towns in this area?

47. If it meant no increase in taxes, would you vote for revenue bonds to acquire land and construct buildings for new and existing industry?

48. Do you believe the efforts being made in _____ to gain new industry are adequate?

General

49. On which of the following do you depend most for information about local and area events and issues? (Check "YES" on only one).
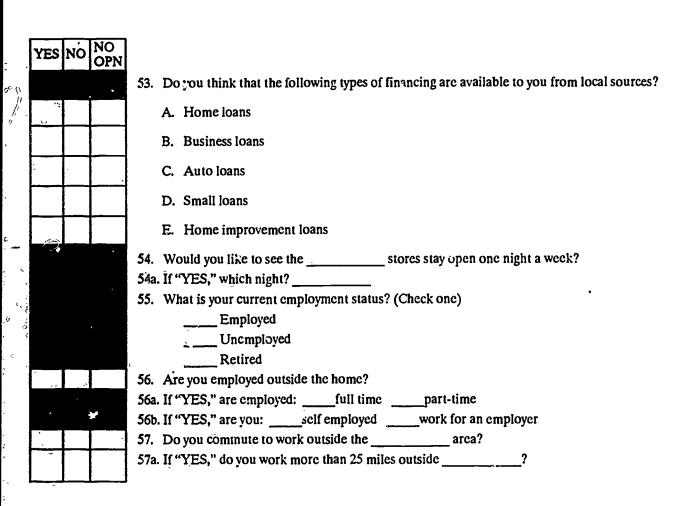
A. TV (If "YES", which station? _____)

YES	NO	NO OPN

B. Radio (If "YES," which station? _____)

C. Newspaper (If "YES," which newspaper? _____)

D. Friends and neighbors

E. Discussions with members of organizations I belong to

F. Signs, posters, billboards, etc.

50. Which of the following kinds of advertisement do you find most useful and helpful? (Check "YES" for each one you consider to be useful.)

YES	NO	NO OPN

A. TV ads of national advertisers

B. TV ads of local advertisers

C. Radio station advertising (local)

D. Local newspapers

E. Daily newspapers from metropolitan areas

F. Direct mail advertisements

G. Store displays

H. Friends and neighbors

51. What percentage of your family purchases are made in _____ ? (Check only one)

YES	NO	NO OPN

A. Less than 50%

B. 50 - 59%

C. 60 - 69%

D. 70 - 79%

E. 80 - 89%

F. 90 - 100%

OUTSIDE	IN	NEVER BUY

52. Where do you usually buy the following items?

A. Feed

B. Hardware

C. Drugs

D. Appliances

OUTSIDE	IN	NEVER BUY

E.   Adult Clothing

F.   Children's Clothing

G.   Furniture

H.   Automobiles

I.   Farm Supplies

J.   Gas and Oil Products

K.   Building Products

L.   Entertainment

M.   Jewelry

N.   Shoes

O.   Groceries

P.   Insurance

YES	NO	NO OPN

53. Do you think that the following types of financing are available to you from local sources?

A. Home loans

B. Business loans

C. Auto loans

D. Small loans

E. Home improvement loans

54. Would you like to see the _____ stores stay open one night a week?

54a. If "YES," which night? _____

55. What is your current employment status? (Check one)

_____ Employed

_____ Unemployed

_____ Retired

56. Are you employed outside the home?

56a. If "YES," are employed: _____full time _____part-time

56b. If "YES," are you: _____self employed _____work for an employer

57. Do you commute to work outside the _____ area?

57a. If "YES," do you work more than 25 miles outside _____ ___?

Blueprint for Entrepreneurship in Your School

Entrepreneur: One who organizes, manages and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise.
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

School-Based Enterprises and Student Entrepreneurs

"Have fun, learn something new, make decisions, be your own boss, earn money, create something, improve your community and learn to work with others, all while getting high school credit!" Schools that integrate entrepreneurship into their courses find students using just those phrases to describe their school experiences.

Learning how to begin and run a business provides immediate relevance to the school experience, can create additional economic activity in a community and is a life-long skill that continues to pay benefits. The school-based enterprise is a simple idea. Students research, plan, set up, operate and own economically viable small businesses in cooperation with local educational institutions. There is a classroom component to the program as well as an experiential component.

The Way-Off Broadway Delicatessen was created by a group of rural high school students from St. Pauls High School in St. Pauls, North Carolina. Serving typical New York deli fare to travelers using Interstate 95 between New York and Florida, its great success is due to two factors: It provides an unusual alternative to fast food along the interstate, and the workers are owners. "Everyone should be putting in 110%, said deli manager John Dexter. "They're going to work harder because they're working for themselves instead of for someone else." Begun as a school project, the Way-Off Broadway Deli becomes an independent cooperative this spring.

How to Begin: Getting Organized and Deciding What to Do

Communities (school board members, administrators, teachers, students, parents, business people, etc.) begin by agreeing that student learning can be enhanced if students learn how to create jobs as well as how to work for someone else. School officials identify a teacher eager to expand the regular curricula. Student participants may be selected (one school used grade point average, another ignores academic ranking and identifies students who are risk takers), or students may select the class themselves (other schools define the program as an elective). In some schools participation is restricted to juniors and seniors; others open it to all high school classes, including ninth graders.

The project can fit in existing curricula (there are now examples in classes ranging from English through Social Studies, Business, Math, Economics and Band) or be offered as a free-standing course. The only unbendable guideline is that student-created businesses, like all businesses, must serve real needs to be successful. Some enterprises are profit-making, others are intended as community service, not-for-profit endeavors. This article includes examples of both.

Fitting the enterprise to the needs of the community is critical, and this is where the community survey (see preceding article) can be very useful.

It is tempting to ignore the survey step. Students will be sure they have a wonderful idea, and be impatient to begin, unable to understand why they should "waste time" discovering what

real needs exist. This impetuosity, not confined to teenagers, contributes to the high rate of small business failures. The community survey is to identify existing and unmet community needs that student enterprises can address.

The survey provides an analysis of the community's demographics and economic base, and will bring to light possibilities that students haven't considered. For instance, many rural communities are aging. A large proportion of the population is over 60, and the need for services to the elderly is significant. Rural communities often have financial difficulty providing such services. A school-based enterprise could help fill those needs, and service businesses are among the simplest (and least costly) to start.

Students in Harding County, South Dakota discovered, through their community surveys, that there was a great need for people to do odd jobs: painting, cleaning and putting on storm windows, for instance. They began an employment service through their social studies class. They circulated applications to all the students; negotiated an arrangement with the school secretary to take messages; developed a data base to match requests with student talent; and publicized the program through the local paper, radio station and with posters in the churches and at other gathering places around town. They charge student workers five percent of the first day's wage and a smaller percentage for repeat business. Students learn organizing skills, workers earn money and older people in the community see them and the school as a source of help rather than annoyance. Community pride has blossomed as the

appearance of homes has improved. "I don't know what I'd do without my helper from school," said one grey-haired resident from her porch. "Before my husband died we were so proud of our house and yard and I just can't keep it up myself, the heavy lifting you know. We talk, too, just after he's done, and sometimes share some cookies. I just makes my day when I know he's coming."

The community study provides a list of possibilities for student businesses. Feasible alternatives that arise can be prioritized, with such student developed criteria as:
- fit to community,
- fit to student operation and interest, and
- ability to exist as an independent enterprise, etc.

Business Plans: Deciding How to Do It

The next step is a student-developed business plan. The business plan describes the business and the reasons a lender should invest start-up money in it. When the enterprise is non-profit, the business plan outlines reasons the school should sponsor the activity. The business plan is the result of student research, ideas and creativity.

Typically, business plans include executive summaries (lenders are busy people and students need to learn to write to capture attention quickly); a description of the company, the industry and the competition; a description of the product and the production process (or the service proposed); an assessment of the market and how the product or service will be marketed; plans for management and personnel; financial data; and supporting documents or exhibits. During this same process, needed resources are targeted, including sources for venture capital. Creating a business plan brings real world learning into the curriculum. In the North Carolina experience with REAL Enterprises, the North Carolina Bankers Association found the student business plans better written than those submitted by most adult loan applicants. A sample business plan outline follows this chapter.

Student business plans provide an opportunity to involve the community in a meaningful way. Community members are willing and eager to contribute their talents and expertise to local schools in worthwhile ways, but rarely are they asked for more than token monetary contributions.

"It feels much better to be asked to talk to students about something I know, like costs of running an operation and sources of supplies, than to always just be asked to put up $25 for the yearbook."

A community-based development advisory council (DAC) can be involved from the beginning when the initiation of a new business is being discussed. Brainstorming with students about possible enterprises also involves the business leaders in positive ways with the school and in creating a more optimistic future for the community's young people. DAC members can be drawn from a list of local people who are skilled and knowledgeable about business, such as a banker, a local CPA, school administrators and others who are not simply consumers. Local lawyers can help with incorporation issues; physicians or dentists can talk about limited partnerships, sole proprietorships and personal corporations. DAC members can also provide some reality checks on unrealistic expectations.

A cafe owner, who inherited the business from her family, told a group of students, "We almost lost the place. I showed up in the morning to open up and closed up at night. I had people working for me, and didn't think I had to be there. I had no idea being the boss meant you had to work, and usually harder than everyone else."

When plans are firmer, you may wish to expand the DAC to business people familiar with the type of enterprise proposed. While it is important that those who could kill or harm the enterprise be identified—and a concerted effort to win those people over must be made—it has been our experience that having a policy that student enterprises not compete directly with existing community businesses removes most negative reaction. Because community leaders are deeply concerned about the future, they welcome increased economic activity. They are often astounded at the talent and energy of students, and begin to work hard to find ways to keep them around after high school.

"For years, our school taxes have gone to create a future we've exported. This project is a first step in turning that around."

The Harding County School is on Highway 85 next to a small gas and groceries operation in Buffalo, South Dakota. Because the district is about 50 miles square, many students board in town during the week, living with relatives or on their own and going home to ranches only on the weekend. Curt Shaw's social studies class decided that their stomachs presented a need to be filled. They conducted a simple survey of the high school, asking what kinds of foods students would like to have available for before-school breakfasts and snacks. Instead of starting a school store, Curt and his students took the list next door and shared it (and what the class was doing) with the proprietor of the gas station. She now stocks those items, has increased her profits and is a strong community supporter of the other student entrepreneurial ideas.

