VIEWPOINTS OF NATIVE PEOPLE ON EDUCATION: PROBLEMS
AND PRIORITIES OF SCHOOLING IN CAT LAKE, ONTARIO

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Contemporary literature on Native education attributes the failure of education for Native children to the negligence of educational policy analysts to obtain grassroots understanding of Indian education from Native perspectives, and that providing successful education programs for Native students should entail an understanding of the purpose and priorities of education from the viewpoints of Native people. The premises for this study were that, first, the failure of education for Indian children was, partly, due to the failure of researchers to analyze education concepts within a framework which fully interprets Native people’s perspectives about schooling. Second, that Native people are capable of acting to improve their school system.

This study had a dual purpose. First, it was to examine how the present system of education provided for Native children in the Indian reserve of Cat Lake, Ontario, might have been inadequate in terms of the expectations of the Indians living in the reserve. Second, the study was to serve as a basis of helping community people to mobilize themselves for action on educational issues. The study documented what Native people perceived were the shortcomings as well as priorities for their school system, and proposed strategies for the improvement of schooling. The objective of the study was to collaborate with the people of Cat Lake to identify problems, and priorities for their school system and find strategies by which to act on both the problems and priorities for the improvement of the school system.

The research strategy for this study drew on participatory research, an alternative research approach to social science and educational research. The methods of investigation included document analysis, workshops, public meetings, recorded observations in the form of field notes, and semi-structured interviews involving the use of open-ended questionnaires with
fifty-eight respondents. The various sources of data and procedures employed in their analysis promoted both the verification and cross validation of the results. The researcher's position as principal of the school in Cat Lake provided deep insight into understanding, interpreting and analyzing the data for the study.

The results of the study indicated that although community people perceive schooling as an institution alien to the traditions and values of Indian people, they deem it important for their children to obtain quality education and attain standards comparable to children in the mainstream Canadian society. This study showed that community people lacked understanding of the meaning of local control and the processes involved in school governance. The study also indicated that among the factors that hinder an effective provision of quality education for Native children are, the poor general social and economic environment of the Indian reserve, and attitudes of community people towards schooling. Finally, the study highlighted community people's priorities for schooling in the reserve, and strategies they suggested for their implementation.

This study concluded that: (1) a two-way or bi-cultural approach to education, that is, children maintaining the Indian way of life, while at the same time being competent in literacy and numeracy skills, is a way of making education relevant to the Native child; (2) in order to enhance the quality of school programs for Native students, Indian schools should minimize their reliance on mainstream Canadian school curricular products and develop a new school concept which emphasizes the traditions and culture of Native people; (3) priorities for the education of Indian children should include a re-conceptualization of local control, the articulation of a new meaning and purpose of education, the development of a suitable curriculum, and the provision
of adequate support and maintenance facilities for the school system; and (4) for local control of education to be beneficial to Native students, politicians and education policy analysts should clearly redefine objectives concerning local control and the devolution of power should necessitate the empowerment of local people to maintain control under conditions of increasing and multiplying awareness of a philosophy of education that is capable of improving the social and economic lives of Native children. I have discussed the implications for policy, practice and further studies, as well as recommendations arising from the research and concluded with a summary of the study.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background of the Study

Native people around the world as well as those in Canada are calling for self determination. They are validating the relevance of their own cultures, and are reassessing education, political, economic, and social priorities within the context of modern times. The control of Native education by the Native people themselves is crucial to Native self-determination (Senese, 1991). As the National Indian Brotherhood (1980) asserts:

The possession and control of one's own educational system is vital to the development and survival of a people. If Indians in Canada are to survive as people we must develop and control our own education" (p. 5).

While Native people feel that education is fundamental to the integrity of the Indian culture, many researchers contend that there is a misplaced emphasis on the present system of education for Native children (Christie, 1988; Hampton, 1988). As Kawagley (1993) writes:

The Western educational system has made an attempt to instill a mechanistic and linear world view in indigenous cultural contexts previously guided by a typically cyclic world view (p. 1).

Accordingly, researchers such as Hampton (1988), Thies (1987), and Christie (1988) advocate a total control of Native children's education by Natives themselves. In Canada, the first expression of the desire for Indian control of Indian education was the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) document entitled Indian Control of Indian Education. The document stressed the importance of Indian people developing their own philosophy of education that would adapt Indian values to modern society (Barman, et al., 1987).

Hampton (1988) argues that in order to enhance the quality of Indian education, schooling should be on the terms set forth by the Indians themselves instead of being on the
In terms set by Anglo-Saxon principles of education. As Hampton (1988) writes:

Indian Education will not be truly Indian until we develop our own research, our own philosophies of education, our own structures, and our own methods (p. 20).

The Indian Education Paper - Phase 1 (1982), maintains that the difficulties facing band education authorities were not created by the take-over from federal agencies. Rather, deficiencies in the federal school system were not eliminated before Indian authorities assumed responsibility of Indian schools. Accordingly, Indian education authorities inherited several problems from the federal system of education, and "Indian education organizations were not supported or developed to assume functions associated with provision of quality of education" (p. 3). Thus, Native people need to identify these problems in their own terms and act on improving the schools.

Among the many problems identified by researchers as impairing the quality of Indian education are lack of theories of Indian education (Hampton, 1988), lack of development and implementation of policy and curriculum respectively (Barman, et al., 1987; Paquette, 1986b; Hampton, 1988; Indian Education Paper Phase 1, 1982). King (1987) describes the situation in which band-controlled schools find themselves in respect of policy and curriculum development and implementation as "role shock". According to King (1987):

Role shock evolves as a cumulative set of frustrations and escalating stresses. It occurs when an individual accepts a status with a feeling of assurance that he or she can provide appropriate role behaviours, only to discover that others in the social situation do not accept those role behaviours as appropriate. Further, no corrective feedback is given, no ‘successful’ models are available" (p. 44).

Thus, in most Native schools, the lack of a body of knowledge from which to derive formal policy and to communicate this policy to the practitioners of Native education hampers the quality of the schools. Paquette (1986b) notes that there seems to be a lack of policy-making
process in the Native education system. Paquette asserts that:

> a lack of this sense of how policy decisions are and ought to be taken has helped to make aboriginal education particularly troubled and uncertain education arena (p. 32).

Many researchers believe that one of the most serious problems facing Native education is the lack of school policy in most band-operated schools (Paquette, 1986b; King, 1987). Paquette (1986b) writes that "Whether at the local or area level, a policy vacuum is typically perceived to be having intolerable effects on educational delivery" (p.35). Although some schools, have developed their own policy, there is an apparent lack of implementation by teachers, most of whom are predominately non-Native, and they tend to teach the way they were themselves taught (King, 1987; Paquette, 1986b; Hampton, 1988). Because band authorities regard teachers as professional people, in most cases, teachers are left to themselves to do whatever they deem fit in their classrooms (King, 1988). Paquette (1986b) argues that in order to enhance the quality of education in Native schools, it is necessary to develop coherent programs. As Paquette writes:

> Ultimately, to be excellent, an educational program must be coherent and must be formulated on the basis of something more substantive than the sum of the uncoordinated teaching instincts of individual teachers - all the more so in a situation where most teachers are cultural and linguistic aliens" (p. 37).

Similarly, Hampton (1988) contends that programs in Indian schools fail, largely, because of a lack of an explicit strategy for Indian education. As Hampton writes:

> I believe that the limited success of programs designed to educate Indians, the prevalence of isolated research findings, and the tacit nature of Indian educational practice all point to the need of an articulated approach to Indian education. A theoretical articulation would serve to organize research, guide practice, and serve as an explicit aid to discussion and clarification (p. 22).
This study also investigated whether the lack of effective policy and strategy towards the education of Indian children was due to the failure of educational authorities to obtain a grass-root understanding of Indian education from Native people themselves. If this were the case, one could assume that it would be necessary to depend on the Native people in finding practical solutions to problems of the education of Indian children.

The problems of the relationships between Native culture, curriculum development and implementation are crucial to Native education. Hampton (1988) argues that Native control of education is meaningless unless it is linked with the control of the structures, methods, and school faculty. Similarly, Paquette (1986b) contends that, excepting a few cases, the curriculum of the Native school does not respond to the realities of the community. He asserts that most Native schools tend to follow the footsteps of public schools, "to teach provincially mandated curricula without systematic modification to recognize the cultural and linguistic milieu students come from "(p. 45). Because Native education authorities do not control the training of teachers for Native schools, and the majority of teachers of Native children are non-Native, these teachers tend to teach the way they were taught in the provincial schools.

Thus, researchers, Native and non-Native, feel that Native culture and history must form an integral part of Native education. As Bouvier (1991) writes:

All school systems, whether federally, provincially or band-controlled, must take into consideration the history, language, culture, present experience, and aspirations of aboriginal people. These elements together must form the foundation for legislation, policy, curriculum, instructional and evaluation decisions, leadership development, preservice and inservice for teachers, instructional resource decisions, and other programs and services within the entire spectrum of an educational system (p. 97).

Many researchers, therefore, advocate a balance between Native and non-Native curricula content (Douglas, 1987; Hampton, 1988; Paquette, 1986b). As Paquette (1986b) maintains:
Establishing a desirable balance between Native and non-Native curriculum content is at once one of the most elusive and most crucial questions in Native education today (p. 45).

Similarly, Douglas (1987) asserts that:

relevant education both for and about Native people is possible. The Native perspective on culture, history, and the contemporary situation can be integrated into any existing provincial curriculum (p. 181).

But Hampton (1988) sees the main problem facing Native education as lack of a theory of Native education. He maintains there is a need to build a comprehensive theory of Native education; that is, establishing a body of knowledge that can legitimately be called a theory of Native education. There has been considerable research done on the education of Native children. Yet, many researchers have felt that studies on Indian education are susceptible to explanation through Anglo-Saxon theoretical frameworks, and have excessively relied on research which analyzes hypotheses that are irrelevant to the Indian situation (Hampton, 1988; Christie, 1988). As Hampton (1988) writes:

Indeed, there are no theories of Indian education from which to derive hypotheses to test. This lack of theory compels researchers to import hypotheses from other areas or to approach Indian educational research in a piecemeal disorganized fashion (p. 21).

The absence of a theory of Indian education impedes research and practice of Indian education (Hampton, 1988). It seems education may become relevant to Native children only when researchers begin to analyze educational concepts within a framework which fully recognizes Native values within the cultural milieu.

Furthermore, education researchers have been concerned about the role and meaning in the practice of education in contemporary times. Several researchers have critiqued existing sociological theories of education (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 1991; Giroux and Simon, 1989; Giroux
and Freire, 1987; Rothstein, 1991; Willis, 1983) and have advocated a new sociology of education. Researchers believe that education should equip students with the capacity to contest and reconstruct dominant social and political patterns rather than simply conforming to them (Giroux, 1991; Apple, 1990). Giroux and Freire (1987) assert that one of the principal aims of contemporary sociology of education should be a critical pedagogy which should encourage the rebuilding of a political and instructional discussion in which patterns of historical and social analyses are connected with educational programs. As Giroux and Freire (1987) write:

[Critical pedagogy] has a practical bent in that it aims critically to appropriate, from a number of disciplines and radical traditions, insights and social practices that can be used in the service of a politics that provides theoretically useful support to teachers, parents, and others engaged in an ongoing struggle for justice and peace (p. xiii).

Accordingly, contemporary researchers view critical pedagogy as resistance of subordinate groups to dominant forms of school experience. Livingstone (1987) acknowledges the effects of critical pedagogy on the education and society of subordinate groups. As Livingstone (1987) writes:

Subsequent critical research has been more sensitive to the resistance of subordinate groups to dominant forms of school knowledge and offered suggestive schematic or illustrative analysis of how school systems, both in their relations with the wider society and their internal cultural forms, are constructed and changed through negotiations and conflicts between and within dominant and dominated groups (p. 9).

For Giroux (1991), critical pedagogy expands the notion of culture, "while breaking down barriers between 'low' and 'high' culture" (p. 62). Similarly, Giroux and Freire (1987) believe that critical pedagogy redefines schooling as a segment of a broader process of education, and, "it calls attention to the need for critical educators and others to develop a radical theory of education in which it becomes essential to examine how diverse public spheres interact in shaping the ideological and material conditions that contribute to instances of"
domination as well as struggle" (p. xii). Further, Giroux and Freire (1987) note that one of the principal aims of critical pedagogy "is to contribute to the reconstruction of a political and pedagogical discourse in which forms of historical and social critique are joined with programmatic considerations for extending the imperatives of democracy in those public and private institutions that shape the quality of human life" (p. xiii).

Accordingly, educational researchers should view involvement of community people as essential in the improvement of the education of Native children. The recognition of the shortcomings in the education of Native children by government authorities and Native people is a first step towards the improvement of education of Native children. The next step should be an understanding of problems of Native education by educational authorities and the development of cooperation between Native people and the educational authorities for the improvement of the Native schools system. Planning for effective provision of education for Native children must take into account the aims and objectives of the native people as well as public goals and aspirations.

The basis of this study, therefore, was to investigate how the present system of education provided for Native children in Indian communities might have been inadequate in terms of the expectations of the people of the Native communities. This study formed a basis for an overall direction of school policy for the Cat Lake Indian Reserve. The relevant questions that arose were: What do the Native people see as inadequacies in the educational system? What are the Native people's aspirations, purposes, and priorities towards schooling? How can educators improve specific inadequacies? What strategies should assist educators in planning for the education of Native students? This study, therefore, concerned an investigation of elements
which might contribute to or hinder schooling for Native children living in remote communities. The study drew on traditional critical pedagogy by collecting data through document analysis, participant observation, interviews, and what Thies (1987) calls "a mode of ongoing participation of Aboriginal people" (p. 8) and "a method of research-in-dialogue with communities" (p. 8). The exploratory and action oriented purpose of this study led me to believe that a paradigm based on an alternative research or participatory research (Participatory Research Network. 1982; Maguire, 1987; Hall, 1993) was the most practical orientation for this study.

Contemporary researchers should not only study Indian education from viewpoints of explanatory frameworks, hypotheses, insights, propositions and models which justify a particularly differentiated phenomenon or set of phenomena that should influence Native education, but should also attempt to put into practice what Native people perceive as meaningful education. The alternative research approach, that is, participatory research, to the study is necessary because of my concern for the development of a critical understanding of the problems regarding schooling, their structural causes and possibilities of overcoming them. As Maguire (1987) writes: "Rather than merely recording observable facts, participatory research has the explicit intention to collectively investigate reality in order to transform it" (p. 4).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate community perspectives, opinions, and attitudes about issues concerning the education of Native children living in an Indian reserve, and enhance Native people's understanding and the ability to control their own education. Specifically, this study documented the perspectives Native people in a Northwestern Ontario
Indian reserve had on education, and the information formed a basis for involving and mobilizing the community people for action on issues concerning the education of their children. In order to effectively involve and mobilize themselves for action, Native people needed to identify issues which might positively influence, or hinder the achievement of, an adequate provision of education to their children who lived in a remote community. They needed to adopt the objective of transforming the schools to suit the purpose of the Native child. Matthew (1991), in his evaluation of Native schools in British Columbia, finds that Native people perceive that one of the major problems facing Native schools is either lack of a school philosophy or that existing philosophy was not sufficient to guide school programming. In order for research to be beneficial to Native people, especially during a period of Native control of schools, researchers must actively involve the participation of Native people in problem posing and solving (Maguire, 1987). Any attempt at reforms in Native schools should involve Native people at all phases of the reform process and aim at providing what Native people want in the Native context based on ideas referring specifically to Native culture (Christie, 1988).

Progressive people in and outside the Native community of Canada are seemingly becoming impatient with studies about Native people which bear little or no significance to Native people’s needs. It is the feeling of most Native people that researchers should direct their studies towards providing both instantaneous and long term improvements in life conditions for Native people. My initial contact with Native educators about the idea of a study of Native education makes it explicit to me that any such attempt should involve Native people in the research process and aim at contributing directly to the improvement of the quality of education of Native children. Native people should, therefore, regard the value of any educational
research in terms of its contribution to making their children have appropriate control over the quality of their lives and the lives of those for whom they are immediately responsible.

Accordingly, in this study, I did not only describe and interpret community attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about educational issues facing the Native community but worked with the community people to effect a radical change. Community people determined the order of priority in which they held educational issues and sought ideas and suggestions for change. This study was to be practical and useful to community people because they sought their own ways of improving their school system. As Thies (1987) writes:

People who have experienced the problems at first hand are well placed to suggest strategies for improving education in directions they themselves deem to be important and in the interest of their children and their communities (p. 8).

Placed against this background, five categories of questions emerged. The first called for an investigation of the viewpoints an isolated Native community had on education. These included: What are the views of community people on the purpose of schooling? What do community people who live in an Indian reserve want their children to achieve from schooling? What do they perceive as an appropriate curriculum for the children of their community? The second category of questions concerns the issue of Native control of education. These include: What powers does the federal government bestow on the Native people in the control of education? What powers do the Native people in Cat Lake perceive they possess in the control of education? What are the actual structures that the community people employ in the control of education? The third category examined school-community relations: These include: What is the nature of the relationship that exists between the school and community? What is the nature of parental involvement in education? How do parents and teachers communicate?
are teachers integrated into the community? The fourth category of questions addressed the need for an examination of Native people's priorities as to what issues educational authorities should be addressing. These included: What do Native people in the Indian reserve consider as the major shortcomings of the education of Native children in Cat Lake? Which areas of Native education have priorities for action? The fifth category of questions addressed strategies to be suggested by Native people for meeting the felt needs of an educational system for remote Native communities. These included: What ought to be the curriculum, administrative, short term, and long term goals for solving the problem of schooling in the reserve? And, what should the community people and educators do to achieve these goals?

This study sought to link all five categories of questions and thereby generated knowledge about the school for Native children in the reserve; in particular, its governance, school policy and curricula processes within the Native context. An investigation of Native people's perspectives on education could provide insight into the best way to initiate reform in Native schools. Such a study was timely as researchers continue to debate the quality of the educational system in Native-controlled schools, the question of curriculum in Native schools, and the role of the schools in Native self-determination.

Assumptions of the Study

In this study, I based my research questions and methodology on certain assumptions about Native education in Canada. They were:

(1) that the problem of schooling in Native communities involved a power relationship of which researcher and participants were aware (Maguire, 1987), and that both researcher and
participants would be able to shift the power and control of decision making and decision taking into the hands of Native people;

(2) that Native people were capable of socially constructing knowledge and could adequately understand their own life situations and that participation in the investigation process could enhance their understanding (Hall, 1993; Maguire, 1987).

(3) that Native people needed empowerment for the control of schools for Native children, and the participatory research approach should contribute to social change;

(4) that researcher and Native people could contribute to knowledge creation because: "'We both know some things; neither of us knows everything. Working together, we will both know more, and we will both learn more about how to know' " (Maguire, 1987 p. 46);

(5) that when Native people acquired the necessary tools and opportunities, they should be able to critically reflect and analyze their own realities of life (Maguire, 1987);

(6) that by becoming both subjects and partners of this study, Native people would benefit from both the opportunity to learn and understand the problems of schooling in their communities, and of sharing directly in successive policy and program decision making and control of their schools;

(7) that the power of knowledge production and use to Native people should encourage them to create a more reliable crucial thought about the realities in their schools and mobilize them to solve problems of schooling in Native communities (Hall, 1975; Maguire, 1987); and,

(8) that this study would emerge as a dual purpose study; it would contribute to knowledge by documenting the viewpoints of Native people on education and at the same time operate as a stimulus for community people to act in the improvement of their schools. Consequently, the
methods I adopted in this study would, to a large extent, depend on these assumptions.

Structure of the Thesis

In consideration of the research questions and assumptions underlying this study, I have organized the remaining sections of this thesis as follows:

Chapter Two presents the review of the literature for the study. The chapter explores the history of Native education in Canada and presents descriptive overview of Native treaty rights and promises as a context for schooling in the community; interpretations of problems related to success and failure of Native education, decentralization and school improvement, and the role of culture in education. The literature review will guide the presentation and analysis of the results of this study.

Chapter Three provides a methodological context for the study. The chapter includes my personal and cultural introduction, the research design and procedures I used to gather data for the study as well as the method of data analysis for the study.

Chapter Four describes the community of Cat Lake and its school. It interprets the geographical, social and economic facts, examines different types of schools for Indian children in Canada, and it also discusses the Common Curriculum for Ontario schools.

Chapter Five discusses community people's viewpoints on the purpose of schooling.

Chapter Six deals with the control of education. It examines local jurisdiction with particular emphasis on the meaning of local control and the role of various community policy actors in education.
Chapter Seven describes school-community relations with emphasis on parental involvement and parent-teacher cooperation in education. It also deals with the orientation and integration of teachers into the community.

Chapter Eight focuses on shortcomings of schooling in the community. It presents a descriptive overview and analysis of problems related to curriculum, student discipline, attendance, and dropout, school supplies, facilities and utilities, school maintenance, and the problems of school governance.

Chapter Nine presents priorities of schooling in Cat Lake. It deals with the scope of issues related to schooling in the community; it identifies priorities, describes fundamental strategies suggested by community people to deal with the priorities, and presents specific implementation strategies recommended by community people.

Chapter Ten presents a conclusion for the study. It provides a summary for the study; it discusses findings, limitations and implications for policy and practice; it provides suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an effort to comprehend Native people's viewpoints on schooling in the Indian reserve of Cat Lake, that is, the field of this study, it is essential to generally understand the social and educational contexts in which the community is located. This chapter reviews literature relevant to the research problem. I divide the literature review into four major sections. The first part focuses on literature dealing with the history of Native education in Canada in order to outline some of its major themes as a backdrop for a more suitable conceptual framework within which to analyze schooling in Native communities; the second part reviews interpretations of success and failure of the education of Native children; the third part examines the concept of decentralization of education; and the final part deals with the role of culture in education. I use the literature review to reflect on some of the challenges now confronting students of Native communities, the leadership of the Native people, and the Natives themselves as they rethink and develop a means of making a meaningful use of tradition and culture to produce a self-sustaining contextually oriented educational system.

History of Native Education

Contemporary literature on Native education conveys a notion of previous domination and suffering (Paquette, 1986b; Hampton, 1988; Atleo, 1990). In order to better understand the concept of Native control of Native education it is important to briefly explore the history of Native education in Canada. Giroux and Freire (1987) attach great importance to historical
memory in that it explains how oppression comes about and allows room for practical action which naturally leads to confrontation of the ideological and political conditions that caused such oppression. Mallea (1989) asserts that historical and current concrete realities of social situations suggest the importance of adopting a new approach to the sociology of education. The history of Native schooling in Canada corresponds to the history of Native people (Matthew, 1991). Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, traditional Native education was in the form of oral histories, teaching ceremonies, stories, apprenticeships, responsibilities of family life, and this form of education generally prepared children for all aspects of adulthood (Barman et al, 1987; Hampton, 1988; Matthew, 1991). At this period Native people were self-sufficient, self-governing nations with existing economies, traditions and lifestyles (Matthew, 1991). However, the arrival of Europeans increasingly exposed Native communities to new forms of education, technology and different religious beliefs which seriously reduced the ability of Native communities to remain socially, economically and culturally independent (Matthew, 1991; Barman et al, 1987; Hampton, 1988; Atleo, 1990). Christian missionaries and the federal government developed a policy to annihilate Native cultures through the schooling of Native children and to assimilate Native people into the dominant society (Barman et al, 1987).

The first schools for Native children in Canada were operated by missionaries and funded by the federal government. These schools were designed by missionaries to "civilize and Christianize" (Gardner, 1986 p.15). As Matthews (1990) writes:

The History of schooling for First Nations People shows that outside forces, represented by the federal government and religious organizations unilaterally set down purposes for the schooling of First Nation people which denied the full expression of First Nation culture or recognition of their rights as aboriginal people (p. 15).
As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jesuits made the effort to provide residential schools for Native students in New France. By the mid nineteenth century, Egerton Ryerson suggested a system of boarding schools which would provide training in religion and basic skills for Native children in Upper Canada (Paquette, 1986a). The system of boarding schools, which became known as residential schools, was to be undertaken as a joint venture between government and churches of Upper Canada. The residential schools became the major pattern of education for Native children in Canada (Paquette, 1986a). The residential schools became significant for their adeptness in isolating Native children from their mother-tongue, traditions, culture, beliefs, and attitudes. As Paquette (1986a) explains the federal government’s education policy as regards residential schools:

The ethnocentric paternalism which lay at the heart of 'Indian Policy' from pre-confederation had two basic goals to protect Native people from certain potentially harmful aspects of non-Native culture to which they were seen as particularly susceptible (e.g., alcohol, the machinations of unscrupulous land speculators, and so forth), and the eventual replacement of the languages, cultures, values and beliefs of native peoples with those of their 'more advanced' Euro-Canadian neighbors (p. 28).

So, the two goals, that is, training of the Native person in religion and basic skills were reflected in the Indian Act and government made definite attempts to follow these through as dominant policy goals. Therefore, the government of Canada used education as a vehicle to assimilate Indian children.

The goals for the residential schools resulted in procedures which collectively led to cultural extermination. Residential schools were determined to do anything to transform the Indian child into a "modern, civilized" person. In the process, they "spared not the rod and spoiled the child". Writing about residential schools, Tschanz (cited in Paquette, 1986a) substantiates the intensity and tenacity with which residential schools endeavoured to exterminate
and replace the language and culture of Native children. Tschanz asserts that upon entering school, Native children who spoke no other language but their Native tongue, were inhumanly confronted by school authorities who were determined to suppress their only means of communication. Corporal punishment was most often the principal form of punishment administered to children for merely speaking their mother-tongue.

By the end of the Second World War, assimilation through education ceased to be official government policy because it became apparent to the Government of Canada that Native people would not easily abandon their cultures and be assimilated into the dominant society.

The trend of Native control of education is inextricably linked with the trend of Native self government. Native people in Canada possessed self government, as well as education long before the coming of Europeans (Cassidy and Bish, 1989). Since the advent of European occupation of Canada, Canadian governments treated Indian governments in a variety of ways. As Cassidy and Bish (1989) write:

Canada has attempted to deal with, separate, accommodate, absorb, limit, mould, and replace Indian governments, but it has never been able to fully ignore or do away with them. Today, many Indian governments are stronger than they have been in recent history, and Indian people are asserting with renewed vigour their wishes and efforts to govern themselves. Their goal is clear. It is self government in the fullest sense of the term; it is the use of government to foster their lives as they see fit (p. 3).

When, in 1876, the Canadian Parliament passed the Indian Act, the legislation that embodies all existing laws concerning the Indian people in the provinces and territories, Indian governments became susceptible to the management of their affairs by the government. The Indian Act was to acknowledge the Indian way of life and at the same time assimilate Indian governments and their people (Cassidy and Bish, 1989). However, as one could see, the Act was controversial from the onset in that to acknowledge a people’s way of life and assimilate them at the same
time were not easy bedfellows. The Canadian government introduced the concept of electing chiefs who would be responsible for carrying out government powers in the process of assimilation.

The impasse caused by the failure to acknowledge Indians' way of life and rather to continuously insist on their assimilation into mainstream Canadian way of life has, since the nineteenth century, pervaded every feature of the relationship between Indians and the government. By the close of the 1960s, there was increased evidence that the Canadian Government's policy for Indians was an abysmal failure and could degenerate into profound long term social and economic implications for the welfare of Canada. It also became evident that the educational assimilationist policy of the government was more and more isolating Native people from the dominant middle-class majority culture rather than bringing them into it. It had become obvious that Canadian Indian policy had crumbled as Native people continuously resisted all efforts to haul them into the Canadian mainstream (Paquette, 1986a).

Although the degenerate conditions of Indians became noticeable to most Canadians, no serious attention was given to the situation by the government until 1967 when Hawthorn released a report which clearly depicted the shortcomings of government policy for Native education. The report became an official document which clearly spelt out the failure of the assimilationist policy. The Hawthorn report based its main recommendations on three assumptions: first, that educators of Native children could modify the established school system to meet Native students' needs; second, that it should be possible for Native people to maintain their culture and identify themselves with it; and, finally, that Native people would continue to depend upon western economy and its technology. Accordingly, the Hawthorn report did not
advocate a radical change, but a change that would better accommodate the Native child in the existing school system. Certainly, the government of Canada needed a new policy for the Native people. More important was the reaction of Native people to the report. The crusade for Indian self government began to develop into a movement which aimed at becoming a force to reckon with within the federal system (Bish and Cassidy, 1989).