The decisions about which student-devised plans to support can be made by the community-based development advisory committee (DAC) with board review and final approval. It is a good idea to spread the decisions among a group of people as a way of increasing information about the project, insuring the best decisions and avoiding personality conflicts. The board of education usually retains final project approval.

Students in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, where the school is about two miles from the nearest store, reacted to the same adolescent hungers by starting a school store. They conducted a survey to decide what to stock, negotiated with the school administration, the board of education, several suppliers and the school attorney before beginning. They filed incorporation papers with the state of South Dakota. Local merchants provided encouragement and advice. All has not been smooth, however. To make the store more attractive, they covered the outside with barn wood. The State Fire Marshall determined that it didn't meet the fire code, so they began negotiating with state officials. After proposing a series of creative compromises, they sprayed the offending wood with fire retardant. The store clears roughly thirty dollars a day selling soft drinks, microwave hot items and celery, carrot sticks and salads to the students.

Operating a Business: Filling Real Needs

Student-owned and managed businesses are no different from other businesses. They need to fill real consumer needs. In northwestern South Dakota, where winters are long and hard and many people heat their homes with wood, Harding County provides an illustration of how a project can meet several needs at one time.

Last year, Ben Latham of Camp Crook, SD cut wood from his father's ranch and sold it to earn enough money for a trip to Europe. This year, he negotiated on behalf of his father with the students in his class (Ben's a senior this year) and they took over his wood-cutting business. The negotiations included the cost of the truck to haul the wood, gas and oil for the truck and the chain saws and sharpening the saws (students researched the costs of buying equipment as opposed to leasing it from Ben's dad and decided leasing was the best deal). They cut wood on weekends, stack it in trucks and bring it to town (about forty miles) and split and stack it next to the school. Orders come to the school and are filled during student free time, after classes. Keeping careful track of hours, they intend to pay every stu-

dent on the basis of how many hours he/she put in at the end of the wood season (which in South Dakota lasts until April). They all figure to make well above minimum wage and, at the same time, are providing a much appreciated service to the wood-burning citizens of the area.

Some student-operated enterprises are organized to re-invest profits in a mutual goal, rather than set up for individual gain. Profits from a commemorative football program, which included a history of the school and team and was personally autographed by the team, coaching staff and cheerleaders, were used to purchase a banner for the school gym.

The most popular TV show in Presho/Lyman, SD is written and produced by band members at Lyman High. Called The Lyman Connection, the show appears on cable TV every Friday night. A talk show format gives community members an opportunity to talk about special interests (Arbor Day, the Soil Conservation District, an upcoming local theater production) and showcases performances by members of the band and chorus. The students plow most of the profits from their show back into production costs; the remainder supports band trips.

The commercials may be the most eagerly awaited parts of the show. Written and performed by the band members, they feature local merchants who are enthusiastic about buying time on the show. One, for example, features an old, old lady in an old, old car creaking into the local mechanic's garage. The garage door closes and, when it opens, out comes a beautiful blond high school senior in a new red convertible. The garage's business has boomed.

The students drive 150 miles each Thursday after school to the nearest television studio, edit the tape all night and drive back just in time for their first class on Friday. The show airs Friday nights and videotapes of the show are the most popular rental at the local video store.

Concerns: Liability, Community Perceptions, Accountability

Liability

Liability issues are a concern for school boards and administrators. The superintendents we consulted suggest that as a school-sanctioned activity (with a board resolution to that effect), the projects are covered under the school's existing insurance policies. You may want to raise the issue with your school attorney.

Accountability

Parents, community members and teachers may ask, "How can we be sure the students are really learning?" There are two ways. The first is to have the teacher(s) analyze the basic skills or competencies for which they are regularly responsible and make plans to be sure they are covered and evaluated as the projects proceed. (A full discussion of how that is done can be found in the article, "Blueprint for Course Design," that follows this one.)

The second way to monitor student learning is even more compelling. It comes from the students themselves as they enthusiastically show and tell the adults with whom they interact how much they are learning.

A group of Harding County, SD students are preparing a directory of all the small businesses in the County. They report, "You can get anything you need, right here!" They are making the directory available free, as a public service, and have learned so much about starting small businesses that they are working as consultants to adult community members. For instance, Marc, a local 23-year old, wants to start a health club. The students have conducted two rounds of surveys for him to satisfy the demands of the SBA and considered (and declined) an opportunity to become silent partners in the operation. (They thought his plans were too ambitious, based on what they knew of him and their data.)

Another community member is being urged by the students to start a cleaning business. They have discovered the need, are willing to buy the equipment and lease it to her, and several of the students will work for her while they are going to school. The Harding County students are (collectively) members of the chamber of commerce, attend meetings and serve on standing chamber committees.

Parents report that conversations at home have moved from the usual—"How was school?" "Fine." "What did you do?" "Nothing"—to excited students, bursting with new information, who monopolize conversations at home on issues such as the social boundaries in the community, the county system for licensing and permits, the history and settlement patterns of the town, the recalcitrance of the fire marshall, the problems of cash-flow and the surprising number of existing businesses in the county.

"This is real learning," said one red-headed senior. "This is how it is in the real world. We're so much better at working together and I appreciate some people I never had time for before. I'm just sorry more of my classes weren't like this one. It's sometimes confusing, but always interesting."

Community Perceptions

Will community members think the students are goofing off when they are out of school, collecting information or doing research? Possibly, at the beginning. Community meetings and articles in the local paper, on the radio and in newsletters can eliminate some misunderstandings. The office secretaries should expect some calls as community members react to the sight of students outside during school time. A simple explanation that it's a school project and personal experience with the earnestness and seriousness of the students will quickly clear up matters. And again, a school board policy endorsing the project is a big help.

Belle Fourche students are responsible for a twice-a-week radio show on the local commercial station. The show began as the usual reading of announcements, but the students lost patience with that. "We didn't want a radio show that just was a talking head.

We wanted to really use the medium and create a theater of the mind." They take pains to present an audio experience that is greatly anticipated by the listeners as a way to keep up with what's happening with their school and community. The radio show is a branch of the corporation created by the Belle Fourche students, called THIS, Limited. The radio work is HEAR THIS; other subsidiaries include EAT THIS, a refreshment stand; WEAR THIS, a T-shirt printing business on the drawing boards; and WATCH THIS, a dinner theater for which they prepared cost estimates, planned and prepared the menu, decorated and managed the house and produced a female version of "The Odd Couple" for a three-day run.

Outcomes: What if the Business Fails?

A not uncommon concern is, "What if the student business fails?" Statistics on small business failure are familiar and gloomy. What is not so well known is that most of those failures are attributable to poor planning and the lack of a business plan. Careful attention to teaching students how to plan for their own businesses creates skills that will serve them wherever, whenever, and if ever, they decide that working for themselves is what they want. If, after all the careful planning and work, a student-owned business fails, that is a lesson to be learned as well. The school district and board of education are generally protected from financial consequences of a business failure.

The emotional and psychological consequences for the students are also part of the risk required for success in the free enterprise system. An entrepreneur is defined as "one who organizes, manages and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise." There is risk involved. The business owners we've involved in the program appreciate that students are aware of and willing to assume risks. They say that that's the exchange for the potential to make a profit. We think the approach outlined here minimizes that risk because of the careful attention given to well-researched business plans. While all risk can't be avoided, careful guidance can lessen the potential failures. The point of the program is student knowledge, and when inter-

preted by a talented teacher, failure too can be a learning opportunity.

The Belle Fourche Dinner Theater, for example, played to about half the crowd they had planned for because the students did not sell the tickets they had assumed responsibility for. Rather they counted on sales at the door that didn't materialize. This left them with left-over food. The prime beef was sold easily to faculty and parents at cost. The lettuce, carrots and other perishable salad fixings presented a larger problem. They made individual salads and sold them in the school store, marketed raw vegetables to the wrestling and basketball teams after practice, and took a loss on the rest. The next production will have built on the great word of mouth recommendations from the audience that attended this one, and more publicity. In the future, the students plan to invest more time and effort in advance ticket sales.

It is important and relatively simple to build a high level of accountability into the project. Students can report constantly to the community, to boards of directors of local civic organizations, the PTA, teacher organizations, etc., and find opportunities to talk about what they're doing. At the same time, an information campaign can be initiated in the community. Periodic press releases with pictures showing the business in progress can be given to local media. If there is no local media, posters could be prepared and written by students and distributed at local points of interest, a community newsletter could be developed and distributed or perhaps a school newsletter could be distributed more widely to the community.

Ultimately, the best nurturing comes from those adult supervisors willing to allow the students to make decisions and implement them. Technical assistance from local resource people as well as external sources may be needed, and the ability to identify sources and to ask for that assistance can be an important learning project. One dedicated teacher, however, is key. Our experience is that unless a school has a teacher turned-on and fired-up about the idea, it won't work. Delay your plans until you find a committed teacher. You may, however, encourage lukewarm interest by arrang-

ing a site visit to a successful project, or arrange to have some involved, experienced teachers and students come talk to your faculty/community. The student-to-student and teacher-to-teacher exchange is a powerful motivator. There are also outside experts from McREL and other organizations who can speak to your faculty/community.

Some administrators and boards wonder, "What if we get this project up and running and the teacher leaves?" Well, either another teacher on the faculty will take it over, or you will hire someone who agrees to continue it (that is Chuck Maxon's solution in Harding County. He says "The community won't let me drop the program."), or you stop the program. The students who have been involved will have profited, and the school has no large investment in materials or equipment.

Money: Costs to the School and Start-up Capital

Let's talk, for a moment, about costs. The strength and apparent weakness of the program is that there is no packaged curriculum. Therefore, the project has no start-up costs and no unexpected costs later. Class time and teacher time come already budgeted for, students are not reimbursed for their time, and there are no special materials or equipment to purchase. The project requires an attitude shift as much as anything, and the activities come from each individual, unique situation: the blend of community, teacher and students. Some teachers will relish the opportunity to be flexible and creative; others will be frustrated at the thought.

There are ways to support teachers. They include courses in community development at colleges and universities (one created especially for this project is described in the article on studying the community and will be team taught by the South Dakota teachers involved with McREL). Short courses and consultation are often offered by extension services and economic development centers. In-service sessions with teachers and students who are already doing projects are possible to arrange, and videotapes and print material are available from McREL and others.