The response of the federal government to this movement was to issue a new policy on Indian affairs. The new policy, the *White Paper*, was publicized in 1969 by the then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien. One of the main themes of the *White Paper* was to abolish the appellation "status Indian" that is, those legally recognized as Indians as a result of the Indian Act. In other words, the government contemplated repeal of the *Indian Act* and from then onward disassociating itself from its unique relationship with the Indian people. Apparently, one of the relationships that the federal government may want to discontinue is its involvement in Indian education (Paquette, 1986a).

The Canadian Indian community responded instantly. Native peoples in Canada became more united than ever towards self determination. Canadian Indians, to this day, interpret self determination in terms of defending their distinct status as Native people and doing things their own way. As Cassidy and Bish (1989) write:

Self government has been asserted as a fact to be recognized, not as a path to assimilation. Self government has been defined by Indian peoples and their governments as a way of protecting the special status of Indian peoples in Canada and of affirming the independent nature of their governing authority. Self government has come to mean "doing it the Indian way" and this has led to many practical efforts by Indians to press Canadian federalism to expand its bounds to accommodate another reality, a third force, a third order of government (p. 10).
In 1969, Native opposition compelled the government to withdraw the White Paper which "advocated assimilation through Indian equality within the dominant society" (Barman et al., 1987 p. 2). In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) provided an alternate policy statement to the White Paper - *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which has become the viable Native policy statement on education. The *Indian Control of Indian Education* Paper invited Canadians to learn and share the history, customs, and cultures of the Native people. The NIB paper provided a philosophy, goals, principles, and directions emphasising Native culture. Put simply, the policy stated that Native people have the right to control the education of their children by exercising parental responsibility and local authority (NIB, 1972). The philosophical statement in the NIB policy of education stressed pride, understanding among people, and living in harmony with nature.

The question of the teaching of Native language and culture was a central issue for the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) for advocating Indian control of Indian education. As the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) paper states:

> Indian children must have the opportunity to learn their language, history and culture in the classroom. Curricula will have to be revised in federal and provincial schools to recognize the contributions which Indian people have made to Canadian history and life (p. 29).

As an essential part of conveying culture and tradition, language is the pivot on which Native people stabilize the alternatives they see available to them to educate their children (Thies, 1987). The Royal Commission on Learning (1994) found that First Nations in Ontario unanimously view the language and culture issue as a major concern. As the Royal Commission on Learning stated:
Like Franco-Ontarians, First Nations are very concerned about the survival of their cultures and languages. They fear their children are failing to develop a better sense of identity, and that curricula rarely reflect their history and culture (p. 41).

If the stated reasons for decentralization of Indian schools were to hold any credence to Indian people, community people and educators of Indian children should face the language and culture issue squarely and try to find its solutions. The approval of the NIB policy on education in February, 1973, by the Federal Government brought a turning point to Native education.

According to Atleo (1990), the NIB education policy:

represented a major ideological shift from the colonial 'White prerogative, culturally superior' mentality which guided Indian education policy from its inception, to the more egalitarian policy-making characteristics of the 1970s onward" (p. 53).

However, the meaning of Native control of education is still shrouded in ambiguity. The National Indian Brotherhood paper was seemingly contradictory in that, while advocating full control over education, the paper at the same time declared that jurisdiction remained with the federal government. The paper also compared full autonomy with a condition similar to that of a provincial school board. It should not be surprising, therefore, if one finds band operated schools functioning in many ways similar to their operation under the federal government. But many Native communities began to move towards greater control of educational programs in their school systems. Since 1973, many Native bands have taken over the control of schools on reserves. Indian people and their leaders have embarked on intensive political activity, aimed at taking control of education from federal and provincial agencies. Many bands have established cultural survival schools and have attempted to develop local curricula products. Universities across Canada have established Native teacher education programs and other post secondary programs which have produced many graduates.
It was not the intention of the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) paper that the federal government hand control of education to the Native people without preparing them for the crucial task of educational governance. The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) advocates a smooth transition in the form of training people from communities which wish to control their education locally. As the National Indian Brotherhood writes:

Training must be made available to those reserves desiring local control of education. This training must include every aspect of educational administration. It is important that Bands moving towards local control have the opportunity to prepare themselves for the move. Once the parents have control of a local school, continuing guidance during the operational phase is equally important and necessary (p. 27).

The Indian Education Paper - Phase I was presented by the Department of Indian Affairs in 1982 to support Native control of Native education. The Paper's definition of 'control' was equivocal. While the Department of Indian Affairs defined control to mean "a degree of participation" (Longboat, 1987), the NIB defined Native control to mean that Native people should make all decisions about education at the local level. These decisions would include educational finances and would involve all local education facilities, hiring of teachers, curriculum planning, administration, and evaluation. Thus, the NIB essentially defined Native control of Native education as the development of education and its administration under a local school jurisdiction. Although the Indian Education Paper - Phase I identified the same areas of Native control as the NIB, Longboat (1987) asserts that the Department of Indian Affairs definition "allowed the department to move slowly, delegating programmes of administration rather than policy development and real management and financial control" (p. 25). So it seems, therefore, that the issue may not be the definition of Native control, but the definition of the role of the Department of Indian Affairs in ensuring the delivery of Native control (Atleo, 1990).
One important aspect of NIB’s document was the emphasis it placed on jurisdiction and control at the local level. Cassidy and Bish (1989) contend that the NIB made education a fundamental matter, at a period when the move towards self determination was becoming prominent in several Indian communities. According to Cassidy and Bish (1989):

[T]he NIB’s identification in the 1970’s of jurisdiction as a critical issue was insightful. Jurisdiction on the part of governments represents the authority to control. If jurisdiction lies elsewhere, then control eventually lies elsewhere. Indian governments have increasingly experienced this fact as they have sought to gather more control at the community level (p. 10-11).

Although many band-operated schools have emerged within the past two decades they vary in their degrees of operation (Longboat, 1987). Longboat (1987) does not believe that Native control of education exists in the absolute meaning. As Longboat writes:

First Nations control of education does not exist in the purest sense. There are at present ‘degrees’ of control in which a particular First Nation may administer part or the whole of a DIAND [the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development] education activity. The deception surrounding the concept of control has been built by the federal government, which offers the pretence of free choice of control only within a carefully managed framework of possibilities (p. 26).

Similarly, in his evaluation of Native schools in British Columbia, Matthew (1991) found conflict in the exercise of power between the school management and the band council. As Matthew writes:

The absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for governance has at times resulted in complaints from the community of ‘too much politics’ surrounding school operations, distrust between school boards and staff and general vagueness in overall direction of the school" (p. 39).

Thus, Hampton (1988) asserts that local control, while a defining characteristic of Indian education, should not just be a "philosophical or political good" (p. 52). Native control of education should mean that the structures, methods, content, and faculty should be Native, and
not merely implanting Native ideas onto Anglo-saxon structures. The Nishnawbe-Aski Nation [NAN] (1991), advocating a NAN community-controlled schooling system gives a new meaning to Native education:

The overall goal is to put in place a Nishnawbe Aski-Nation community-controlled education system in First Nation communities. NAN First Nations do not see their rights and responsibilities in the education sector limited to an elementary and secondary definition of education. Rather, tradition, needs, and the wherewithal to meet our educational needs, demand that education be defined on a comprehensive basis. By a comprehensive definition of education, we mean any educational activity, course or program that will allow an individual to move forward in their life and to contribute to the well-being and growth of their community. A comprehensive definition of education would include, for example, daycare, upgrading, skills development, literacy, adult education, cultural and traditional studies, secondary and post-secondary education (p. 1-2).

Treaty Rights, Promises and Indian Education

In order to be able to determine powers government gives Native people in the education of their children, it will be necessary to discuss the actual powers that government has historically had over control of Native education in Canada before handing over the control to Native people. The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) paper acknowledged the federal government’s obligation towards Native education as specified by the various treaties and the Indian Act. As the National Indian Brotherhood writes:

The Federal Government has legal responsibility for Indian education as defined by the treaties and the Indian Act. Any transfer of jurisdiction for Indian education can only be from the Federal Government to Indian Bands. Whatever responsibility belongs to the Provinces is derived from the contracts for educational services negotiated between Band Councils, provincial school jurisdiction, and the Federal Government (p. 5).

The Canadian Constitution Act, 1982 (formerly, the BNA Act, 1867) specifies the extent of control the federal and provincial governments have over the education of Native people in Canada. Section 91(24) of the Constitution specifies that the federal government has control
over "Indians and Land Reserves for Indians" (p. 16). However, section 93 specifies that the education of each province in Canada is under the authority of the provincial government. At first glance, it does not seem clear where to draw the line between federal and provincial control of Indian education. Smith and Associates (1994) contend that in legal terms, section 91(24) and section 93 of the constitution "creates what is known as concurrent legislative competence or joint jurisdictional competence" (p. 16). As Smith and Associates (1994) write:

What this means is that the federal government can use its constitutional authority to specifically handle education but is forced to concentrate on the 'Indian' aspects of education. Similarly, each provincial government's authority over education as a result of section 93 can be used to create laws which affect Indians and Indian reserves but cannot be used to focus precisely on 'Indianness'. Simply stated, both the federal and provincial governments are empowered to pass laws relating to Indian education but cannot encroach on each other's jurisdiction (p. 16).

While Smith and Associates acknowledge that the shared obligation between federal and provincial governments in the control of education is conflicting and confusing, it is, nevertheless, explicit that in the main, the federal government is responsible for the education of Native students residing on reserves. Although constitutionally, the federal government could make laws regarding education for all Native children, the federal government concentrates on students living on reserve. Subsequently, the provincial government is responsible for Native students in the mainstream Canadian schools although the federal government pays tuition fees through Native organizations to the provincial government on behalf of students who leave their reserves to attend school outside the reserves.

Jurisdiction over the education of Indians is embedded in the various treaties signed between the federal government and Native people. The education provision of Treaty 9 (1964), to which Cat Lake belongs states:
His Majesty agrees to pay such salaries of teachers to instruct the children of said Indians, and also to provide such school buildings and educational equipment as may seem advisable to His Majesty’s government of Canada (p. 21).

In Treaty 9 it seems that the federal government’s obligation towards the education of Native children is limited only "to pay salaries to teachers and maintain school buildings and educational equipment" (Treaty 9, p. 21), and, that the federal government will provide education from kindergarten through grade 12. However, it appears that recent interpretations of treaty rights go beyond the limitations imposed in the treaties. As Smith and Associates (1994) write:

The interpretations of these Treaty rights varies depending on who is analyzing the content. Nonetheless, if one refers to case law and Supreme Court decisions on Aboriginal and treaty rights, one should expect a broad, contemporary interpretation of the treaty clauses (p. 17).

Accordingly, the federal government has the obligation of providing lifelong education for Native people. As Lancaster (1994) maintains:

A just broad and liberal reading of the provisions of the treaty would suggest that the schooling to be provided would, in today’s changed world, have to include university, college, vocational and continuing education (p. 19).

The Indian Act entrusts the responsibility for education to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). However, in Ontario, for example, the federal government has depended on the Province of Ontario to formulate standards, and curriculum, and to control teacher training and qualification for Native schools. While the province’s Ministry of Education and Training develops standards, policy and regulations for all the schools in the province, the main function of federal authorities is to ascertain funding levels for Native schools and also to maintain standards for school buildings, plants, and equipment. From the literature reviewed for this study, one can safely say that decisions made by the province’s Ministry of Education and Training as regards quality of education have not been relevant to the needs of
Native schools. Also, federal authorities do not seem to have ensured that Native schools meet the standards provided by the provincial government.

**Local Jurisdiction.** As I have already stated in preceding sections, the withdrawal of the federal government's *White Paper* in 1969 and the issuing of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) document in 1972 brought a renaissance to Native education throughout Canada. The move by Native people toward greater control of schooling in their communities, or rather the desire for the federal government to hand the control of schools over to Native people had become a common practice in the 1980s. It became obvious that most Native communities did not ask for the control of their educational system but they sooner or later had to assume some responsibility for their schools.

When the federal government handed over the control of education to local authorities, the federal authorities literally vested in the local people all decision making with respect to education. The one thing that local authorities understood was that the federal government would continue to provide the necessary funds for education. There were neither guidelines as to how to administer education funds nor how to manage the school system. *Barman, et al.* (1987) assert that while the federal government was quick in handing schools over to local people, the government neither provided the people with a definition of their role, nor a power base for the transfer to local control. The key issue vital to local control here lies in the major role that the local authorities play to ensure the maintenance of education and its complex structures through the provision of suitable curricula, general support services, and additional teaching services. A general understanding I gathered from the literature review on Native control of education in Ontario was that the decision to take control of their schools was not an
immediate result of persuasion or push by the Native people themselves. It became quite clear that the decision to seek local control was a decision which was handed down to them from the district level.

Given that the decision to seek local control was handed over from the district level, it is not surprising that band-operated schools would continue to operate under the ministry's guidelines because of lack of suitable alternatives. Despite the problems that Native education endured under the control of government authorities before the hand-over to local authorities, there is evidence that there was, certainly, some form of management which included such things as establishing priorities among all the possible goals of the school system, allocating resources to meet the goals, and organising the activities of the members of the school system to accomplish the goals more effectively. Educating children of Native origin for productive lives in contemporary times requires an administration that is capable of defining goals for education, determining what goals should take precedence over others, and apportioning the available human and financial resources to fulfil the goals, and coordinating all the components of the educational system to accomplish the goals of education in a more competent manner.

Interpretations of Success and Failure of Native Education

Many people interested in the education of Native peoples seem to communicate an idea that Native education in Canada has been a dismal failure. In a study conducted for the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training entitled, *Native Student Dropouts in Ontario Schools*, Mackay and Myles (1989) link Native students' poor performance and dropout to difficulty with English language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking in class. As they write:
Students may avoid submitting homework for fear that it will be graded poorly or even rejected outright. Several educators made a further link between this language-related behaviour and the problem of attendance. They suggest that if assignments and homework are not completed, students may give in to the temptation to skip that class in order to avoid trouble with the teachers to whom the work is due. By missing classes, they fall further behind until they have no idea what is required of them or how to complete further homework assignments. They find themselves sucked into a vortex from which the only escape is opting out (p. 21-2).