While costs to the district are minimal, there may be some costs associated with the businesses the students wish to start. When students have identified market niches through community survey research, decided on goods or services that are needed that they could produce, prepared business plans and had them reviewed by development advisory committees and approved by the board of education, it is time to secure financing for their ventures.

The quality of the business plan will determine how well it will attract financing. Of course, waiting for capital to fund the business may mean a very long wait. At the outset, it is wise to identify stages within the business plan and to target financial resources needed for each stage. This will enable a sequence of financing that can add to the strength of the enterprise and may be easier to obtain in smaller communities.

Funds are available from a number of sources. The district itself, in rare cases, may wish to provide start-up capital. Stage legislation governing spending by school districts may need to be reviewed. In fact, if this is an inhibiting factor, an effort on the part of several districts interested in this approach to community development may need to actively lobby for change. On the other hand, state dollars may be available, as several states have special funding packages available for rural communities.

It is important to begin with the local community. Close ties to investors will enhance the opportunities for success. Some local Chambers of Commerce have economic development programs that include incentives for new businesses. The local advisory board may be of considerable help in developing sources for risk capital. A local development corporation may need to be developed to handle financing. Grants could also be written through Chapter 2, Carl Perkins or Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds. It is important that, even though the business is owned and operated by young people, it be subject to the rigors of the marketplace faced by any other business. This way students will learn the most and be best prepared to survive in the real world.

There is also the possibility of developing a partnership with an existing local business. In this case, it may be in the best interest to invest in a business

that offers some type of support service that previously had to be sought elsewhere. Businesses developed as school-based businesses could be prime supporters of new businesses. In fact, that may be something that could be specified in the business plan. Another good source for funding is those individuals in the community who are already providing financial support in the form of scholarships. A good business plan should be fundable from the usual sources; however, donations may be in order, especially if funding sources are difficult to access.

Of course, local banks and other sources of commercial capital should be contacted. The most difficult obstacle to overcome is lack of collateral. School districts may not wish to encumber property, and students generally do not have sufficient collateral to insure a business loan. However, if the business is such that signed contracts for services can be obtained in advance, those contracts can act as collateral.

The Small Business Administration has a guaranteed loan program, FASTRACK, for just these kind of student owned and operated businesses. The FASTRACK process is itself an education in securing government loans. The fact is, when seeking capital for starting a business, small amounts are often more difficult to obtain than large amounts.. For that reason, it may make some sense for an intermediate service agency to acquire larger funds which can then be distributed to local school districts engaging in the establishment of school-based enterprises. Establishing an economic development mill levy might also provide a source of risk capital on a local level.

Aaron Amber of Lyman, SD began his own business last summer. Lyman opened a new golf course and Aaron got the first loan from the SBA's FASTRACK program for students and now owns and operates a driving range.

Through this process there should be several active partners seeking capital: the school system, local banks, private corporations, the federal government and the students themselves.

The Bottom Line

Finally, as the business develops, there should be in place some criteria for spinning-off the business. Some projects in Georgia ran into difficulties when the child care center that students started proved so profitable that the school refused to relinquish ownership to the students when they graduated. They responded by starting another, even more profitable one. The point is, expectations should be clear. Criteria need to be developed for who is eligible to take over the business once those students involved have graduated or at the time of spin-off. Contracts should be made with time lines included and a written plan for how and when the business will spin-off into the community. In addition, there may be a variety of legal issues to consider. All of these issues can be dealt with on an individual basis, by individual communities and boards of education.

School boards will need to develop policies involving rules for business involvement and operation. For example the following might be included in such a policy:

- All students working with the enterprise have the right to become an owner but do not have to be an owner.
- Any student working in the business must take education support classes that teach business skills.
- All owners must work in the enterprise.
- Students have several ways to become business owners, including fiscal and "sweat equity," where they earn shares by working in the business.

A time limit needs to be established for spin-off. At the same time, the first right of purchase of a business must belong to the students who founded it. Perhaps the second right of purchase should be to the adult supervisor who has been working with the students. Following the refusal by both parties, the school then can make the decision to retain the business or to sell it. It is important, however, that the school not elect to retain the business simply because of its success and refuse students the opportunity to purchase it. Clear policies will help resist that temptation, even when the business provides very

good public relations exposure or is highly successful.

In addition to specifying how the business must be sold, policies about price should be established. A formula for determining that price should be specified and agreed upon at the outset. That formula should reflect the actual investment in the business plus a reasonable level of interest or profit share.

If the ultimate purpose in developing school-based enterprises is as it should be, to provide educational opportunities for students, to enhance community development through a collaborative community/school effort and to increase opportunities for students to stay in their home communities or return to them, the school-based business must be looking to a future position as a community business. The school acts as an incubator, nurturing the business in its early stages as students learn what they need to know to "leave the nest."

Eighteen Additional Suggestions for Entrepeneurial Activities

Directories of business services available in communities and counties can be researched and produced by economics or business classes. Listings can be provided free or for a small charge, advertising can be sold.

Job services can match willing student (and community) workers with employment opportunities; students can operate the employment service as part of a business curriculum. The service can be organized as a worker-owner corporation, with shares allocated in exchange for sweat equity. Jobs might include the usual (babysitting, lawn care, cleaning, home maintanence) and such tailored services as the delivery and installation of water softener salt. The employment service may charge a small percentage of wages earned by workers placed or collect a fee from the person requesting the service, or both.

Students in family or human development classes can organize child care services for days when school is cancelled to accommodate families where both parents are employed out of the home.

Summer camps for families with two wage earners can provide a service and

an opportunity for students to learn about child development and care for students in home economics, family or health classes.

Physical education class members can provide coaching in life long recreation skills such as tennis, handball, volleyball and other individual and team sports.

Arts and Craft fairs where local citizens can display and sell goods can be an annual Saturday event that draws the community together and provides an additional source of income for talented community members, organized by the Art classes. The organizers can also arrange monthly shows in local businesses and in public places with the artist clearly identified to raise interest in the next show. A portion of the proceeds covers organizing expenses and provides a profit for the producers.

History classes can research when public and private buildings in town were constructed and who owned them then and now. Shop or Industrial Arts students can make lawn signs with this information. Buhler, Kansas had signs like this on lawns during their Centennial celebration, much to the delight of the out of town residents who returned for the day.

Some students interested in health care or social work could research and set up a child care and respite service especially for children with handicaps and their families. Students figure out how to qualify as certified care providers (perhaps by setting up their own certification program). There may be third party payments or state support available to families to pay for such services.

The music department and students might organize an instrument inventory, repair and exchange service for outgrown or underused instruments, charging a small percentage for offering the service. Other music students may investigate a booking agency for local club meetings, dances and other circumstances when music is a desired addition.

Agriculture or biology students could engage in experimental agriculture, researching and testing new crops that might improve a sagging farm economy. Microcrops, supplies for gourmet groceries or restuarants in urban areas and new uses for ancient seeds are all potentially profitable.

English students could organize a rental library for books, paperbacks, records, tapes, CDs and videotapes. Part of the service might be suggestions for reading/listening/viewing materials and brief reviews to interested patrons. In some areas, a pick-up and delivery service would add to the value of the exchange.

Students could organize and manage a bi-annual community garage sale and clean-up campaign. Student helpers could be available for minor repairs, painting, yard work and hauling. Proceeds from the garage sale could be split among the owners and school or the owners and a local charity.

Students could be trained to do energy and safety audits of private residences, encouraging or providing assistance to reduce energy use through better insulation or fuel conservation. Dollars not exported for fuel costs can then circulate in the local community.

Students in English or journalism classes could research, read and edit, as well as type or word process, papers for community members attending adult education courses. A student-run agency would guarantee timely, accurate results.

Business or economics classes might prepare a community "yellow pages" listing talents and skills people were willing to share or wanted to exchange. For instance, someone might be willing to read to a person with diminished sight, in exchange for a pan of sweet rolls or some lawn work. The journalism or English class could write descriptions and produce the document with yearly updates and follow-up stories.

Classes with expertise in developing business plans, starting new businesses and community surveys can share their expertise with community members individually as consultants, negotiating fees on an individual job basis. In Harding County, for example, the students' market research suggested there was a need for a cleaning/painting service. They investigated the purchase price for heavy cleaning and painting equipment, identified a local resident they thought would do a good job, and suggested she start the service, employ several students and lease the equipment from them.

A community theater, including student actors and technicians, could be established that used school facilities. Students in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, organized a dinner theater to increase profits and participation in their productions.

Business plans keep students realistic and focused. They also may surface additional opportunities. In Presho, for example, a student investigating the possibilities of a trash and garbage pick-up service was spurred by his business plan development to include providing garbage cans, can liners, bags and fly spray in the summer.

Ten Strategies for Making the Connection: Rural Schools and Economic Development

1. *Chamber-School Committee Membership*
   Appoint educators to Chamber of Commerce committees; appoint business people to school committees. Ask participants occasionally to report to their respective boards on what they are doing.
2. *Joint School Board-Chamber Meetings*
   Schedule regularly a joint meeting of the School Board and the Chamber of Commerce to share information relevant to economic development.
3. *Economic Surveys by School Classes*
   Ask high school classes or clubs to conduct community surveys to help determine current economic activities, trends, and projections.
4. *Career Awareness Days*
   Ask local employers to act as "mentors for a day" for high school students as a means of career exploration.
5. *Teacher-Business Exchanges*
   Sponsor a one-day "job exchange" program, asking teachers to work in businesses and business people to work in schools, Hold a follow-up discussion.
6. *Entrepreneurship Education*
   Sponsor a class in the high school on starting and operating a small business, with guest speakers from local businesses as an integral part of the instructional plan.
7. *School Facilities as Incubators*
   Make available under-utilized school facilities as small business incubators. Hire students to provide support services.
8. *School-Based Businesses*
   Initiate a program that will help students explore, start and operate businesses filling gaps in available local services.
9. *Joint Economic Development Planning*
   Ask the School Board, County Board, Town Council and Chamber of Commerce to develop a joint area economic development action plan, using the unique strengths and contributions of each partner.
10. *Public-Private Partnership for Leadership Development*
    Develop a public-private partnership for leadership development, focusing the program on developing local capacity and nurturing local resources that are critical to economic renewal.