Cummins (1993) rejects the view of past researchers that students from minority groups failed in school because bilingualism caused language barriers and emotional conflicts among children. Cummins asserts that while early research reports might confirm that children from minority groups failed in school, their failure was not due to difficulties they experienced in dealing with two languages, but rather it was due to how school authorities treated these children. As Cummins (1993) writes:

However, virtually all of this early research involved minority students who were in the process of replacing their first language by the majority language, usually with strong encouragement from the school, many minority students from North America were physically punished for speaking their first language in school. Thus, these students usually failed to develop adequate literacy skills in their first language and many also experienced academic and emotional difficulty in school. This, however, was not because of bilingualism but rather because of the treatment they received in schools which essentially amounted to an assault on their personal identities (p. 16).

The most frequent theoretical explanation that past researchers attributed to the failure of the education of Native societies centred on cultural differences between Native and non-Native societies (Atleo, 1990; Ogbu, 1987; Erickson, 1987). According to these researchers, Native children failed in school because of cultural deprivation. While Atleo (1990) explains the notion of cultural deprivation in terms of what he calls "significant discontinuities" (p. 7), Hampton (1988) explains it in terms of disrespect of, and lack of recognition of Native ways of life by non-Native educators. Atleo (1990) asserts that while Native people’s culture may place
a significant value upon group goals, non-Native people, particularly, the White group may place a higher value upon individual goals. Such differences, he says, may constitute a significant discontinuity for the Native child at school. Similarly, Bowd (1977) asserts that socio-cultural factors of the Indian child impose a discontinuity between the home and the school. As Bowd writes:

The home environment of the Indian child both physically and psychologically, was considered to be deficient in fostering skills likely to assist adaptation at school. The typically non-punitive protective discipline, flexible routines for learning and the encouragement of independence and autonomy in children by Indian parents were considered contrary to the practices of the school and therefore likely to contribute to the child's 'retardation' (p. 333).

Contemporary researchers believe that historical references to differences in language, beliefs, behaviour, skin colour, and so on, which defined Native and non-Native culture may not constitute a significant discontinuity (Atleo, 1990) because such differences have become blurred. In other words, as some Native people today may only speak the language that White people speak, and behave in a way similar to Whites, and may even have a skin colour that may not be differentiated from Whites, one may assume that there may be no cultural discontinuity. However, some researchers believe that because of historical roots, Native culture is different from non-Native culture. Atleo (1990) contends that historical roots are important because basic beliefs about life are transferred from one generation to another and these beliefs which are automatically transferred "become assumptions of culture which are not usually articulated" (p. 7). Thus, even though some Native people may not experience significant discontinuities in culture, the notion that culture is rooted in the past makes Native people culturally different from non-Native people.
Hawthorn (1967) recounted that during the 1950s, because White researchers perceived a cultural superiority of White cultures over Native culture, White people did not anticipate that Native children in general could achieve success in school along the same course as White children. There was also the notion that since minority cultures were impoverished, concomitantly, minority groups were genetically inferior and they were bound to be maladapted and fail at school (Atleo, 1990). However, researchers in the 1960s dispel this notion of cultural impoverishment and minority group genetic inferiority which allegedly led to the failure of Native people at school. Hawthorn (1967), Gue (1974), Ogbu (1987), Christie (1988), Hampton (1988), and More (1986), for example, believe that failure of Native students at school is neither due to cultural impoverishment nor genetic inferiority, but rather, it is due to cultural discontinuity. In fact, the Hawthorn report (1967) asserts that Native children fail in school because the rich experiences they acquire in their own culture and language do not prepare them for the boring routines and activities of the school. The Hawthorn report states a number of problems associated with the school that cause the failure of Native education. Some of these were, the school’s concept of time and space, discrepancies in the curriculum, and, the incongruity of Native worldview to the discipline system of the school. As the report states:

It is difficult to imagine how an Indian child attending an ordinary public school could develop anything but a negative self image. First, there is nothing from his culture represented in the school or valued by it. Second, the Indian child often gains the impression that nothing he or other Indians do is right when compared to what non-Indian children are doing. Third, in both segregated and integrated schools, one of the main aims of teachers expressed with reference to Indians is to ‘to help them improve their standards of living, or their general lot, or themselves’ which is another way of saying that what they are and have now is not good enough, they must do and be other things (p. 142).
Also, Gue (1974) explains cultural discontinuity in terms of value differences. Hampton (1988) explains it in terms of what he calls "cultural genocide" (p. 72). He argues that since western education seeks to indoctrinate the Native child by substituting non-Native for Native knowledge, values, and identity, "Western education is in content and structure hostile to Native people" (p. 72). More (1986) characterizes cultural discontinuity in terms of differences in learning styles of Native children. According to More, as learning styles are culturally determined, Native children experiencing a strange learning style in school may suffer cultural discontinuity. DeFaveri (1984) supports More's (1986) argument by contrasting the Native worldview with the White worldview. DeFaveri asserts that while the Native worldview symbolizes unity with creation, the White worldview symbolizes individualism and isolationism. Thus, while the Native worldview espouses that all things are integrated and united in some way, the White worldview maintains that reality does not necessarily constitute related or connected components. Hampton (1988) sums up the differences in worldview between Native and White cultures when he writes:

At the historical level Native and non-Native look at the world from opposed positions. Not only must they contend with personal differences in viewpoint, language, and experiences; not only must they contend with cultural differences in value, understandings of human relationships, modes of communication; but they must contend with the world shattering differences between the conquered and conqueror, the exploited and the exploiter, the racist and the victim of racism. It is this historical difference of perspective that demands more than 'learning about each others culture'. It demands that we change the world (p. 82).

Accordingly, Hampton believes that the failure of Native children at school is a manifestation of resistance to non-Native domination and an assertion of Native integrity. The dilemma of the Native student, therefore, is due to the fact that teachers have not been able to combine Native and non-Native cultures in their teaching. It seems apparent that because Native and White
conceive their senses of time, space, energy and humanity in different terms, and their conceptions of epistemology, ontology, and cosmology are also different, they fail to understand each other's actions, thoughts or purpose (Hampton, 1988; Atleo, 1990).

A relevant question may arise here as to why Native students fail in school while students from other minority groups with similar handicaps as Native students succeed in school (Ogbu, 1987). Atleo (1990) views the failure of Native students from what he terms a theory of context. According to Atleo, this theory assumes that there is a connection between an individual and the society in which that individual lives. This means that individuals fail when society views them as failures. As Atleo writes:

For example, if society rejects an individual socially, politically and economically, then that individual may respond by committing suicide, behaving in unacceptable deviant ways in order to survive, or emigrating to another country if possible. On the other hand, the theory of context holds that when a society accepts an individual socially, politically and economically, then that individual may respond by behaving in socially acceptable ways (p. 10).

Ogbu (1987) distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary minorities and asserts that voluntary minorities are more successful in school than involuntary minorities. According to Ogbu, Native people are involuntary minorities in that unlike immigrants in the North American society, Native people were colonized and have not had any other choice but to live with the colonization. For example, Ogbu (1987) found that while the Buraku, a minority group in Japan fail in school in their homeland, they tend to succeed in school when they emigrate to the United States. Similarly, Mexicans born in the United States fail in school while other Mexicans who emigrate to the United States succeed in school. Accordingly, Ogbu's (1987) findings tend to support Atleo's (1990) theory of context which tends to explain the failure of Native children in school.
On the other hand, Hampton (1988) strongly believes that one can explain the failure of Native students in school in terms of the malevolence of Western education in its structure, curriculum, context and personnel. He asserts that since Western education is a political, social and cultural institution that represents and conveys Anglo-saxon values, knowledge and behaviours, the Native child is bound to fail in school. Hampton (1988) argues, for example, that the demands for higher standards is inevitably a demand for Anglo-saxon standards. According to Hampton, Anglo-saxon education "is never a call for a more adequate presentation of the knowledge of devalued minorities, creative thinking about pressing social problems, higher standards of equity and respect, or recognition of institutional racism" (p. 75). For Hampton, therefore, the lack of recognition of Native culture by non-Native people constitutes a major impediment to the success of Native students in school. As Hampton writes:

The idea that different cultures and different races may have standards just as worthy seems never to have crossed the minds of the proponents of 'higher standards'. Rather, they assume that they possess the one true standard yardstick and that any consideration of Blacks, Indians or Chicanos would simply lower standards. The challenge is ... the negotiation of multicultural yardsticks. We live in a world of many cultures, all of whom have different standards (p. 75).

So, Hampton (1988) believes that rather than simply admit failure, one must recognize the fact that White educational systems and procedures have not been competent in educating Native children who struggle against an atypical system endemic to the larger society in which they live. Until Native children stop the daily struggles of attacks on their ways of life, their identity, their intelligence, and their essential worth, they could not attain success in education.

Also, Paquette (1986a) sees the inability of Native students to measure up to their Anglo-saxon counterparts in educational achievement in terms of the way policy is formulated and implemented for Native students. He believes that the interpretation researchers give to the
quality of education of Native students is erroneous because researchers fail to acknowledge the "political 'black box' of Native education policy making" (p. 52). In other words, researchers fail to consider the effects of government educational policies on minority groups. As Paquette writes:

Minorities are expected to integrate and assimilate because it is the best thing for them and for society at large. If they fail to do so, the problem is 'inadequate learning' and the treatment is more often than not, even heavier than immersion in the values, beliefs, and languages of the majority. In such a view, minorities are powerless to change either their circumstances or the content and form of the education provided to them and this powerlessness is seen by the dominant group in society as fitting and just...If minority children fail to make the desired adjustment, into the majority language and culture, the cause is seen to lie in their failure to learn even though given the 'same educational opportunities' as their majority-culture counterparts (p. 56).

Perhaps, one can safely assume that failure of Native children in school is due to how governments define educational problems for Native children and the type of policies they formulate for their cultural displacement and assimilation. As Paquette writes of Canadian Native education policy:

Most Canadian Indian education policy, then, both formal, stated policy and the actual practices in the field were, at least the early 1970s, dominated by a problem definition based on the learning deficit model. Such educational policy was both a reflection of and the chief policy instrument for accomplishing the larger meta policy of assimilation. The residential schools were the embodiment of this policy of cultural replacement (p. 56).

Accordingly, if the residential schools, from their beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, to the middle of the twentieth century focussed exclusively on basic skills, it would seem obvious that educators of Indian children would downplay high academic achievement.

While many of the reasons for the failure of Native students may be closely related to policy and general attitudes of society towards the education of minority groups, Mackay and Myles (1989) contend that Native parents, generally, have a "lack of 'know-how' to motivate
their children" (p. 37). These authors' findings suggest that since Native parents may feel that the educational success of their children may alienate the children from them, parents do not encourage their children to attend school. Their findings cited the lack of parental support as a major cause for absenteeism and dropout of Native students. As Mackay and Myles put it:

Certain Native dropouts lacked parental support because of the multiplicity of social problems that affect their families. Educators thought that these problems including the difficulties facing single parents, family breakdowns, alcoholism, and financial problems were so pressing that such parents had little time to address the educational needs of their children (p. 37).

Although many researchers accept the failure of the education of Native children as an unfortunate heritage in Canadian society (Barman, et al., 1987), others believe that current changes taking place in Indian communities may improve education in the future (Atleo, 1990; Matthew, 1991; Hampton, 1988). According to Matthew (1991), "it is becoming apparent that First Nations schools can become a very positive force in the development of First Nations communities" (p. 28). Changes taking place in the Native communities are a part of an ongoing need for Native people around the world to achieve self determination. These changes may be significant in making Native people in Canada begin to perceive the education of their children in new terms and may begin to explore ways and means of making education more meaningful to their children.

Similarly, Hampton (1988) acknowledges in spite of the difficulties facing Native schools, recent evidence shows that Native schools are making significant progress. He cites the example of a Native tribe which has been successful in reducing the dropout rates from about 40 percent to about 3 percent. There are also undocumented examples of Native schools in British Columbia which have succeeded in lowering their dropout rates to 0 percent (Matthews, 1991).
Matthew's (1991) evaluation of Native schools in British Columbia recounts that the most pressing issues in Native education today are those concerning governance, student progress, parental involvement, administration and teaching, curriculum, and funding. As regards school governance, for example, Matthew (1991) found that parents and teachers were concerned about the absence of a school philosophy in most of the schools. Concerning student progress, Matthew's (1991) findings suggest the need for "more effective discipline policies or strategies to motivate students to engage with school activity in positive ways" (p. 40). Furthermore, many parents found their involvement in school affairs restricted by lack of effective communication between the home and the school. Matthew (1991) asserts that while community people expressed some satisfaction with teaching and administration, they felt the need to develop a cultural curriculum for the schools and the need to provide adequate funding for the training of cultural teachers.

Accordingly, this study will attempt to describe all the concerns of Native people in Cat Lake in the areas of school governance, student progress, parental involvement in school affairs, administration and teaching, curriculum, and school funding. The questions that community people, administrators, teachers, and students may pose regarding these issues form one of the bases of this study.

Decentralization and School Improvement

This section explores the concept of decentralization and school improvement in the context of band-operated schools. In this section, I discuss some elements and dimensions of decentralization and provide an analysis of organizational and political effects of decentralization.
of schools for Indian children.

Educational researchers regard decentralization in education as a necessary structural overhaul which could possibly improve education. Centralization of schools suggests a significant degree of uniformity in school practices, procedures, and salaries, notwithstanding provincial and local disparities in educational needs of students. A centralized nature of schooling usually causes dissatisfaction of parents about the educational system (Winkler, 1993). In a centralized system, the education ministry's monopoly of school functions may restrict parents from influencing the direction of their children's education. Therefore, decentralization of schools is seen by many researchers as a modern reform process in education, propelled by convictions that justify the privatization of education in the interest of freedom and equality (Lewis, 1993). While educational decentralization is a common phenomenon of educational reform throughout the world, the meaning of educational decentralization is country-specific (Winkler, 1993). Decentralization in educational systems seems to be a deliberate attempt by central governments to cede power to local or provincial governments to manage the affairs of their school systems.

An attempt to define decentralization of education may depend on the form of decentralization in question. Some researchers define decentralization in education in terms of community control of schools, where community people take responsibility for making practically, all decisions affecting the school (Elmore, 1993). Winkler (1993) considers centralized and decentralized school systems in terms of the degree of decision making authority wielded by central and local authorities respectively, as regards educational goals. As Winkler (1993) writes:
The resulting mixes of decision-making power with respect of education functions, decision-making modes, and levels of government are what lead to the description of an entire educational system as 'centralized' or 'decentralized' (p. 106).

Some researchers term decentralization as site-based management (Sergiovanni et al., 1987), or school-site management (Elmore, 1993), and others, in terms of objectives, that is, whether decentralization is organizational or political (Brown, 1990; Hannaway, 1993; Fantini and Gittell, 1973). For the purpose of this study, decentralization simply means community control.