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SAMPLE BUSINESS PLAN

This sample business plan outline is reprinted here to help organize your thoughts and to ensure you have the required information. You may wish to modify it to suit your needs but, in general, try to include all the types of information requested here. The outline describes the sections. Each section opens with a brief introduction (what the purpose of the information is, where and how to gather it, how to present it). Several questions you need to consider follow. Complete answers to the questions will sharpen your presentation and increase support for your project.

Business Plan Outline

I Executive Summary
II Table of Contents (as you see here)
III The Company, The Industry and The Competition
IV The Product and The Production Process
V The Market and Marketing The Product
VI Management and Personnel
VII Financial Data
VIII Exhibits

A. Company Financial Information Checklist

☐ Start Up Costs and Capital Requirements

☐ Pro Forma Income Statements

☐ Pro Forma Cash Flow

☐ Pro Forma Balance Sheets

☐ Break-even Analysis

☐ Historical Income Statements, Cash Flows and Balance Sheets (if available)

B. Supporting Documents

☐ Resumes of Principal Parties

☐ Personal Financial Statements (when appropriate)

☐ Market Research Information

☐ Documentation of Customer Demand (customer orders, requests for the product, letters of support, etc.)

☐ Legal Documents

Executive Summary

This section is one of the most important components of the business plan. Just like the suspenseful introductory chapter in a good mystery novel, the executive summary should arouse the curiosity of the reader and make him or her want to continue reading. In most cases, this is where the reader forms his or her first impression, so make sure this section is well written and brief.

The executive summary is an overview of the business plan. Highlight the significant points of the plan or proposal without getting bogged down with details discussed in a later section. Show realistic opportunity and demonstrate how the reader will benefit by helping you take advantage of the opportunity.

While this is the first section of the business plan, it does not have to be written first. You may discover that this section needs to be rewritten as other sections of the plan are completed. What follows is a general outline for the executive summary.

Opening Paragraph
- Briefly describe the business. Is it new or existing? Mention significant milestones, future goals, etc.
- Where will the business be located?
- How will the business be structured (sole proprietorship, partnership or sub-chapter S)?

Second Paragraph
- What product or service will be sold?
- What competitive advantages does the product have?
- Why will the customer buy it?

Third Paragraph
- Who and what is the target market?
- What is the market size and what percent will you capture?
- What will be the marketing strategy?
- Who is the competition?

Fourth Paragraph
- Who will manage the business?
- Discuss the people involved with the business; mention any previous experience in this field or related fields.
- What contributions will each make to this organization?

Fifth Paragraph
- What are the capital requirements of the venture, both immediate and in the foreseeable future?
- List the source(s) of funds (debt and equity).
- How will the funds be used?

Final Paragraph
- Summarize why you think this venture will work
- If the business plan is to be used for obtaining funding, make the actual request for capital.

The Company, The Industry and The Competition

This section calls for knowledgeable insight and a realistic assessment of the situation. The sub-section, titled "The Company," should give past, present and future information about the company. The purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader with the business and should reflect how it is positioned in relation to the rest of the industry.

"The Industry" sub-section can provide a valuable learning experience for the writer and the reader. Researching industry information and putting it in writing gives you an opportunity to realistically assess your chances for success. In many cases, this process also provides you (the businessperson) with the information needed to convince others you will succeed. After the research is completed, you should know who does well in this industry, why they do well and what your chances are of successfully competing with them.

Questions to Consider

The Company
- Give a history of the company to this point in time, if applicable
- Is this a start up or an expansion?
- When and where did the business begin?
- What type of business is it: manufacturing, wholesale, retail or service?
- What products or services does the company offer?
- Is the business seasonal?
- Is this a franchise operation?
- What milestones and significant events has the company experienced?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the company?
- What does the future hold? What new products? What new people?

The Industry
- Are there many or few suppliers? Many or few customers? Will you be at the mercy of suppliers or too dependent on just a few customers?
- Are there many or few substitutes?
- Are there significant barriers to entry in this industry?
- Is the industry cyclical with the economy?
- What are the industry trends?
- What changes are taking place in the industry? Why?
- What government regulations apply to your business?

The Competition
- Who are your nearest competitors?
- Approximately how many companies (competitors) are in the industry?
- Do the companies compete mainly in price? Service? Quality? Advertising? Locale?
- What are your competitor's strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Have any companies recently appeared or disappeared? Why?
- What have you learned from watching the competition?

The Product and The Production Process

This section simply explains the product or the service the company offers, what the product does and who uses it. Describe any unique features or advantages the product has over competitive products. Mention any patents or copyrights the company will hold, as well as any exclusive distribution rights.

Explain whether the product or service is simple and easy to provide, or something complicated that only a few people can offer. Is it something that can be easily duplicated by a competitor? Discuss any measures that can be taken to insure that any attractive, unique features cannot be simply copied and exploited.

Talk about any research and development that is being done on the product. Explain any changes currently taking place with the product and the industry. This discussion must be detailed, but don't get so caught up in the technical information that the reader is flooded by data he or she can't decipher. When writing this section, assume the reader knows nothing about your company or the industry.

Questions to Consider

The Product or Services
- What product will be sold?
- What features make it unique?
- How far has the product been developed (research stage, prototype, produced in quantity)?
- What research has been done?
- If the product is still in the research stage, what research has yet to be done?
- Is the product a durable or non-durable good?
- What new products will be developed?

Production Process
- How will the product be produced?
- Is the production process capital intensive or labor intensive?
- What materials will be used in the product?
- What will it cost to produce the product? Will this cost allow you to charge a competitive yet profitable price?
- What facilities are needed to support the manufacturing process? Will you need rail access? Loading docks?
- Will any work be sub-contracted?
- Is it feasible to have someone else manufacture the product?

The Market and Marketing the Product

There is a very important point to remember when writing a business plan. Write the plan from the readers' point of view, not your own. Anticipate their questions and answer them before they ask them. With this thought in mind, there is one very important question they will want answered: "Will anyone purchase what you have to sell?" They want to know if enough people will buy the product or service to support the business. If so, why? This section of the business plan must explain, in detail, who will purchase your product or service and why.

Taking this approach insures that the business plan is market-driven rather than product-driven. It shows that the reason this product is being produced and sold is because consumers want it! If demand is strong enough, sales will support the business and the investor or lender will get what he or she wants: a return on his or her money. Investors and lenders will not support the project unless you present realistic evidence that consumers will purchase the product.

Questions to Consider

The Market
- Who or what is your target market?
- What is the size of the target market?
- What are the geographical boundaries of your target market?
- Will your product be targeted at a specific market segment?
- In detail, describe your average customer (age, sex, income range, etc.).
- What share of the market will you have?
- What is the growth potential of the market?
- What stage of the market life cycle is the product in (introduction, growth, maturity, decline)?
- Will you be exploiting a market niche?
- Is exporting a possibility?

Marketing the Product
- How will you penetrate the market?
- What price will you charge for the product?
- How did you arrive at this price?
- How does this price compare to that of similar products?
- What will be the primary form of advertising?
- Will the advertising emphasis be print advertising, radio or TV?
- Will you use direct mail? Telemarketing?
- How will you maintain and increase market share?
- How will the product be distributed?
- Will you offer credit to your customers?
- Are you doing anything different from current industry practices? Why?

Management and Personnel

It has been said that there are three key components that dictate whether a business succeeds or fails: money, marketing and management. The factors are equally important. When these three criteria are met, the chances for success, although not guaranteed, are certainly increased. If any of these needs are not met, the chance of failure is greatly increased.

This is the approach most investors and lenders take as well. You have already shown them the market is there; the following section will provide the financial information. This is the section in which you convince the reader that YOU are the best person to take advantage of this opportunity.

When assessing the strength of the management team, a heavy emphasis is placed on past experience in the proposed area of business, or one similar in nature. There is good reason for this. The initial stages of business operation are generally the most critical in deciding the fate of the business. Errors can be costly, sometimes fatal. Experienced managers can often recognize a problem and solve it quickly or prevent it from ever occurring. It is important to demonstrate that management has the knowledge and ability to meet problems head on and to solve them.

Questions to Consider

Management
- What is the business background of management personnel?
- What is their educational background?
- Provide personal histories
- Do you have managerial experience in this or a similar business?
- Who will do what for the company?
- What will management be paid?
- What other resources will be available (lawyer, accountant, consultants, etc.)?
- How would the loss of a key member of the management team affect the business?
- Has an organizational chart been drawn up?
- Who will be the owners of the business? Give names and percentage of ownership.

Personnel
- How many full-time employees will be needed immediately? In the future?
- How many part-time employees will be needed immediately? In the future?
- What skills must they have?
- Will the size of the labor pool meet the needs of the business?

- Will they be paid hourly, receive a salary, earn commission or a combination?
- Will there be fringe benefits?
- What training will be required?
- Will seasonal employees be hired?

Financial Information

This section incorporates all of the information in the business plan. It is important to show that a product is innovative, attractive and that everyone will buy it. If you can't show you can make money selling it, no one will listen. Lenders are looking for the answer to one all important question: "What are the chances I will be paid back?"

This is a written summary of the actual financial projections included in the exhibits. It also includes any explanation of the assumptions and past data used to compile the financial projections. Although it is necessary to show that the business will make money, it is important that reasonable and realistic assumptions are used to arrive at these numbers.

Questions to Consider

- What is the current financial status of the company?
- What are the total capital requirements for the proposal?
- What percentage of the total costs will be financed through debt?

- What will the funds be used for? Give detailed information.
- What are the advantages of purchasing versus leasing (or vice versa)?
- What is the projected net income and cash flow for the first three years?
- What assumptions are these projections based on?
- What is the break-even point for the venture in the first year?
- What percentage of the costs are fixed?
- Will all the money be required immediately, or can it be drawn down in installments?
- What will be the terms of the funding?

Blueprint for Redesigning Your Classes

Community development is a new emphasis for most teachers, and we can understand if the first reaction is, "Well, it seems like a good idea, but my courses are already so full that I can't add another thing." Fortunately, you don't have to. This is not an add-on program; it gets integrated into the courses you are already teaching. This article tells how. It is drawn from the work of the most famous practitioner of the approach, Eliot Wigginton; and comes from his wonderful autobiography, *Sometimes a Shining Moment* (Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985.)

Redesigning an Existing Course: Purposes and Objectives

Begin with lists of purposes and objectives. One list might come from state mandates; your local curriculum committee may have established another. Supplementary lists will come from school goals (developing responsible citizens, etc.) and goals specific to your own priorities. These might be questions from your professional practice that you've asked and answered, questions such as: "What survival skills will students need when they get to college, not only to pass but also to wring out of that experience all that it can offer?" And "What skills, aside from those specifically outlined in a job description, would make students, college graduates or not, so valuable to a future employer that, as employees, they would be the absolute last ones to be laid off in a financial crunch?"

Without objectives and purposes, we're stumbling over mental furniture in the darkness of our assumptions.

Eliot Wigginton

Put all of the purposes and objectives on wall charts; you will see there is terrific overlap. The state mandates and curriculum committee goals tend to be different ways of approaching the same basic skills agenda. They seem to be subject specific, while the latter two lists have more to do with content than basic skills. With careful planning, almost every activity in the classroom can hit items on all four lists simultaneously. Courses then become the delivery systems for the facts/skills/concepts that fulfill the purposes of the mandates.

What is needed is intervention by a teacher who has finally fought through all the muck and come to an understanding of what that objective is and why it's there in the first place.

Eliot Wigginton

Designing a New Course

Suppose none of your existing courses seems to be the appropriate delivery system for material you think is important. Designing a new course need not be intimidating. Play from your strengths and begin with what's going to come first.

You may rewrite the facts/skills/concepts lists so they reflect an appropriate order, dictated by the material itself. Should the students learn a group of facts first and then draw a conclusion from them that becomes a working concept? Is the drawing of that conclusion a skill you want them to have? Get control over one favorite piece of material or theme and prepare to present it whole, hopefully in the service of facts, skills and concepts simultaneously.

"Now, still dealing with the same chunk of material (let's say organized labor and the rise of the labor movement), I'd make another list. This one would be a list of all the ways I can think of that material shows its presence in or manifests itself in the school and/or the community from which my students come. Is there a teacher's union? If not, why not? Is there a mill in town? Is it organized? If not, why not? There may be very good reasons. What are they? If it is organized, how and when did that happen? Are any of my students' parents members of a union? And so forth."

Determine the means you can use to take those examples that are forceful and appropriate illustrations of the material at work in the real world and use them to bring the material to life and

make it meaningful and memorable. Parents, grandparents, friends, neighbors: try to find someone who will come into your class and talk about their experiences.

Look at the text and ask to what extent the text needs to dominate the material. Look for other materials, perhaps essays and other readings that could substitute for some portion of the text, or amplify, expand or enrich the text.

I find myself sometimes being about to go from illustrations and activities to text or not using the text for certain things at all.

Eliot Wigginton

It's a process of asking different questions of the material than we have asked before that takes some getting used to. If you know the material well, and are dealing with it in manageable, bite-sized chunks, you can do most of this fairly easily and quickly. Ask yourself Dewey's questions, from *Experience and Education*, "How can I make this material stick? How can I bring it to life?" Is it repetition? Drill? Action and experience? Discussion? Is it projects and real end products? Is it a field trip?" It comes down to a search for fit. What are the most appropriate means and the most forceful means for not only teaching this material specifically but at the same time enhancing the very process of education?

You Are a Resource

One often overlooked source of help comes from our own experiences. Think seriously about your experience in high school. What things have remained with you as powerful moments of learning and when did you turn off? What did the good learning times have in common? Distill the best of your experience and incorporate that understanding into your own work.

Employ a variety of techniques, knowing that some of your students are

going to be left-brain learners and some right-brain learners. You know the value of mixing methods in the classroom and keeping things moving to avoid the deadliness of routine. It might be helpful to review Benjamin Bloom's work and the process of true cognitive learning (memory to translation to interpretation to application to analysis to synthesis to evaluation) and strive not to short circuit that process.

Finding a Project

Wigginton waits until he is several weeks into a course, becoming more and more familiar with the people and physical resources available outside and with students and their needs and interest in the class. He then begins to watch for a class-wide project, appropriate to the subject material and the students. He creates a list on the classroom wall, to which both he and the students contribute. As a class, they discuss the options and vote.

"Ideally, no matter what subject area I was teaching, the project would culminate in an end product of some sort (an exhibition, a play, a slide-tape show, an experimental model, whatever) that would provide closure and a sense of accomplishment for the class, and that an audience would see."

The end product should stand as an illustration of how the subject matter being covered in the class can be utilized, should involve the use of human and physical resources from the real world and should be broad enough in scope to allow for:
- Participation by all students in the class, either individually or in small groups (where cooperation and consensus is emphasized).
- Peer teaching, cooperative learning and small group work, so that you are free to help students through that

grueling period in the middle of any project when energy begins to flag or hurdles are met that can't be scaled alone, or when they simply don't have all the information they need to complete the task.
- Numerous approaches to the problem so that there is not just one "right" answer to the question (that only you know) but, as with magazine layout and design, enough right ways to do it so that many student ideas can be accepted and used, leading each student in the realization that "my values matter and my ideas count."
- Questions for which you do not have the answers.
- Class decision-making, and plenty of opportunities to help students organize and achieve what they want rather than what you want them to do for you.
- And, most important, the utilization of other academic disciplines, so that students can see their interdependence and the necessity of having a variety of interests and strengths and talents represented on any team.

"Ebb and flow, back and forth. Lecture and text and project and application and reflection. In what percentages? How is the time split among the various methodologies? What is the breakdown between student input and teacher control? I honestly don't know. It all depends. It will take years of working with this one course and its typical student population to be able to answer that question with anything resembling certainty. There are so many variables. At some point, however, I would figure it all out. At some point, it would all come together. I know it would."

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Learning by Example

Here are several examples of schools who improved their programs by using the community as a focus of study.

In Broken Bow, Nebraska, the public school district's decision to purchase new computer equipment for school needs proved a benefit to local businesses as well. Just about the time the school became aware that more and more students need computer skills, a number of community businesses drew the same conclusion about their employees.

Working with the school's advisory committee for community education, the school district has trained employees from several local businesses, many of which bought similar equipment and software.

At least one evening class is offered each semester, and Superintendent Don Vanderheiden estimates that 300 local employees have been trained through the program, in a community of only 4,000 people.

In Quitman, Georgia, another community of about 4,000, students in the high school did a market study to find out what services were missing in the local economy.

One result was a student-founded construction company. That company, responding to another need, built the community's first day care center which is seven years old; and students have since started two more.

Last year, some $38,000 in profits were put back into the school to enrich the school program.

But Barbara Carlson of the University of Georgia says that the business had even more important impacts in a non-monetary way. Among them: an enrollment decline has been turned back and

the incidence of teen-age pregnancy is down, since the experience of working in a day care center has made family responsibilities more real to teens.

The above are from *Making the Connection: Rural Schools and Economic Development*. Presentation to Pioneer Hi-Bred International "Search for Solutions" Conference on Education, March 15-17, 1988, Des Moines, Iowa by Milan Wall and Vicki Luther, Co-Directors, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 941 O Street, Suite 818, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Rural School-Based Enterprise Program

The purpose of the Rural School-Based Enterprise Program in North Carolina is to encourage and assist in the creation of school-based enterprises at rural high schools and community colleges. Program sponsors are the Small Business and Technology Development Center (a unit of the University of North Carolina, with offices on seven campuses) and the North Carolina REAL Enterprises (a private, non-profit organization).

The primary goals of the program are to help rural schools become effective small business incubators, to help participants develop competence in entrepreneurship and business management, to help create good new jobs through finding and exploiting untapped opportunities in the local economies, and to help foster empowerment and the capacity to be successful, productive community members.

The basic idea of the rural school-based enterprise program is simple. Rural students research, plan, set up, operate and own economically-viable small businesses in cooperation with local educational institutions. The pro-

gram contains both a classroom component (in which students take courses for academic credit in applied economics, entrepreneurship and small business ownership/management) and an experiential component (in which students develop and run their own "honest to goodness ventures").

These businesses are neither simulations, nor short term educational exercises. Rather, they are intended to be businesses that will became an on-going part of the community's economic and employment base. After starting as part of the local educational institution, these enterprises are scheduled to be spun-off by the students who founded them and operated as regular commercial entities.

Rural students, at both the secondary and post-secondary levels, are too often trapped when they leave school. They are unable to stay in the local area (because of a dearth of good jobs at home) and have nowhere to go (because of a shrinking pool of good urban jobs to which they have access). The secret is to identify and build upon the untapped economic opportunities that exist across rural North Carolina—even in the absence of good job opportunities there.

The rural school-based enterprise program was launched in 1986 with a grant from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and from UNC's Small Business and Technology Development Center. Subsequent operational funding has been provided by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and a grant application currently awaits action from the Ford Foundation.

Originally the program operated at five pilot high schools in eastern North

Carolina. After an intensive, year-long business planning process on the part of the students, teachers and other adults involved, five businesses were launched: a silk-screen printing company making T-shirts, athletic uniforms and related items, a boat rental operation, a "leisure time" activities store, a New York style delicatessen and a child care operation.

In August, 1987, five new pilot sites in Appalachian North Carolina joined the program and negotiations are underway to create one or more "adult" versions of the program in cooperation with the state's community college system.

Significant technical assistance, but only limited financial assistance, have been made available to the rural school-based enterprises started to date. For further information, contact Jonathan P. Sher, North Carolina REAL Enterprises, Route 1, Box 323K, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27514.

From *Foresight, Model Programs for Southern Economic Development*, Stuart Rosenfeld, Director of Research and Programs for the Southern Growth Policies Board reports on four schools.

Building New Businesses: Hartwell High School, Hartwell, Georgia

The conventional economic goal of schooling is to prepare youth for jobs. For a long time, that was the objective of the Hartwell County High School. The city of Hartwell is located in the northeastern part of Georgia near the southern end of a huge lake. Unfortunately, in Hartwell, as in many small communities, too few job opportunities exist for local youth—or for adult males. In 1982, about 30 percent of the jobs were in apparel industries, required little education, and generally tended to hire women. Much of the vocational training offered in the Hartwell school, while useful in the context of a national or even a state economy, was irrelevant to the local economy.