As Fantini and Gittell (1973) write:

The concept of community control represents an effort to adjust existing systems to new circumstances and needs. It seeks a balance between public, or citizen, participation and professional roles in the policy process (p. 113).

The purposes for decentralization could be either organizational or political. The next section discusses the rationales for organization and political decentralization.

**Organizational Decentralization**

Brown (1990) contends that objectives for organizational decentralization pertain to the way power is distributed. Traditionally, organizations are created and controlled by legitimate authorities who establish the goals, frame the structure, employ and administer the employees, and attempt to ensure that the organization functions in ways that are inkeeping with their objectives (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Organizational decentralization concerns the way an organization distributes authority to make decisions (Brown, 1990). In attempt to simply define organizational decentralization, Brown (1990) writes:

Decentralization is the extent to which authority to make decisions is distributed among the roles in an organization (p. 36).
Thus, organizational decentralization is a means of distributing responsibilities in order to enhance efficiency. Hannaway (1993) asserts that the basis for organizational decentralization concerns the notion that decentralization increases efficiency when those with the best information about a particular field can use their discretion to act on the information. For Hannaway, organizational decentralization concerns distribution of information. As Hannaway writes:

The basic principle presumed to guide decentralization in organizations is simple: those actors with the best information about a particular subject should have the discretion to make decisions about the subject. Consistent with this argument, empirical research has shown that two conditions - large organizational size and complex or dynamic technology - are likely to lead to decentralized organizational structures ... In the case of size, it is presumed that decision demands, at some point, outstrip the decision-making capacity of top management. Management is simply not able to process the large volume of information and make all decisions necessary to manage the organization effectively. Thus, out of sheer necessity, management delegates decision making responsibilities to lower levels in the hierarchy (p. 136).

So, the point for decentralization is that as information is crucial in the operations of educational organizations, in-school authorities may have better information about day-to-day operations of the school than central office authorities (Brown, 1993). Also, Hannaway contends that in cases where top management is unable to keep up-to-date of current technology, management assigns accountability of technological decisions to lower level employees who are better informed about the latest technological trends. As Hannaway (1993) writes:

In education, decentralization proponents argue that the technology of teaching is complex and dynamic and that decision making about what goes on in the classroom should therefore be located with the classroom teacher, or at least somewhere within the school. Proponents assume, quite reasonably, that teachers understand better than central authorities, the requirements of the classroom teaching and learning process. Proponents also presume that the autonomy and discretion of lower-level units, meaning schools and the actors within them, are constrained by higher authorities. If these constraints were lifted, it is argued, and schools (particularly teachers) were empowered to use with more discretion the information that they possess, then they would do things differently and
better. The expectation is that school actors, freed from state and district prescriptions, would focus their efforts in ways that would lead to greater achievement (p. 136-137).

Researchers explore different kinds of effects of organizational decentralization on education. For the purpose of this study, I will examine only two of the effects that proponents of organizational decentralization most frequently cite. These are: accountability; and efficiency.

**Accountability.** Brown (1990) characterizes accountability as a "rather basic value" (p. 104), and an impression that we expect from other people but do not expect others to use the impression to judge us. According to Winkler (1993), "accountability requires clear assignment of responsibilities, public information on finance and performance, and mechanisms by which to hold decision makers responsible" (p. 128). As Brown (1990) simply put it: "To be accountable means to answer for one’s actions to someone else" (p. 104). The issue of accountability in educational organizations poses more questions than answers (Brown, 1990; Elmore, 1993; Winkler, 1993). While researchers assume that there could be no decentralization without accountability, basic questions remain. Some of the most frequent questions pertaining to the concept of accountability are: who is to be accountable to whom (Elmore, 1993; Winkler, 1993)? For what should people be accountable (Elmore, 1993)? Elmore (1993) argues that if the school should be accountable to the public, then who make up the public?

Whereas advocates of decentralization assume that schools will improve by holding school officials responsible for their actions, Winkler (1993) believes that decentralization may have vague results on accountability of school officials. As Winkler (1993) writes:

Decentralization is likely to have ambiguous effects on accountability. While it may encourage parents and voters to monitor the school more closely, it may also reduce the information available for those doing the monitoring (presuming that central ministry officials have, on the average, better information than parents and voters do) (p. 117).
Similarly, citing examples from New York and Chicago, Elmore (1993) contends that it is ambiguous to assume that there is a connection between decentralization and accountability. As Elmore (1993) writes:

Decentralization in both New York and Chicago is a creature of state policy. In both instances, reformers at the city level took their case to the state legislature and were able to gain significant changes in the institutional structure of the local education system. After these policies are set in motion, local actors tend to treat the institutional framework as given, rather than as an artifact of politics at a higher level of government which can be changed whenever the politics at the level change. To say, then, that community district decentralization in New York or school-site decentralization in Chicago make schools more accountable to their immediate communities is to say something important about the short-term incentives operating on schools, but also to ignore the longer-term dynamics of accountability in the system at large (p. 46-47).

Despite several arguments that decentralization does not make schools more accountable to their neighbourhoods, some role changes may occur in areas such as school budgeting that may, perhaps, benefit community schools. Whereas teachers of Indian children, for example, were previously accountable to central office authorities about educational functions of Indian schools, decentralization may have held Indian schools accountable to Indian parents. Considering the nature of education for Indian children prior to the period of the takeover from central authorities, one could assume that when Indian parents are involved in the education of their children, their confidence about schooling may increase.

Efficiency. The efficiency argument for organizational decentralization mainly concerns cost effectiveness. Brown (1990) labels efficiency as "service increase" and "reduced costs" (p. 95). Weiler (1993) contends that efficiency in education is to reinforce "the cost-effectiveness of the educational system through a more efficient deployment and management of resources" (p. 57). Elmore (1993) asserts that proponents of decentralization think in terms of "reduction of overhead costs" (p. 49). As Elmore puts it:
Centralized bureaucracy is always an attractive target, and reformers usually see decentralization as opening up opportunities for more efficient government through the reduction of overhead costs associated with centralized administration and through the use of those resources for direct delivery of services at the lowest level of the system (p. 49).

Accordingly, decentralization advocates assume that control by central authorities does not allow schools, and teachers in particular, to do their job in the best possible way. They also assume that schools and teachers would perform more efficiently if central authorities give them all the power and discretion to use the information they possess. This line of reasoning suggests that if central authorities make schools autonomous, in-school authorities would channel their efforts in a direction that would lead to greater student accomplishment (Hannaway, 1993). However, Elmore (1993) does not accept that decentralization increases efficiency at the in-school level.

As Elmore writes:

To say that decentralization increases efficiency, however, is to say very little in the absence of knowledge about the level of aggregation at which efficiency is important and in the absence of knowledge about how resources are used in so-called decentralized systems (p. 49).

In fact, Elmore argues that there is no connection between decentralization and student achievement at the school level. As Elmore writes:

Indeed research on centralization and decentralization in American education is characterized by the virtually complete disconnection between structural reform and anything having to do with classroom instruction and learning of students (p. 35).

Despite a common belief by some researchers that decentralization does not increase efficiency at the school level, Brown (1990) sees some effectiveness in decentralization at the in-school level. As Brown writes:

The literature on school-based management suggests that money for supplies may be spent more efficiently and it raises the possibility that decentralization is more likely to permit suitable local expenditures for local purposes. The argument is put forward that
some equity of student treatment may be attained. However, it warns that workloads for school personnel may increase (p. 97).

While proponents for decentralization argue that decentralized systems are more likely to be efficient than centralized systems, they fail to provide a simple criterion by which to establish the relationship between decentralization and efficiency. As Elmore (1993) observes:

[I]t is sufficient to observe that the relationship between decentralization and efficiency in education is tenuous at best. There is no simple formula for establishing a relationship between decentralized authority and efficient use of resources; there is only a series of complex, interrelated puzzles (p. 50).

However, from the literature, one could assume that proponents for decentralization believe that community people and in-school authorities are more knowledgeable about most school functions than central authorities, and are more capable of making and effecting decisions that would result in school improvement. The notion that decentralization would make band-operated schools efficient derives from the claim that excessive control and regulation from the central office estranges school teachers and parents from their own ideas and suppresses their inventiveness. As part of this study, I will investigate how efficiently school authorities use resources in band-operated schools.

**Political Decentralization**

While many researchers treat educational decentralization in an organizational context, others (Weiler, 1993; Sergiovanni et al., 1987; Tyack, 1993; Elmore, 1993) treat it in a political context. This section addresses the political dynamics of the argument over decentralization in educational governance.
In most cases, decentralization in education, virtually, has nothing to do with either structural reform or with classroom instruction or the learning of students (Elmore, 1993; Weiler, 1993). Decentralization is a process of participative management (Bolman and Deal, 1991) which politicians design to support fulfilment of people’s needs. It is an example of "co-optation" (Bolman and Deal, 1991, p. 228). According to Bolman and Deal, co-optation is "a process whereby an organization gives something to individuals so as to induce them to ally themselves with organizational needs and purposes" (p. 228). Elmore (1993) terms decentralization in American education as a "democratic wish" (p. 35). Elmore describes two underlying tenets of American political culture: first, there is trust in government, based on honest democracy; and second, the concern that convergence of power in institutions of government is threatening to personal freedom. Therefore, as a guard against convergence of power, Americans frame their political institutions in ways that "institutionalize conflict and disperse responsibility" (p. 35). As Elmore (1993) writes:

Periodically, reformers act on the democratic wish to return power to ‘the people’ through reforms that push decision making out into smaller, simpler, more directly accountable institutions. These new reforms almost never displace existing institutions, which are the products of earlier, similar reforms and of attempts to disperse and fragment power. The new institutional forms, born of democratic wish, emerge and become routinized (p. 36).

For political analysis of decentralization, the most relevant explication of governments' intentions may be found in Weiler’s (1993) thesis, Control Versus Legitimation: The Politics of Ambivalence. Weiler maintains that decentralization serves as a political instrument of "conflict management and compensatory legitimation" (p. 56). Bolman and Deal’s (1991) political view of organizations suggests that conflict is a dilemma that hinders the achievement of organizational objectives. As Bolman and Deal (1991) write:
Hierarchical conflict raises the possibility that the lower levels will ignore or subvert management directives. Conflict among major partisan groups can undermine an organization’s effectiveness and ability of its leadership to function. Such dangers are precisely why the structural perspective emphasizes the need for a hierarchy of authority (p. 199).

Accordingly, Weiler’s (1993) discussion of the politics of decentralization emphasizes control, conflict, and legitimacy. Weiler’s main premise is that in exercising its prerogative, the state has a two-fold agenda: first, to ensure effectiveness and maintain control; and, second, to strengthen and maintain the normative basis of its power.

To understand the political debate over decentralization, I will examine Weiler’s treatise in four areas: (1) redistribution of authority; (2) cultures of learning; (3) conflict management; and, (4) compensatory legitimation.

**Redistribution of Authority.** Weiler (1993) contends that the state, as a centralized power base wields authority over educational policy in various ways, such as setting standards of qualification by determining curricular examination criteria, or certification and accreditation rules for students, teachers and other employees. Also, the state allocates resources to education. While Weiler believes that centralization enhances equity and reduces disparities in educational organizations, there is no form of decentralization that genuinely redistributes authority. As Weiler writes:

A decentralized system of governance tends to introduce into the processes of regulation and allocation of certain interests (such as those of parents and local communities) that may disturb the relatively smooth and privileged interaction between the state and capital accumulation... Given this basic incompatibility between the power-sharing logic of decentralization and the interest of the modern state in maintaining control, it is not surprising that forms of decentralization that involve the genuine redistribution of authority are rare (p. 61-2).
Similarly, Winkler (1993) asserts that while politicians seldom use the term redistribution of political power as a goal for decentralization, they suggest that the objective of decentralization is to democratize or to include minority groups in society. However, Winkler argues that if redistribution of political power were the main objective for decentralization, then the state's objective for decentralization may be to empower groups in society that champion policies of the central government or to weaken groups that do not support the policies. Thus, Winkler does not believe that decentralization concerns the redistribution of government power.

As Winkler puts it:

From this perspective, decentralization is less concerned with the transfer of power from one level of government to another than with the transfer of power from one group to another. Ironically, one consequence of decentralization may be to increase the effective control of the central government, or at least that of key decision makers with the central government (p. 105).

So, a relevant question arises here as to what form of powers Government has ceded to Native people to control their schools and how much power do Native people wield in the control of education? Mintzberg (1983) simply defines power as "the capacity to effect (or affect) organizational outcomes" (p. 4). Mintzberg (1983) asserts that "to have power is to be able to get things done, to effect outcomes - actions and the decisions that precede them" (p. 4). Bacharach and Lawler (1980) contend that influence and authority are both subsets of power in that lower level employees in an organizational hierarchy may have substantial influence, while higher level employees may have substantial authority but little influence. Further, Bacharach and Lawler (1980) assert that authority and influence rely on different bases of power. Bases of power are the elements of control that are available to users of power; that is, the means that people adopt to manipulate the behaviour of others, such as, coercive, remunerative, knowledge,
and normative means. Bacharach and Lawler identify four sources of power, namely, structural, personality, expertise, and opportunity. Whereas authority rests solely on structural sources of power, influence rests on any of personality, expertise, or opportunity. Frohock (1979) notes that people in positions without authority engage in "gaming" (p. 10). As Frohock writes: "A gaming approach to politics concentrates on the tactics or the strategies of people in no conditions of authority" (p. 10-11).

As part of this study, a few more relevant questions may arise as to why government ceded control of education to Native people in Canada. First, what are the stated goals for transfer of control of education from government to Native people; and second, how does the central government increase its effective control of Indian education?

**Cultures of Learning.** Many educational researchers believe that the context of the learning process is crucial to student achievement (Hawthorn, 1967). The rationality behind cultures of learning argument is to localize education in order to meet the various social and economic needs of students. The most frequent argument advanced by the National Indian Brotherhood (1972; 1980) for *Indian control of Indian education* in Canada is the cultures of learning argument. The National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) (1972) states that the current system of education is culturally foreign to the Indian child. The NIB further maintains that Indian people want an education that would develop in their children Indian attitudes, and values which form the basis of Indian tradition and culture (p. 2). Accordingly, the NIB perceives centralization as creating a disparity between Indian children and the culture of the school.