After years of stagnation, the town is in the midst of a large-scale development project, trying to build on its water resources and nearby tourist activity. The catalyst for the town's rebirth is its historic heritage. In the town's business district, 87 percent of the buildings were erected by 1902 and are eligible for the historic register. As part of this new campaign, the school and community joined forces in an unprecedented way

to make education more relevant and real and to tap into the resources of the school in the rebuilding of the local economy. The school system itself has taken on the characteristics of a business enterprise aimed at creating jobs, forming what they call a School-Based Enterprise. This not only puts the high school in the thick of the town's aggressive economic development activities, but enhances the educational programs by providing experiential learning related to local existing or potential job opportunities.

Perhaps the most important distinctions between the School-Based Enterprise and, for example, more traditional vocational education housing construction projects or junior achievement programs, are that (1) the business is created as a long-term job-creating venture; (2) the education and economic objectives are more balanced; (3) students participate in all activities and functions, such as needs assessment, economic planning, financing, and operating; and (4) it is part of the curriculum rather than an extracurricular activity.

The first enterprise the high school created was a not-for-profit corporation to run a youth-run retail store selling, among other things, local cottage industry goods. With support from the mayor and local merchants, and technical assistance from the University of Georgia's Small Business Development Center, the school is renovating a store front on the Depot Street, downtown. The SBE has a seat on the town's Depot Street Development Corporation, which involves students in the overall planning. Students are surveying the surrounding seven-county area to identify cottage industry products that can be sold, as well as other state-related commercial products. In addition to the students, the enterprise employs five full-time employees from the community to help manage and operate the store.

The second venture underway is to operate the Hartwell Railway Company, the second-oldest existing business in the city, as a tourist excursion train running along the lake. The railroad was owned by a retiree from Oklahoma who bought it but then decided that it was too large an operation for him to manage practically. With the help of the Georgia

Building Authority, the SBE was able to acquire the steam engine and by borrowing the community's revolving Urban Development Action grant funds, it bought the necessary equipment. Students eventually will be involved in almost all phases of the railroad, including ticketing, office work, track maintenance, and running the gift shop. To begin operations, though, the students have already constructed a turntable to reverse the direction of the steam engine. This not-for-profit passenger business will be run in tandem with a local for-profit freight corporation; and, if the railroad shows a profit after five years, 50 percent of its stock will be turned over to the non-profit SBE.

The projects are coordinated and managed by two vocational education teachers from the high school, one currently assigned to the store and one to the railroad. The SBE is negotiating with the school for academic credit.

Organization and Funding

The SBE is set up independently of the school system and the community development organization, but there are formal linkages. The school board has a permanent place on the REAL Enterprises board and REAL Enterprises has a seat on the Depot Street Development Board.

For more information, contact Dr. Paul Delargy, Institute for Community and Area Development, 300 Old College Building, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

The School the Students Built: Byng High School, Byng, Oklahoma

The Byng school district is unique. Spread over 72 acres, the district uses some 48 separate buildings for the three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The students themselves, with the support and cooperation of local construction companies and trade unions, built 40 of the buildings, including the cafeteria, theater, gym, library, and separate facilities for many of their vocational education programs. In the opinion of the Department of Education consultant who visited the school, "they have a $250,000 gym, an absolutely beautiful masterpiece of construction and architecture, and an auditorium that would be the envy of a large metropolitan school, all done chiefly by student labor." Plaques in the

buildings bear the names of the students who helped construct them rather than the names of donors or local celebrities which usually decorate the halls of public buildings. This unusual school represents not just student labor, but the cooperation between school administrators, vocational educators, and community that permeates the town on all education-related matters.

The school is located in the town of Byng (population 833) which is about six miles from Ada (population 15,902) in central Oklahoma. The district serves an area with a population of 5,400. About 50 percent of the population are Native American and 6 percent are black. More than two out of five of the 1,783 students enrolled in the school district are from low-income families. Byng is one of the poorest school districts in the state in terms of property wealth per capita.

Despite the lack of economic advantages, the school's accomplishments are nothing short of remarkable. In 1984 the school was selected as a school of excellence by the U.S. Department of Education's Secondary School Recognition Program. More than two-thirds of the graduates go on to post-secondary education—45 percent to four-year schools, ten percent to the military and the other third found either full time (22 percent) or part-time (11 percent) employment. The average daily student attendance rate was 94 percent and the teacher attendance rate was 97 percent. The average score for students taking the American College Testing Program (ACT) tests was well above both the state and national averages.

Although the classroom methods and disciplined environment in the school are quite traditional, the atmosphere is far from ordinary. Student participation in the operation of the school is based not on the typical student council model, but on the knowledge that they have real voices in the administration of the school.

The local economy is not as strong as it once was, and Native Americ..s in particular have trouble finding good jobs. Employment in the area's major industries, oil and gas, has fallen off in recent years. The town is not only small, but not located on any major interstate or U.S. highway, and is not in a particularly good position to attract new

business growth. Many students who are able to find part-time jobs work to supplement family income. Even this added demand on students' time has been turned into an advantage because it serves to cement good school-community-business relationships.

Even though a large number of students work part-time, participation in extracurricular activities is extremely high. About 95 percent of students are involved in at least one of the school organizations, which include the Future Homemakers of America, Future Business Leaders of America and Future Farmers of America as well as Mu Alpha Theta (a math and science club) and the Young Engineers Society. Participation extends beyond the school property to the community as well. Students are active in local affairs usually reserved for adults, such as Rotary, Red Cross, Community Theater, and volunteer fire department, and hold seats on the parent advisory boards for Title IV and the Johnson-O'Malley Act (Indian Education).

Despite the range of incomes and classes in the community, the school is unusually free of cliquishness or class-related groupings. Unlike many larger schools, students are not distinguished by their programs of study; one characteristic that students and staff alike note is that the students in the vocational and academic curricula mingle freely, both in and out of class. All students are encouraged to take both academic and vocational courses. The district superintendent's report says, "We like the mix of vocational educational programs in this school, a the mix of students who take both." In fact, the vocational education program attracts some of the strongest academic students, who intend to go on to college but want a skill so they can help support themselves in college.

What makes this school so successful? It seems to have capitalized on what often obstructs good education in rural areas: size and isolation. Because the school is small, the students and faculty have formed a close-knit relatio' ship that has existed over many years. Also, in this small school system, it is clear that every student is needed and able to contribute. This helps break down class distinctions. Further, the decision-making process is clearly cooperative

and participatory rather than top-down. The cooperative environment reaches into the community, where students, parents, and employers work together toward common community and economic goals. The school board is representative of the wide range of economic opportunities in the community, and includes, for example, a repair person, dairy worker, bank executive and laborer.

For more information contact Mr. Marvin Stokes, Superintendent, Route 3, Ada, Oklahoma 74820.

"Service Plus": Shelbyville High School, Shelbyville, Tennessee

Shelbyville (population, 13,530) is an industrial community tucked away in the heart of beautiful horse farm country, sometimes referred to as "the Walking Horse capital of the world." The manufacturing base of the county stands in sharp contrast to the tourism industry attracted by the horse farms. Among the area's largest employers are American Can Company, Empire Pencil, Stanley Tools, Eaton Transmissions, and Jostin School Equipment. Shelbyville is the largest town in the county, with about 13,500 people. Sixty miles south of Nashville and twenty miles from Interstate 24, the county is in a good position to reach markets quickly anywhere in the nation.

Bedford county, which is primarily rural (52 percent), has one comprehensive high school, one area vocational school, and one middle school to serve its teenage youth. The schools have never been particularly strong and educational levels are correspondingly low. As of 1980, fewer than half the county's adults had finished high school and fewer than one out of 13 had completed college. Per pupil expenditures in 1983 were about $1,400, which was only 78 percent of the Tennessee average and 47 percent of the national average.

In the past, industrial employers did not have any great need for high levels of education; manufacturing jobs in the nondurable goods industries that were concentrated in the rural South were not highly skilled. Moreover, many of the local plants are branches of national corporations, which tend to promote from within the corporation to management slots rather than hiring local people. But with the state's desire to

promote technology and improve education, and with Governor Lamar Alexander figuring so prominently in the national education reforms, the business community has become increasingly aware of the importance of education to both productivity and to the quality of life. Both—productivity and quality of life—affect Shelbyville's economic climate.

One of the area's largest employers, America Can Company, was particularly concerned about the quality of education in the vicinity of its plant and was willing to make a major investment in the community and in its schools. The rationale was stated succinctly by the company's vice president, Sal Guidice: "For years, corporate America has given millions of dollars of support to our nation's colleges and universities. Such support has been and continues to be good business. Why? Because these colleges and universities are where we look for our future business leaders. But where do all these bright young people come from? You guessed it, the public schools."

The American Can Company Foundation, working with local educators, set up the Bedford County Educational Development Foundation, Inc. (BCEDF), which was intended to serve three purposes. First, the new program would utilize the skills and strengths of the teaching staff to assess and improve social services in the town. Second, it would provide more extensive community experience to the teachers so they would better understand the problems in the community and become more effective classroom teachers.

Third, it would increase teachers' incomes to make the profession more attractive.

The idea for a new program was first suggested at a meeting of another local program, "Assist," which places industry people in the schools to provide special expertise. Those involved in that program came to the realization that the exchange ought to work in both directions, and that teachers also had expertise to offer the community during their summers above and beyond their role as educators. The new program, called "Service Plus," began in 1985 with a three-year grant of $125,000 from the American Can Company Foundation. In the summer of 1984, the first year of operation, 15 teachers were placed in community positions with organizations including the County Child Development Center, the Senior Citizens Center, their library, the State Department of Education, Parks and Recreation, and the Juvenile Court and Youth Services. The response has been so positive that the number of positions open for this year was increased to 21—for which more than 50 teachers applied.

An external evaluation conducted at the end of the first year concluded that the local social services had benefited immensely from the program, that the teachers had been able to contribute to improving community life, that the experience had enriched and improved teachers' abilities to understand students' problems, and that it had reduced the probabilities of teacher "burnout." The one disappointment cited in the report was that the evaluator

was unable to identify many new or innovative educational programs resulting from the investment. Thus, from the perspective of improving the quality of life in Shelbyville, the program is a success, but from the perspective of improving educational outcomes the results are inconclusive. If "Service Plus" is able to attract higher quality teachers, it will also improve the quality of education.

The question facing the community is whether this program is the most effective way to improve education. Improvements in the quality of life, unfortunately, are even more difficult to document than improvements in the quality of education. The future of the Shelbyville program depends on how highly the community eventually values this investment in its community, which is social as well as educational as compared to more direct educational investments. So far, the community seems willing to take a long-range view of the project. According to the director of the foundation, "they (the community) were pleased to see the cooperation between business, schools, and public service agencies that is taking place." And a former lieutenant and local citizen is convinced that the program "is a stake in the future for good prospective employees five or ten years down the road."

For further information contact: Larry Harkness, General Supervisor, Employee Relations, American Can Company, P. O. Box 747, Shelbyville, TN 37160.

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A School for the Year 2020

'We began this *Noteworthy* with a vision of what rural America and rural schools might look like in the year 2020. We conclude by sketching this vision more fully.

The Community as the Focus of Study

Curriculum and Instruction

One way to conceptualize this redesigned school is as a school that uses the community as the focus of study, with community being broadly defined in its complex and overlapping configurations. These configurations would include communities as places where we live, produce and purchase goods and services, or as groups of people with common values. The content will include the physical and the human dimensions of the community. The goal of our 2020 school will be to provide the student with the skills necessary for understanding and controlling the concrete environment in which he/she must function daily, and for dealing with the problems posed by it.

By restructuring the school with the community as the focus of study, a number of the current problems facing public education in general, and rural schools in particular, can be addressed. With the factory model of schooling, learning has become more and more abstract and increasingly fragmented. Textbooks and workbooks, while useful, if used exclusively, provide only a symbolic medium which is drained of vitality and meaning. To recapture the relevance of learning, we propose the evolution of a style of schooling and classroom organization that engages students far more actively with the natural and human world around them—not just in the context of science or social studies, but as fresh subject matter for artistic expression, mathematical analysis, astronomy, history, and for reading and writing.[1]

In the preceding articles we have presented some exciting examples of how creative teachers are incorporating the world around them in learning activities related to entrepreneurship and economic development. Similar approaches could be taken across the curriculum, giving it new meaning and new vitality. R. W. Colton, in *The Science Program In Small Rural Secondary Schools* asserts, "If science is learning facts from a book and carrying out more or less complicated 'experiments' to demonstrate something that is already well-known to the teachers, and perhaps to the students, if science is always a distillation of reality and never the real thing itself, and if scientific disciplines are specialized, distinct areas of knowledge unallied and unalloyed with the other subject areas, then the rural school is at a serious disadvantage. If, on the other hand," Colton adds, "...we look upon science as an exploration of our surroundings, as a method of finding out about things, and as something that, through the medium of technology, has a profound effect on all our lives, then the rural school is at an advantage."[2] The Foxfire program of Rabun Gap, Georgia is an excellent example of how this approach can be implemented in the arts, the language arts and the social sciences.

Shifting the focus of study from abstract artifacts to the real world, a shift which rural schools, because of size and logistics, can accomplish much more easily than large schools, does much to eliminate the problems of limited resources—a major stumbling block in small schools achieving the highest standard of excellence. Engaging students in learning from the real world builds on the rural tradition of "learning by doing"; it is real learning which comes from doing real work.

Learning is Not Linear

The existing curriculum is linear. It starts with certain basic propositions, and students pursue them through a series of developments, adding information along the way. This means that the only way in is through the first page. From then on it is inaccessible. The surface area of contact between the subject matter and the learning mind is very, very small. As good teachers know and do when working with diverse human beings in diverse contexts, you must reorganize, in your own understanding, your knowledge of the subject matter. You organize it for maximum surface area. By spreading out, by making many parts of the logically organized subject matter accessible to the already established means of knowing, by taking into account the interests and commitments of the learner, you greatly increase the rate of learning in that subject matter.[3]

Using the community as the focus of study allows content to be presented in an integrated way, maximizing the opportunities for students to become engaged in learning. An example of a cutting-edge piece of curriculum development that incorporates both the integrated and real world dimensions presented here is *Teaching About Energy, A Sourcebook for Teachers*, by David M. Armstrong and Ronald W. Colton, University of Colorado.

One of the important outcomes of our 2020 school will be to instill in the stu-

dents a continuing curiosity about the world we live in, and teach them the skills needed to feed that curiosity. What kind of information is needed to better understand what's going on? Where are the sources of that information? How does it need to be analyzed? And what does it mean?

Learning is Both Local and Global

While the basics can be learned in the local community, not all of what we need to know can be found within its immediate confines. Here, the information technologies will link our school of 2020 with neighboring communities whether they are 15 miles down Route 15 or half way around the world. Schools currently are sharing teachers and other resources through inter-active networks that range in sophistication and cost from simple computer/audio networks, which use existing telephone lines, to fiber optic two-way video. Specialists can be brought into the classroom via satellite. Computers with a modem can provide access to an unending array of data sources anywhere in the world. Isolation and insulation need no longer be a problem for rural communities. Rural schools can have the best of both worlds with access to information and resources while enjoying all the strengths and benefits of a small community.

What it Means to Teach

As we evolve into schools for the 21st century, what it means to teach will change significantly. Presiding over the classroom in the traditional manner will not work in a school that uses the community as the focus of study. David Hawkins talks about the need to "unpack" the curriculum in order to increase the available surface area between the learner and the stuff to be learned, the world around him or her. And, while professional mathematicians, physicists, biologists and social scientists have a contribution to make in accomplishing this unpacking, the real task has to be done by creative teacher-researchers. Teachers who continue to seek to understand what goes on in the heads of their students will find where the connections can be made to real

learning opportunities. Jeannette Veatch, in *Learning, Training and Education*, calls this "teaching by participation." We have referred earlier to Eliot Wigginton's *Sometimes A Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience*, as a good resource for teachers who wish to re-examine their pedagogy.

Perhaps the most difficult shift we as teachers will need to make is to give up the notion that we must know all things and, instead, be co-learners with our students. To be sure, we must continue to provide direction and structure, but knowing all the answers is neither necessary nor possible. A group of teachers working on this transition summarized their experience by saying, "We had gotten to the point where we were not only willing to confess our ignorance but were regarding this as a form of investigation into the whole topic of early learning. We were confessing the deficiencies of our own early learning, not with embarrassment but with delight...."

School Organization

Using community as the focus of study, engaging students with the natural and human world around them, will require a different organizational structure. The curriculum will no longer fit into the neat 55-minute packages required by the traditional schedule. Fortunately, we are seeing a groundswell of dissatisfaction with the way the school day is organized. Researchers such as John Goodlad and Ernest Boyer are calling for a more integrated curriculum, taught over longer blocks of time. Support for action is coming from a variety of groups, including the National School Boards Association, which is now calling for doing away with constraints imposed by the traditions of the Carnegie Unit.

The schedule of the future will be more flexible with most courses being taught in blocks of time a minimum of two hours in length. With electronic networking and many students having computers at home, daily attendance at school may no longer be necessary. With a shift from "time-based" to "outcomes-based" measures of student achievement, meeting the schedule and being physically present in school become less important.

The boundaries of our school will be less well defined in many ways. Schools may offer day-care where some formal learning takes place. High school students may elect to be part-time students, combining learning with work. Earning a high school diploma may take either more or less than 12 years. Adults will be served by a wide variety of job related, life enrichment or leisure time activities. Adult learners will be integrated into many instructional options currently reserved only for traditional high school students.

Districts, while preserving their identity and control through local boards, will form consortia with other districts, institutions of higher education and private sector agencies to provide the various functions of schooling that cannot effectively and efficiently be provided by a single district. Higher level courses need not be duplicated by high schools if accessible via technology from community colleges or universities. Contract arrangements with higher education or the private sector for vocational education can replace expensive vocational facilities.

We have suggested a vision of school for the 21st century. Some parts of that vision we see less clearly than others. We envision a school, however, that has vitality and meaning, a school that serves as the center of a community of learners. Since communities are unique, there is no single model, no one-best system that is right for all schools. The basic principles outlined above, however, will need to be a part of each community's journey into the future. The final story presents one possible scenario.

[1] Hawkins, David: "Statement on Environmental Education," Outlook, Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, Winter 1970, Boulder, CO

[2] Colton, Ronald: *The Science Program in Small Rural Secondary Schools*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Charleston, WV, 1981

[3] Hawkins, David: "Finding the Maximum Surface Area in Education," Outlook Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, Autumn 1975, Boulder, CO

A Telescope to the Future

This is a story of what a school might be like in the year 2000. It is a preliminary sketch on the horizon that acts as a magnet to pull us into the future.

Marian Ogledorff, a member of the school board in Freiburg, North Dakota, has strong opinions about her school's response to the challenge of educating students in remote rural communities. "While we used to talk about educating our students to live in the 21st Century, now that it's here, we've finally had to wake up. It's not enough to give them the skills to make it in the nearest big city. The basic question is not how will they do in Fargo or St. Paul, but whether they can succeed wherever they choose to live—including here."

When the farm slump of the 1980's brought wrenching changes to rural communities across the Midwest, many resigned themselves to the inevitable and waited for the death knell for their towns. But in Freiburg, a group of citizens, teachers and students decided that there was something in their community that was worth fighting for—that they weren't willing to board up the stores and houses and move to the city. They decided that they had some major assets: a comfortable way of life, a real sense of community, a strong agricultural base (including products and knowledge about how to produce them), good schools and their young people.

"We figured that if these things couldn't reinforce and strengthen each other, one by one we'd lose them all. And we didn't want to do that," says Travis Mott, mayor and retired rancher. "We kept hearing people say back in 1989 that we'd moved from an industrial to a technological society. And that we should be training our kids for the 'information age'. Well, that didn't mean much to us—we'd largely been bypassed by 'industrialization'—except of course for some of our farmers who'd been using computers to run their businesses

for years. Why they even had modems hooked up to the commodities market in Chicago. Anyway, we figured we could just jump right into this new age without the 'industrial' one holding us back. We didn't realize then how much our schools had been industrialized, but that's another story. So we decided we needed to stimulate and broaden the economic base and keep what money we had in town if we were going to save the community. We started looking at trends and data and the international market place and found out right away that there was a whole lot more information available about the number of tons of kumquats grown in the world that year and the projected birth rate for the entire United States in 1990 than we could find out about North Dakota, let alone Wentworth County."