Similarly, a version of the same reasoning has to do with the language of instruction in Indian schools. The National Indian Brotherhood sees Indian languages as providing a more
practical connection between learning at home and learning at school. As the National Indian
Brotherhood (1972) writes:

While much can be done by parents in the home and by the community on the reserve
to foster facility in speaking and understanding, there is a great need of formal
instruction in the language (p. 15).

While this thinking of cultural learning has some theoretical justification and significant political
appeal, it is hard to reconcile it with the statement by the National Indian Brotherhood (1972)
that Indians want education "to provide [their children] the training necessary to make a good
living in modern society" (p. 3).

Weiler (1993), argues that even under centralized educational systems, educators
increasingly recognize the significance of culturally specific learning environments and accept
the learning of languages that are peculiar to specific locales. However, as Weiler appropriately
notes, centralization caters for the demands of modern labour markets and communication
systems, which need more universalized and similar skills, and credentials at both national and
international levels. As Weiler concludes:

The link between culture and learning tends to get replaced by the link between learning
and technology: the link between culture and learning tends to benefit from a more
decentralized, disaggregated notion of learning and educational content, the link between
learning and technology tends to require more homogeneity and uniformity as far as the
content and outcome of education are concerned (p. 65).

In other words, a centralized system of learning deals better with the universalities of modern
systems of technology, communication, and living. So, given Weiler's contention, one can
safely argue that if education were to provide the Indian child with the technological skills of
modern society, then Indian schools would be better off under a centralized system.
While the idea of decentralizing the contents of learning for Indian children as a way of identifying and accommodating the diversity and significance of different cultural environments in Canada is valid and meaningful, it would be necessary to balance the content in a way that schooling would provide the Indian student with necessary skills to survive in two worlds, that is the Indian world and the mainstream Canadian society. Educators and advocates of cultural learning should take care that sentiments about culture do not override the main purpose of education. Excessive reliance on culture may deprive students from learning experiences that may serve them in a modern society. The rationale for this statement is that Indian traditional ethos may not have a link between learning and technology (Paquette, 1986a). In order for Indian children to benefit from learning, Indian schools should develop a happy marriage between their traditional ethos and technological learning.

**Compensatory Legitimation.** Addressing compensatory legitimation, Weiler (1993) defines legitimacy as "the normative basis of the state’s authority, or the state’s ‘worthiness of recognition’ " (p. 70). According to Weiler, because of the enormous task of government business and exigencies placed on it, government is unable to respond adequately to the demands of the modern state. As a result, government encounters ‘delegitimation of authority’ (p. 70). In other words, the normative basis of government authority has become continuously unstable, to the point where the main preoccupation of politicians and civil servants is to safeguard government legitimacy. Weiler, thus, asserts that those who plan educational policies do not consider outcomes such as excellence, efficiency, equity, or more employment of school leavers. What they consider most is how educational policies would preserve or recapture as much as possible the state’s legitimacy.
In his analysis of decentralization as compensatory legitimation, Weiler (1993) states two reasons for decentralization. First, as the problem of government seems to be in its overcentralized structure, decentralization can make the state look more accommodating to internal differences of needs and conditions. And, second, in modern societies, there is a growing awareness of the adverse effects of overcentralization in education, and the advantages that cultural and language education may bestow on minority groups. As Weiler (1993) writes:

> The resurgence of cultural regionalism, or local languages, dialects, and cultural and folkloric traditions, and of subnational alternatives for national conceptions of cultural identity have led to more emphasis on the limits of centralization in education. These developments have further reinforced (and been reinforced by) the perception that centralized state structures (other things being equal) tend to be greater obstacles to democratic expression than decentralized structures tend to be (p. 71).

Therefore, Weiler believes that the more the state decentralizes education, the more it gains control and legitimacy over education. However, while Weiler’s theory of compensatory legitimation may be directly persuasive in considering the circumstances leading to the hand-over of Indian schools to the Indians themselves, some pertinent questions remain: Does the government of Canada gain more legitimacy over Indian education as a result of Indians controlling their own education? What structures does the government employ to ensure that Indian children receive quality education? These questions and related ones form an integral part of this study.

### Role of Culture in Education Among Ethnic Groups

The role of culture in the meaning and practice of education among ethnic groups has been documented by contemporary researchers. There have been studies that have supported cultural education that symbolizes interests and values of dominant and subordinate groups of
society (Andereck, 1992; Bouvier, 1990; Giroux et al., 1989). Freire and Giroux (1989) express:

the need to reclaim a cultural literacy for each and every person as part of the democratic idea of citizenship that dignifies and critically engages the different voices of students from both dominant and subordinate groups in ways that help them to define schools as part of the communities and neighbourhoods they serve (p. x-xi).

Giroux and Simon (1989) also argue that while politics of popular culture form an important part of a new sociology of education, many radical educational researchers have overlooked its importance in their analysis. As they write: "By ignoring the cultural and social forms, that are authorized by youth and simultaneously empower or disempower them, educators risk complicity silencing and negating their students" (p. 3). Similarly, Livingstone (1987) believes "Cultural power involves the capacity of social groups to convey notions of actual, possible and preferable social beliefs and practices to their own groups and throughout society as a whole" [italics his] (p. 7).

Also, speaking to the promotion of heritage languages in Canadian schools, Cummins and Danesi (1990) contend that a child’s general educational achievement is closely associated with the child’s development in his or her culture. As Cummins and Danesi write:

The personal and conceptual foundation that the child develops in her culture and language increases her sense of confidence and enhances cognitive growth and success in acquiring additional languages.

There are also strong arguments relating to the importance of rooting children’s development in a knowledge and appreciation of the culture and traditions of their ethnocultural community (p. 77-78).

Because culture is important in the lives of dominated, exploited, poor or otherwise left out minority or ethnic groups, researchers have offered various models of conducting research on these groups. In his article, "From Margins to Center? Development and Purpose of
Participatory Research”, Hall (1993) traces the development, use and benefits of participatory research in countries such as Tanzania, Venezuela, Peru, Nicaragua, and India. As Hall writes:

"Participatory research’ were the words which evolved in the Tanzanian context of the early 1970’s for a practice which attempted to put the less powerful at the centre of the knowledge creation process; to move people and their daily lived experiences of struggle and survival from the margins of epistemology to the centre" (p. 1).

Kemmis’ (1991) study of Aboriginal education and teacher education in the Northern Territory of Australia illustrates how research can lead ethnic groups to maintaining a central role in their own development. As Kemmis writes:

"The projects in Aboriginal education and teacher education undertaken in the Northern Territory exemplify the shift from 'facilitatory' roles to collaborative ones. They have shown how one can establish modes of work which recognise and respect different interests (p. 114).

Similarly, Maguire (1987) studied battered families in Gallup, New Mexico and found women’s participation in participatory research projects boosted women’s self-esteem as well as the control and organizational power of women’s groups.

There are also studies that address the resistance of ethnic groups to a dominant culture. In a study of Irish immigrants in the United States, Andereck (1992) found ethnic groups do not easily replace their ethnic cultures with a dominant culture. According to Andereck, "Every ethnic group has boundary rules to maintain ethnicity" (p. 3). She found ethnic groups may choose to do one of three things: (1) to totally absorb (or assimilate) the culture of the dominant group; (2) to gradually move toward totally absorbing (or acculturate) the dominant culture; and (3) to maintain its homogeneity (acculturate) by modifying any attitudes or values of the dominant group using boundary rules that may minimize the possibility of assimilation or acculturation.
LeVine and White (1986) in their study of agrarian ethnic groups found that even though these groups may acquire Western education, they may often stick to their traditional objectives and may prefer to mesh the latter with new mixture of inherent and alien interpretations. Similarly, Thies (1987) conducted a study on the Aborigines of the East Kimberley region of Australia and found that although the Aborigines viewed education as a process whereby the student learned the lifestyles necessary for survival in the society, they believed that a full and competent young person in their community should acquire both traditional and Western education. LeVine and White (1986) believe, therefore, that in any attempt to formulate policy for Native education, policy-makers should recognize and understand Native culture and history. As LeVine and White write:

The particular agrarian culture indigenous to each country or province sets the stage for an interaction with foreign ideas that continues for centuries, creating distinctive contexts for life span development. To ignore these contexts, their historical roots and their influence on personal experience, when designing policy is to court failure in its implementation. Cultural, historical and psychological understanding is a practical necessity for the policy-maker, but it has not yet found a secure place in the analysis of educational policy and practice (p. 13).

Paquette (1991) asserts that "public systems seeking to assimilate minorities by replacing their cultures and languages have a very poor track record internationally of adequately preparing minorities for full participation in their host societies and economies" (p. 124). However, it is not to assert that foreign domination has not disrupted indigenous cultures. As Kawagley (1993) writes:

The indigenous people of the world have experienced varying degrees of disruption or loss with regard to their traditional life styles and world views. This disruption has contributed to the many psycho-social maladies that are extant in indigenous societies today" (p. 2).
Accordingly, the need for more critical education research or participatory action research (Hall, 1993; Whyte, 1991) in dominated, exploited or poor societies is paramount as researchers move beyond methods suggested by positivist and interpretive social sciences. Researchers must concern themselves with forms of educational theory and research aimed at transforming the works of schools and educational systems of deprived communities "forms of research whose aim is not to interpret the world but to change it" (Kemmis, 1991, p. 102).

The Canadian Education Association (CEA) Report (1984) asserts that non-Native teachers of Indian children lack understanding and experience with Native people. As the report states:

Too often, non-native teachers have little or no professional understanding of the lifestyles, values and cultures of native people. There is no doubt that native education must recognize and respect these differences and obviously native teachers and counsellors are ideally suited to meet the needs of the native student. However, the need for native teachers is only partially being met and it is the non-[N]ative teachers, often ill-prepared to deal with the cultural and linguistic differences, who are responsible for providing the greatest share of native children's education (p. 75).

This study should investigate how community people and teachers collaborate to improve the children's education and how teachers could become familiar with things that are important to Native people? The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) addresses the concern by stating:

Federal and provincial authorities are urged to use the strongest measures necessary to improve the qualifications of teachers and counsellors of Indian children. During initial training programs there should be compulsory courses in inter-cultural education, native languages (oral facility and comparative analysis), and teaching English as a second language. Orientation courses and in-service training are needed in all regions. Assistance should be available for all teachers in adapting curriculum and teaching techniques to the needs of local children. Teachers and counsellors should be given the opportunity to improve themselves through specialized summer courses in acculturation problems, anthropology, Indian history, language and culture (p. 19).
It is important to note that theories regarding minority group education either come from the viewpoints of very well educated Native people or from scholars of dominant cultures. Therefore, the need to document the different ways that Native people, living in remote communities, view their own children's schooling is crucial. As the culture of Native people living in remote communities is different from the dominant culture, and their understanding of schooling issues may be different from their educated counterparts, it is important to investigate their conceptions about schooling. How these conceptions about schooling affect the education of Native children and how Native people would engage themselves in exploring ways to improve their schools so that they may closely reflect the culture and aspirations of their communities are the key questions that researchers must address. These questions are at the very foundation of my study as I seek to engage Native people in a participatory (or action) research.

Concluding Summary

This chapter has attempted to review literature in order to provide an outline within which to analyze schooling in Indian reserves. A broad review of the history of Native education in Canada reveals that the first schools for Native children, operated by missionaries made a deliberate attempt to exterminate Native cultures and assimilate Native people into the mainstream Canadian society. However, by the end of the 1960s it became increasingly evident that Native people could not abandon their cultures and be assimilated into mainstream Canadian society. Accordingly, the literature asserts that the control of Native education by Native people is closely linked with Native self determination. This perspective suggests that Native people
should develop a new meaning and purpose of education and employ new structures for the control of their schools. Therefore, the purpose of education from Native people’s perspectives and the control of education will form some of the bases of this study.

A review of treaty rights and government promises indicated that jurisdiction over the education of Indians in Canada is located in the various treaties signed between the federal government and the Indians. While it seems generally that there is a shared obligation between provincial and federal governments in the control of Native education, it is clear that the federal government is responsible for Native students residing on reserves and provincial governments are responsible for Native students attending schools in the mainstream Canadian society. Despite the rhetoric about local control it appears in the treaties signed between the federal government and Native peoples that the federal government has an obligation to provide lifelong education for Indians.

An extensive review of the literature on the interpretations of success and failure of Native education dispels the notions of cultural superiority of White cultures over Native culture, the impact of bilingualism on educational achievement, and minority group genetic inferiority. Rather, the literature reveals that failure of Native students in school is due to cultural discontinuity. Some of the elements viewed as causing cultural discontinuity are, the school’s treatment of minority students, its concept of time and space, contradictions in the curriculum, and Native people’s worldview to school discipline. Based on the literature on interpretations of success and failure of Native education, this study will investigate the challenges and priorities of schooling in Cat Lake and attempt to elicit from research participants strategies they suggest to deal with these challenges and priorities.
While decentralization of schools is seen by many researchers as a contemporary reform process, some researchers argue that it may have ambiguous results on efficiency and accountability of school officials. However, decentralization may benefit school systems only if it has something to do with structural reform, classroom instruction and learning of students.

The literature also criticizes the nature and purpose of the practice of education in modern times and it highlighted the importance of cultural education among minority groups.

As Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has handed most of the schools in Ontario to Indian bands, this study will examine what the handover means in terms of control and curricula implementation. While investigating the purpose of schooling, the control of education, school-community relations, problems and priorities of schooling in Cat Lake, this study sought to use the literature as a framework to guide the discussion of the results.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I provide a methodological context for the study, which includes my personal and cultural introduction, the research design and procedures I used to gather data for the study, and, the way I analyzed the data I collected for the study. My personal and cultural introduction are relevant to this study because I was born into a traditional society and as a child I found my community values and standards entirely different from that of the school. While this study is a cross-cultural research, given similarities that exist in traditional societies, my background may possibly contribute to better mutual understanding and interpretation of the findings of the study.

Personal and Cultural Introduction

I was born in a small, rural community in Ghana, where the majority of the inhabitants were engaged in subsistence farming. Fundamentally, my community people based their livelihood on their subsistence and reproductive lives. At an early age, I learned the community vocabulary, logic, morals, values, and standards that were different from those I acquired at school in later life. I, as well as every child or adult of my community, was aware of the virtues and vices that existed in our society and how individuals fought to augment their social lives in terms of community ethics.
The young members of the community regarded adults as fountains of knowledge and looked up to them for cultural education. The social identities of adults in the community were established by a local age-sex hierarchy that offered support, structure and opportunities for self-fulfilment. Reciprocal obligations of clan and neighbour provided support for all members of the community. Customary practices of interpersonal morality that clearly specified virtue and vice, and formed a basis of trust, and positive consciousness provided structure to all the members of the community. Members basically derived motivation from expectations of advancement in the age-sex hierarchy, with its concomitant prestige, wealth, power, and security. Advancement in the hierarchy specified expansion of life opportunities in the community context. Community members did not, for the most part, aim at social individuality that would outshine or oppose conventional communal bonds in the search for individual accomplishment.

I have come to entertain the feeling that my community was very traditional and unique in its values and standards. Child-bearing, religious piety, and a variety of social skills such as obedience, cooperation, helping, and respect for life and property, for example, were seen by community members as necessary for the optimal development of the individual. There were moral codes for parent-child relations and there existed a cultural model in which parenthood was symbolically the centre-piece of community life. Women and men had their specific roles which were defined by community conventions, and hardly could there be a conflict of roles between husband and wife. In other words, from childhood, girls learned to become ideal mothers and effective housekeepers, while boys learned to become ideal fathers and providers for the household. The individual who wished to achieve optimal development should maximize
his/her attachment to the community which bestowed the welfare of security, continuity, and trust. Although the community recognized a point for individual ambition or achievement motivation, it limited its expectations within reach of the average community member. However, there were also high ideals that might not be achieved by anyone in the population.

I went to school at the age of 5, and had to learn English as a third language; my second language being a local one which I learned alongside with English at the inception of school. At school, I did not learn my native tongue, the dialect I spoke at home and in the community. I became aware, early in my school life that the school did not recognize, let alone incorporate the virtues or vices I learned from my home. Community standards, values, morals, ethics, and religious practices, which we held in reverence as integral parts of our very existence were, in the language of the school evil, and should not have a place in our lives. I very well remember doing punishments for speaking my own language at school. The very tasks that I did as punishments formed the basis of the livelihood of my family, that was, working on the school farm. I learned at that early age that the occupation of my parents, grandparents, and forefathers which sustained our livelihood was regarded by the school as a sort of punishment and, therefore, degrading.

It was never clear to me why I had to go to school. For, as I learned later in life, school was originally introduced into my community in order to train people in the basic skill of reading and writing so that they could interpret the bible. During my time, interpreting the bible was no longer essential, for, colonialism has succeeded in imbuing the tenets of Christianity into old and young, and Christian life and routines had already become part of the life of the community. All I knew was school was a necessary evil. It became a meaningless
routine for me and the other boys and girls of the community. One either dropped out or continued. With some restructuring of education to incorporate our traditional values in schooling, school began to make sense to some of us. I was one of those who continued schooling. Despite all the Western education I have had, I still feel there is still something missing from me. That is, I have to understand what it means to be me. I need to discover who I am. I have always felt that my education has not adequately endowed me with the necessary skills I need for survival in my own community. Rather, it has tampered with some of the values, morals and standards, and above all, my placement as a member of my community. This is not in any way to say that education has not been useful to me. I have rather realized that education has taught me to look at the world with two viewpoints, that is, with a compromise between Western and indigenous values. I have come to believe that I am the true educated person who sees things with two eyes.

Since I earned my bachelor's degree, I have taught at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education and at various times taken up administrative positions as principal of Native schools in Canada. My experience in Band-controlled schools, located in remote Indian reserves, makes me conceptualize the education of the Native child in my own schooling terms. To the Native child, the culture of the school may be meaningless, yet essential for survival in the mainstream Canadian society. Is the Native child being deprived of the very fabric of her/his existence—the good things of her/his culture? As I recall my own schooldays with mixed feelings of joy, pride, remorse, resistance, and fear, I wish to investigate the feelings of Native people about schooling.
My interest in the study of Native people's viewpoints on education has been rekindled by my own personal and educational background. With my experience working in schools in remote Indian reserves, I have felt that my doctoral dissertation should be concerned with helping to improve schooling conditions of Indian children. Yet, I thought that I could not be helping by doing a research for the Indian people, but rather with the Indian people. My knowledge of various research paradigms teaches me that participatory research would go a long way in helping to understand and improve the education of Native children. Knowing the principles involved in participatory research, I "put myself out to be requested" (Maguire, 1987) from Indian school authorities for the research. My decision for this study (and its methodology) was a result of discussions about problems of schooling which I had with Native people in the communities in which I did my research, and those I had with intellectual people among the Indians at the University of British Columbia.

When I decided that I was going to study Native people's viewpoints on schooling, I was aware that the only way to be able to do a meaningful research was to integrate myself fully into a Native community, and to be in a position to influence policy. I could only conduct a purposeful research in a school system if I were part of that system. By early December 1992, I sent resumes out to Native communities in Ontario to seek a position as a teacher. In May, 1993 I was invited by the Windigo Education Authority to an interview for the position of principal in one of their school systems. I came out of the interview as the successful candidate for the position. With little information about Cat Lake, I made a commitment to undertake a participatory approach for my thesis research. The decision was, somewhat, an answer to my desire to work hand in hand with community people to bring some improvement into their school
system. The question of whether participatory research could be a knowledge-generating enterprise for a doctoral thesis came up several times in discussions I had with colleagues and thesis committee members. I was convinced that there could not be any better way of helping to improve schooling and at the same time producing a doctoral thesis.

From my literature review about participatory research, I learned that the process should be a cooperative venture. The initial problem I had was that I had not yet known a specific group with which to work. However, with my position as principal of the reserve school, I was confident that my position of influence in the school could let many things happen. I viewed my study as a way of collaborating with Native people to analyze and act on problems affecting the schooling of their children. Hopefully, this study has gone a long way in empowering the people in the community of my study to make education meaningful to their children. One substantial purpose of the study was an attempt, by thinking and rethinking along with the community people, to find a way of redefining and implementing an education worthy of their culture and their children.

The Research Design

The research design for this study drew on participatory research, an alternative research paradigm approach to social science and educational research (Maguire, 1987). The methods I chose for this study were a function of the purpose of the research (Bodgan and Biklen, 1982), and to a large extent, depended on the assumptions underlying the study. Hampton (1988) writes that it may not be the lack of research that impedes Indian education "but a shortage of research that is useful from Indian points of view" (p. 21). As this study concerns not doing
research for the Native people but with the Native people (Hall, 1993; Maguire, 1987; Carr and Kemmis, 1986a), and as the research was designed to directly involve Native people in implementing change, I believe that the participatory research methodology was the most appropriate for the study (Maguire, 1987; Hall, 1981, 1993; Participatory Research Network, 1982). Maguire (1987) asserts that participatory research goes beyond merely interpreting and describing social phenomenon. As Maguire (1987) writes:

Participatory research offers a way to openly demonstrate solidarity with oppressed and disempowered people through our work as researchers. In addition to recognizing many forms of knowledge, participatory research insists on an alternative position regarding the purpose of knowledge creation. The purpose of participatory research is not merely to describe social reality, but to radically change it (p. 34).

As a research process, participatory research explores social problems which are proposed and resolved by participants; as an educational process, participatory research educates both researchers and participants by engaging them in the analysis of structural causes of selected problems through collaborative discussion and interaction (Participatory Research Network, 1982; Maguire, 1987); and as an action process, participatory research enables researchers and participants to take collaborative action for radical social change in both the short and the long run (Hall, 1993; Maguire, 1987). As Hall (1993) defines participatory research:

Participatory research has been expressed most generally as a process which combines three activities: research, education and action. Participatory research is a social action process which is biased in favour of dominated, exploited, poor or otherwise left out women, men and groups. It sees no contradiction between goals of collective empowerment and the deepening of social knowledge. The concern with power and democracy and their interactions are central to participatory research. Attention to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities, and other social factors are critical (p. 3).
Accordingly, the most peculiar aspect of participatory research is the direct link between research and action (Hall, 1993; Maguire, 1987). The combination of the creation of knowledge about social reality with actual action in that reality distinguishes participatory research from traditional research methods (Tandon 1981b; Hall, 1981, 1993; Maguire, 1987). According to Maguire (1987), the objectives of participatory research are:

- Development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants;
- Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process; and
- Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships (p. 36).

Therefore, the objective of this study was to use a collective inquiry procedure to involve the people of the Cat Lake community in building a group ownership of information as they moved from being mere objects of research to acting as subjects of their own research process (Maguire, 1987). Put simply, the methodology employed in this study involved a group of Native people residing in an isolated community in deciding what problems of schooling to investigate, what questions to explore, how to collect data, and how to organize and use the data according to their own priorities (Participatory Research Network, 1982).

Thus, working towards what I believe is the fundamental need for understanding and improving Native education, I saw my research as an example of a critical education research process that "is organised to produce collaborative action which can then be submitted to reflection and evaluation, and produce further action" (Kemmis, 1991 p. 103). In other words, I organized this study within an alternative social science framework by employing data collection processes that combined the activities of research, education, and action (Hall, 1993; Maguire, 1987; Kemmis, 1991).
So, unlike a study using an externalist position, this study did not intend merely to produce information about Indian education and remain on the shelves. Moreover, the study was also unlike more latent interpretive forms of critical theory. The study, as Kemmis (1991) puts it, was:

"learning by doing in collaborative groups - 'critical and self-critical communities' whose aim is to improve their understanding of the world, their practices, and their organization as groups committed to the development of more rational, productive, satisfying, just and humane forms of life" (Kemmis, (p. 103).

The method of critical education research described by Kemmis (1991) and the method of participatory research described by Hall (1993) move educational research further than usual in directing it toward action.

One may be tempted to ask how this participatory research can fit as a doctoral dissertation and at the same time work out in the context of a Native community in Northwestern Ontario. This study had two major components, the first, which documented issues concerning the education of the children in an Indian reserve, and the second, which utilized the documentation as a basis for local people to act in the improvement of their school. The knowledge producing aspect, a characteristic of dissertations, has been served by the first component. Matthew's (1991) evaluation of Native schools in British Columbia indicates that while community people are usually determined to involve themselves in changing schools, their involvement is restrained by lack of impetus which would act as an effective link between the school and the community. As Matthews (1991) writes:

All nine reports found that greater involvement of parents in the schools was desired by teachers, administrators or the parents themselves. Parents interviewed in the studies were supportive of the concept of local control but sometimes their involvement was restricted by lack of communication between the school and the home and they did not know how to become involved (p. 40).
I assumed, therefore, in this study that community people were willing to participate fully in the affairs of the school but were restricted by a lack of stimulus. One of the relevant questions that arose in this study, therefore, was: How could the school within the reserve build effective communication lines with the people in the community?

Research Procedures

The purpose and objectives of this study determined the choice of procedures I employed in data collection and analysis. Hall (1993) asserts that participatory research literature has always been unexplicit about the problem of methods. According to Hall (1993) "there are no methodological orthodoxes or cook-book approaches to follow" (p. 11). For participatory research:

the most important factors are the origins of the issues, the roles which those concerned with the issues play in the process, the immersion of the process in the context of the moment, the potential for mobilizing and collective learning, the link to action, the understanding of how power relationships work and the potential for communications with other[s] experiencing similar discrimination, oppression or violence (Hall, 1993, p. 10-11).

Thus, the precept is that participatory research is context-bound and the procedures employed should emanate from both researcher and participants.

The Participatory Research Network (1982) documents various approaches to participatory research. These include group discussions, public meetings, research teams, open-ended surveys, community seminars, factfinding tours, collective production of audiovisual materials, theatre, education camps, and many more. For the purpose of this study, I drew on data collected through document analysis, workshops based on group discussions, meetings, and interviews. I restricted the focus of this study to people directly connected with the school
system. The data were collected through participant observation during the period September, 1993 to August, 1994. I conducted interviews with local education authority members, community leaders and people, directors, teachers, and students of the school.

**Documents**

It is difficult to understand schools without giving attention to documentary material. Since schools acquire all kinds of documents in their day to day operation, it is necessary for the researcher to review all available documents as a basis of understanding the operation of the schools. Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) assert that researchers should treat official documents as social products and should carefully examine them instead of merely treating them as a resource. Researchers should, therefore, consider documents in the same way as information they gather using other research tools. In other words, documents, especially primary documents, though may be useful, may also be inaccurate, or biased or may contain hidden agendas in their preparation. They may also be incomplete.

This study used documents produced by the Ministry of Indian Affairs for Native schools, as well as those produced by the tribal council education authority and those produced by the local education authorities. I incorporated four major documentary sources in my analysis. The first source was the various documents the Windigo Education Authority had prepared for the school since the inception of band control in 1988. These included *Policy for Windigo Education Schools* (revised edition, 1992-93); *Annual Reports of the Windigo Education Authority*; *minutes of the Windigo Education Authority Meetings* (1992-93). The second source comprised various documents at the local level such as *A Review of the Titotay Memorial School*.
Programme—Learning Sources (1992-93); and the Titotay Memorial School Discipline Policy (1989); the third source was Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Document, the Common Curriculum, 1993, available in the school for teachers’ use in preparation for teaching. The final source was teachers’ goals and objectives and their long range plans. I identified topical descriptors in all the documents and verified if the different documentary sources used common themes. My approach was to search for patterns, common themes or ideas. In my view, a careful examination of documents conveyed information about the school in Cat Lake in particular, and information about curriculum, policy, and governance of schools for Native children in general. Whereas my general interest was in schools for Native children since 1973, the year Native people started to take control of schools for their children, my specific interest in Cat Lake meant that it was appropriate to concentrate data collection from 1988, the year the community took control of its own school. Specific documents that were useful in this study included mission statements, band policy on schools, curricular material, program evaluation reports, minutes of staff meetings, and many other pertinent pieces of information that the school possessed.

Workshops Based on Group Discussions

According to the Participatory Research Network (1982), "Group discussions are probably the most widely used method in participatory research. They occur throughout the process, and are often used together with other methods" (p. 6). The Participatory Research Network (1982) suggests small numbers of 8, 12 or 25 who meet to solve problems by sharing experiences, information and support. For this study, I targeted the small group of five people
who form the Local Education Authority, who were active on school affairs, to act as an advisory or reference group for the project. Basically, this group advised on what to do in the course of the project. I encouraged participants to present and talk about their own ideas especially about what changes they required for the school in the community.