That scarcity of information led to the first bit of "real work" for students at the school. Edna Erickson, the high school English teacher, volunteered her fourth period class to find information and data that would be useful to the community's economic development. Students started by examining the local economy, sources of income and outflow. They did surveys, analyzed data, began making recommendations to the Chamber of Commerce and even started a couple of small businesses. "Some of the students discovered that there was a lot more to Freiburg than they had ever imagined," says Mrs. Erickson. "They began interviewing older residents, writing articles and getting them published in the local paper and national magazines. The next thing I knew they wanted to extend the class to 2 periods so they'd have more time to work on their projects. Soon after that we were doing away with 55 minute classes altogether and working

with blocks of time. I never would have imagined that getting the kids involved, really involved, in the community could have such an impact." Ten years later she notes that it was indeed the beginning of a revolution and the winners have been all the residents of the community.

Using the Community as a Focus of Study led to a totally different schooling process, an increased sense of pride in the community and a healthy, though not booming, economy.

Mrs. Ogledorff remembers, "One of the first things we came to grips with in 1989 was that we weren't treating our assets like assets—we didn't always value and treat with pride and respect the things we said were assets. This was especially true of our children. Although the school and our kids were always a central part of our community—certainly they provided most of the entertainment through sports and plays and so forth—it seemed like we waited for them to grow up, and then at the age of 18 they left town, rarely to be seen again. Kind of like a bottle of wine aging in the basement and then being exported without anyone getting to taste it. But when the kids started gathering data and writing reports and starting their own businesses, we realized that they could make an active contribution to the community even though they were "just kids." It sounds kind of hokey, but we passed a resolution at a school board meeting and later at a city council meeting that: "Whereas our children are one of our major assets they shall be treated like 'real people' and given all the respect, status and responsibility accorded a local treasure." Well, that single act gave us permission to allow, not expect, children to make a contribu-

tion to our community as full members, and for the community to give them all the support and love and care and wisdom that would allow them to be productive members of society. We hoped that some of them would remain in the area or come back to Freiburg, but most of all we wanted them to have real choices and then be successful here or anywhere."

"I was a first year teacher in 1990 in Freiburg," says Jennifer Stone, "and I was surprised how attitudes towards teachers began to change. It seems that if you treat the children as if they matter, then you start relating to the people who are responsible for their education as if they matter too. When they had two job openings that Spring, the School Board looked for caring committed teachers who could work with students at their individual levels and styles and who could also arouse in them the need and desire to learn. And we found that there were wonderful people already in town who could be tremendous resources and even teachers, even though they weren't certified. Over time, we've redefined what a teacher is so that now we have retired farmers guiding research project teams and students teaching each other. I've had to give up a lot of what I learned in college about *the way to teach*, and have discovered that there are lots of ways.

"A group of us adopted a philosophy that we wanted all students to know that it's within their power to accomplish whatever's needed in school and that those accomplishments would be of use to them. We wanted to encourage discovery and to mix abstract ideas with concrete examples, to combine understanding with experience—we wanted to make learning real and relevant. The Community as a Focus of Study has provided the perfect paradigm for all of this idealism. Every lesson and project begins or ends with the community and the individual student. With the younger children almost everything is done with the immediate community as the laboratory. Once they're well grounded and knowledgeable about the local level, we expand the definition of community to include the county, then the state and region and so forth. By the time they're in high school, they're ready to look at the whole world and how it relates to them and they to it."

"After a couple of years we began to get concerned that our kids might be missing out on some things just because of our remoteness. We decided that we could take our commitment to tender loving care (TLC) that was working well for us and add another dimension: technology, learning and community," says Max Shepherd, principal at Freiburg High School. "Technology seemed our best bet for a link to the rest of the world. We got computers and video disks and satellite dishes and linked up with a bunch of data bases. We even put in a recording studio and a TV studio. But I must say that if it hadn't been for our enterprising students all of that equipment might have just sat there gathering dust."

Joseph Blois is an American Indian student who drives 50 miles each way to go to school in Freiburg. He remembers those early days. "I was in grade school on the reservation, but my older brother was going to Freiburg. He loved the computers and the access that they gave him to sources of information. Bobby was trying to figure out how to use remote data bases to learn about the local area. He finally got into some Library of Congress records and information on old Indian treaties that turned into this gold mine. What happened was that when Bobby got into the files he got really interested because these treaties were about this county and the next one over. He managed to negotiate an independent study with his teachers in Social Studies and English to do all of this research and then write up a report. He found some unbelievable stuff and other kids started getting interested. It was real clear that there was no way that one guy could do all of the research, 'cause it was like a spider web—one thing led to another and to another. So anyway, they formed this team and wanted to work on the project together." Today this interdisciplinary block is called *Community and Social Justice*, and some of the students, including Joseph, are still working with Bobby's original project. Bobby is now in law school at Georgetown University and continues to act as a community colleague with the Freiburg students sending information back and forth on their computer network. Joseph is able to stay at home some days and work from his computer since he's on a

flexible schedule at school. He is a member of a study team that divides up duties and coaches each other. He has an individual educational plan (IEP) that enables him to take responsibility for his own learning within a caring environment that would notice if he were missing some important elements.

In addition to the educational impacts of the introduction of technology in Freiburg, there were some economic ones as well. When the students first gained access to computers, their link to the world was only a phone call away. What they hadn't bargained for was the cost of those phone calls. A business was born when they decided to put the computers to work to pay for themselves. A number of schools across the country were using the Community as a Focus of Study concept and students were starting small businesses and earning money in creative ways. Four of the Freiburg students decided to start an electronic bulletin board to share information about these projects, including tips for success, nightmares to avoid, etc. By charging a small subscription and per use access fee, they were able to generate income, have access to interesting and useful information and learn about the computer and information business. Today the business has grown and expanded in scope but is still school-based. Three students maintain the electronic network, two other students write a Spanish translation, and two others do a print version in Spanish and English that is circulated monthly to subscribers around the world. Several former students have developed an international data base that tracks world currencies and their values and exchange rates that is operated as a business above the old Ben Franklin on Main Street and grosses over half a million dollars a year in subscriptions.

Along with recognizing that Freiburg needed advanced technologies to access information, data and courses, some citizens advocated a human connection with the outside world. Over a period of several years, "Sister City" relationships were established with Alice Springs, Australia; Trondheim, Norway; and a neighborhood in New Orleans, Louisiana. By that time, the school had been reorganized around broad interdisciplinary courses offered in flexible blocks with individual educational plans

for every student. Students were not grouped by age exclusively, nor did they receive simple letter grades. Short term student exchanges became viable for students who could articulate what they wanted to learn and reasonable standards for measurement.

"The first time I walked down the street in Freiburg, I knew that some of these people had never seen anyone like me before," remembers Sherman Parsons, a student from New Orleans. "And that first Winter I thought I was going to freeze to death. But now when I come up for the six-week term on Human Ecology, the family I stay with has a big down coat and gloves and hat waiting for me." Sherman was always interested in biology, plants and insects, so when he heard about the chance to go to North Dakota and spend a block of time doing nothing but ecology, he thought it would be interesting and a breeze. "I thought I'd be getting out of math and English and all that stuff. But instead I learned those things without even trying while I was doing the Human Ecology block. We were studying the prairie grasslands, and after examining the inhabitants of a 9 square foot area we were doing mathematical projections and probabilities and writing reports to the US Forest Service. We all had Communications Tutors who worked with us individually just on the grammar and form, not the content, of all of our papers before they went to anyone. My tutor was and still is Mrs. Smith, who is the secretary at the grain elevator; I get together with her once or twice a week. Well, I learned just as much about writing and computing as I did about grasslands. But I'm still really into environmental things so I keep coming back here to study more. The colloquia we do with real live visiting scientists are better than you can get at the university. This summer I'm going to Kenya for a month with a meteorologist and a grasslands specialist from Colorado to examine grasslands in the national wildlife preserve as part of an AID project. And I'm getting credit for it in school too."

When Sherman goes back to New Orleans for the rest of the school year, he maintains his connections in Freiburg. "Sherman has this great voice and whenever I need him for a funky or deep baritone sound for one of our commercials, we record him from New Orleans through our satellite network," says Jolene Dickert, student and manager of *Marketing Maniacs*. "Everyone in North Dakota listens to the radio since we have such long distances to drive. And the local radio stations had the WORST advertisements. So we started a project that's turned into a profitable enterprise. We got permission from Mr. Shepherd to use the recording studio on a cost recovery basis, and we organized a sales team, a concept team and a production team to get started. We put together some demo ads and then went out and started selling our services. We were surprised how easy it was to sell ads produced by kids, but our age group was the one that a lot of advertisers were trying to appeal to so it made sense that we'd be more in tune than a bunch of middle age producers at the stations. We have some incredibly talented people at the school and we end up taping just about everyone, depending on what we and the advertisers need. We let other schools know about our project through the electronic bulletin board and it turned out that some kids in Idaho and Florida wanted to do similar projects but they didn't have a production quality recording studio. So we contract with them to do production. They sell and write and review concepts with the buyers and then fax us the storyboards and we provide the talent and production. We've gotten some great ideas from each other and the ads on the radio are a thousand times better than they used to be in this part of the country; we're also making some healthy money.

We're just starting to explore producing a weekly half-hour radio program for regional distribution. Then when we get into the national market we're looking at big time bucks. I'm having a great time in school this year!"

The citizens of Freiburg also have access to the recording studio and the computer lab at the school, as well as a number of other services, equipment, and courses. Since students are doing a lot of their learning in non-traditional ways and places, empty classrooms have been put to other uses: a health clinic, day care center, social services department, arts and crafts studio and a weight training room for men and women. The school has become the heart of the community.

"With the Community as a Focus of Study we've come to realize how good and unique our community of Freiburg is," observes Mr. Shepherd. "We also realize how delicate the balance is—that things are ever changing and that we have to remain ever watchful. We try to promote balance here: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, financial—in all areas. All of our students are getting a lot from the community because we realize that they are 'our' children and we've assumed responsibility for each and every one of them. And they give a lot back too. All of the students do Community Service—some of them teach younger kids in school, play with the toddlers in the day care program, clear walks and mow lawns for the elderly, help with the visiting Artists Series, work in businesses that donate their profits to the community. We made some good decisions back in the late 80's and our students and our town are doing better than anyone expected. We've created a learning community and we've learned that the learning never stops. And, you know, we're having a good time, too!"

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Videotape of Rural Schools and Community Development Project   Available for rent July, 1989

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