Group discussions helped in problem posing, identifying causes, discussing possible solutions and evaluating actions (Participatory Research Network, 1982). Group discussions also created circumstances under which people felt relaxed and free to speak. Researcher and participants used group discussions to build a sense of trust, support and cooperation among community people who shared the same ideas or problems; group discussions maintained communication among researcher and community members, and also acted as productive interviews (Participatory Research Network, 1982).

In order to clearly identify the shortcomings of schooling and find solutions for them, school staff, the Local Education Authority and community people attended a series of workshops (see Appendix C and Appendix D). The purpose of these workshops was for the school staff, the Local Education Authority, and community people to come together as a team and discuss how the present form of education provided for the children of Titotay Memorial School might have been inadequate in terms of the expectations of the people of the community. The workshops concerned an investigation of elements which might contribute to, or hinder the achievement of an adequate educational provision for the children. The data for this study come from workshops that took place in January and February, 1994 (see Phase 2 below). Although I invited as many as 45 people to attend the first workshop only 28 participants attended. These people comprised the school teaching and support staff, Local Education Authority members and
some community people. During the second workshop, 32 people participated. These people included 26 of those who attended the first workshop, four others from the community who joined, and the Director and Assistant Director for the Windigo Education Authority who flew in from Sioux Lookout. The themes of the workshops reflected the viewpoints of participants in relation to the problems they viewed most pressing to the school.

Prior to the workshops, the principal, teachers and Local Education Authority (LEA) engaged in a problem identification exercise. In a participatory research enterprise, I believed that the identification and recognition of problems of schooling in the community by researcher, school staff, the Local Education Authority, and community people was a first step toward participation in the solution of the problems. Discussions I had with school staff, Local Education Authority members and community people suggested that they were aware of several problems that faced the school. I asked the school staff, members of the Local Education Authority, and community people to submit lists of problems that they felt affected the school.

The purpose of the problem identification exercise was to identify problems that existed in the Titotay Memorial School in 1993/94 and demonstrate that the situation was different from the expectations of the people involved in the school system, and that the problem identification process would show the differences. In other words, participants at the workshops attempted to describe the existing condition in the school and planned for a more desirable condition in the future. Recent reviews of the Titotay Memorial School program (Learning Sources, 1993), indicated that in order to develop an effective school it would be necessary to undertake innovations in many areas of the school. The principal and staff felt mandated to ensure that
students received high quality education and they supported a problem identification enterprise as a source of information about the quality of schooling they are delivering to their students. The principal, teachers and LEA have committed themselves to developing an effective school program and perceive that identifying the problems of the school is a means to achieving that end. As part of this study, the problem identification process was one component in the school improvement program, which would lead to planning towards the achievement of broader goals.

One of the most important purposes of this participatory study is to expose the problems of schooling in order for community people to deal with them squarely. The recognition of the shortcomings of the education of the children by the school staff and the local authorities was a first step towards setting priorities for the improvement of education in the community. The next step should be an understanding of the problems of schooling by the school staff and the local authorities, and, the development of cooperation between the local authorities, community people, and school staff for the improvement of the school system. Planning for effective provision of education for the children must take into account the aims and objectives of the community people as well as public goals and aspirations.

The problem identification exercise leads to a relevant question. In what way can problem identification improve the quality of schooling in the community? I believe that a clear understanding of the quality of the school program, that is, understanding the present state of affairs, would provide a clearer understanding of possible solutions for the problems facing the school. Secondly, all those involved in the schooling system could accomplish the task of building an effective school when they work together to identify problems, find solutions for them, and provide an integrated leadership to support students to achieve high performance at
During each of the workshops, participants were divided into 4 groups. Each group comprised teachers, parents and Band workers. The objective of the workshops was for the groups to draw on the existing knowledge about the problems facing the school in the plan of an appropriate strategy for their solution. The group, which constituted a research team worked together with a teacher as secretary on discussing issues and finding solutions for them. As principal researcher, I acted as facilitator and joined in various group discussions. After spending the whole of the morning discussing issues in groups, participants broke up for lunch and came back in the afternoon to discuss their results in a plenary session. At these sessions, group secretaries presented their reports for comments from participants.

On the whole, the arrangement worked effectively as participants indicated that they found the exercise very interesting. Sometimes, disagreements resulted in arguments and it made it necessary for participants to take votes on issues. If participants agreed, the discussions were documented by a general secretary and tape recorded to ensure that important remarks were not overlooked. After the discussions, I produced a summary report (see Appendix D) for distribution to all participants who were free to draw my attention to any issues that I missed in the report.

**Interviews**

In this study, I based the interview process on Freire's (1970) concepts of dialogue and problem-posing. According to Freire:

> Since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue
cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the discussants (p. 77).

Freire (1970) further argues that "Without dialogue, there is no communication and without communication, there can be no true education" (p. 81). Thus, in the terms of Freire, dialogue encourages critical thinking and action. This study involves the mobilization of community people to pose problems and find solutions to them. The interview process should, therefore, be flexible to accommodate all the necessary viewpoints of participants. As Freire writes of problem-posing:

Problem-posing education, as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as fundamental that men subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and alienating intellectualism; it also enables men to overcome their false perception of reality (p. 74).

Patton (1980) warned against using 'why' questions in qualitative investigation because the objective of the interviewing process is not to put things into people's minds but to inquire into what is in their minds. In contrast, the dialogue process persuades people to explore the "whys" of their lives. For example, why do Native children drop out of school? What causes the problems of dropout? The use of the dialogue concept in this study, however, was not to put ideas into people's mind but to encourage them to "reflect on parts of their lives that they might not ordinarily question or pay attention to" (Maguire, 1987, p. 166). The interview process in this study encouraged people to begin to explore 'truth' more critically.

So, in this study, dialogue with individuals and groups meant a process of developing conversation with the Native people, respecting their ways of knowing, their ways of working, and thinking about reality. I heard the voices of parents, students, teachers, elders, band council, and education authorities—what they said, thought, and wanted to do to improve their
school. I first asked open-ended questions to allow participants to express their unique views about schooling. I used a semi-structured interview guide that focussed on basic questions, e.g. How do participants view their children's schooling? What do they view as the shortcomings of the present system of schooling? What are their priorities for schooling? How useful do they think schooling would be to their children? What do they wish to do to improve their school system? Because of the cross-cultural nature of the research, I had to employ an interpreter to translate the answers of people who could not respond to the interview questions in English. I tape recorded all the interviews, and transcribed the tapes verbatim as soon after the interviews as possible. The interview process allowed me to explore areas of unique participant concern or importance which I might not initially have anticipated, as well as areas of concern common to all participants. Throughout the interview and transcription process, I highlighted responses that appeared either especially relevant or that were similar to other responses. I also reviewed those responses that were different from others but had particular intensity or relevance to specific issues.

Public Meetings

Public meetings formed an integral part of this study. I used public meetings to inform community members about the research as it progressed. I used them to provide a chance for the community members to contribute to the plan and implementation of the research project. I used them to involve more community members in playing an active part in the research project by joining small group discussions, interviewing people and allowing themselves to be interviewed. Since the balance between Native and non-Native conceptions of schooling may
be important for the development of education in the community, I met with non-Native contract teachers and community people together at certain times and met them separately at other times. For example, questions that arose during meetings with non-Native teachers concerned issues such as orientation of non-Native teachers into the community, e.g. What kind of orientation should new teachers be given by the community? How long should this orientation be? How can non-Native teachers integrate themselves into the community? Should they have host families? During these meetings, I encouraged teachers to write down observations in their own words while I jotted down notes on my observations about individual interactions, group activities, and statements by participants. I highlighted priorities in participants' comments and recorded overall reflections.

**Research Phases**

This section presents the phases in which I conducted the study. It presents time periods and the activities accomplished by researcher and participants during those periods.

This study proceeded in five phases: the first phase involved negotiating the research relationship; the second phase involved identifying the most significant problems; the third phase involved collective educational activities; the fourth phase involved classification, analysis and conclusion building; and the final phase involved definition of action projects. Note-taking and tape recording of interviews formed an integral part of all the phases of the research. Table 1 shows the research phases and activities initiated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September - October, 1993</td>
<td>1. Negotiating Research Relationships</td>
<td>a) Gathering and analysing information about research area</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Establishing relationships with groups</td>
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<td>c) Locating research problem within site</td>
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<td>d) Formed advisory group</td>
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<td>e) Journal keeping</td>
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<td>November 1993 - January 1994</td>
<td>2. Identifying Most Significant Problems</td>
<td>a) Setting up a problem-posing process</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Dialogue with groups and individuals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Daily journal keeping and notes from interviews</td>
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<td>a) Workshops</td>
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<td>b) Workshops</td>
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<td>c) Compiled themes for investigation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>d) Participants began to assume fuller responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Preparing for action</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) Meetings with participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Development of theories and search for solutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e) Data gathering, classification and analysis for thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1994 -</td>
<td>5. Definition of Action Projects</td>
<td>a) Deciding on Action projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Ongoing participation in school development</td>
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Table 1 shows the research phases of this study. It shows that in all, there are five phases. The sections that follow provide a more detailed description of the activities initiated during the phases.

**Phase 1: Negotiating the Research Relationship (September, 1993 - October, 1993)**

I arrived at the Indian reserve of Cat Lake during the last week of August 1993. The initial problem I encountered was how to establish myself, particularly, how to be accepted by the community people as a researcher and at the same time as the principal of the school. I realized that as the principal of the school, I stood in a unique advantageous position as a researcher, compared with other researchers who might not have positions of authority in the community.

As soon as I entered the community I started gathering and analyzing information about the research area. This was a period I started establishing relationships with groups within the community and inviting these groups to participate in the research process. It was also a period, during which I tried to locate the research problem within the community. I identified the small groups within the community that were active in school affairs and formed an advisory or reference group for the project. Data gathering was in the form of journal keeping and note taking during interviews and dialogue with people in the community.

By November, I started setting up a problem-posing process which enabled me and participants to start identifying the community's most significant issues about schooling of their children. It was a period of ongoing problem-posing in the form of dialogue with groups and individuals, leading us to a more complex and critical understanding of the problems and issues as perceived and experienced by us. It became quite clear to me during this period that the community people were aware that problems existed in the school and were prepared to work together for the improvement of the school. I started collecting data in the form of daily journal keeping and notes from interviews and dialogue with community people.

In December, an idea came from a member of the Local Education Authority to conduct a needs assessment for the school. We agreed at a general meeting that we would all submit lists expressing problems of the school. I received lists from classroom teachers, support staff, Local Education Authority members and community people. In total I received 36 lists from respondents. Some respondents provided causes of the problems and suggestions for their solution, while others merely listed the problems. The high standard of responses, the efforts that respondents put into identifying the problems of the school and the number of suggestions reflected the importance members attached to the notion of school improvement and participatory research.

We decided to hold workshops to discuss the problems raised by participants. We held the first two-day workshop in January, 1994. The themes of the workshops reflected the viewpoints of participants in relation to the problems they viewed as most pressing to the school (see Appendix D). In order to identify most precisely the problems that were common in the
submissions, I analyzed the submissions in two stages. First, I thoroughly scrutinized all the submissions identified by participants. Second, I subjected the submissions to a coding process. In coding the submissions, I categorized all the issues by using coloured stickers to reflect common themes expressed by the participants.

**Phase 3: Collective Educational Activities (February, 1994 - April, 1994).**

In the third phase, I attempted to connect participants' personal perceptions of issues to the wider context of the community. It had become obvious at this stage that the teaching staff of the school, the Local Education Authority and I were all interested in the improvement of the school. We all felt mandated to ensure that students received high quality education. We became committed to developing an effective school program.

We conducted another two-day workshop in February, 1994. At the January and February workshops, I allocated discussion topics to six to eight participants who came together for the general purpose of solving problems by sharing experiences, information, and support (see Appendix C). The group posed problems, identified possible causes, discussed possible solutions and prepared the grounds for evaluating actions. A group leader was responsible for presenting the group's findings at a general meeting of all members. Participants critiqued group findings to arrive at a general consensus.

In this way, by the end of this phase, we compiled the questions and themes for the investigation. Also in this phase, participants began to assume fuller responsibility for the project through the workshops which encouraged group discussions. They had increased their understanding of the issues concerning their school and had been cultivating a preparedness to
commit themselves to solving problems. They also began to realize their potential and abilities to mobilize and act on school issues.

It is important to note that as community people seemed to lack the literacy skills and information for critical analysis, I embarked on collective educational activities, such as showing videos which helped participants to further examine their interpretations of issues.

**Phase 4: Classification, Analysis and Conclusion Building (May, 1994 - July, 1994).**

During this phase, I involved participants, through various means, such as inviting them to regularly visit the school and talk to students and teachers, to gather information, classify, analyze, and build conclusions. Participants and researcher met two times in every month, to investigate problems posed in Phase 3. It was also a period when participants began to develop their own theories and understanding of issues and began to find solutions for them. Phase four was crucial to the dissertation component of the study in that this was the phase where I put together information, classified, analyzed and started to build a thesis. Basically, the dissertation stops at this phase.

**Phase 5: Definition of Action Projects (August, 1994 - ).**

The final phase, which at this time is still ongoing, has involved researchers and participants in deciding on what actions to take to address the issues they have collectively identified and analyzed. At this stage, community people have "moved from being objects to subjects and beneficiaries of the research" (Maguire, 1987, p. 51), I have become an involved activist in the school improvement program. Although the process of the research has indicated
direct immediate value for me and the participants, one cannot determine the final results of the research, since phase 5 of the research is still ongoing. Definitive results should be realized by both participants and researcher by the end of this phase. This is a phase which would utilize the documented findings of the study as a basis for ongoing participation in school affairs.

Data Analysis

In this study, the initial question that came up regarding data analysis was to find the best possible way to analyze data within the framework of an alternative research paradigm in order for the study to conform to traditional ideas of social science research. Like data collection, participatory research literature does not specify "one best way" of data analysis. As the data for this study came from the notes I took throughout the phases of the research process, submissions of participants, and the transcribed tape recorded interviews, I felt I had to analyze the data using qualitative approaches to research. However, Lather (1992) contends that data analysis of alternative research paradigms transcends the ordinary application of qualitative approaches. As Lather writes:

Rooted in the research traditions of interpretive sociology and anthropology, alternative practices of educational research go well beyond the mere use of qualitative methods. Their focus is the overriding importance of meaning making and context in human experiencing (p. 91).

Researchers in the social sciences use a variety of methods to collect and analyze qualitative data. Standard approaches that emerged out of a myriad of methods include: first, the interpretive technique which emphasizes importance of patterns, categories and descriptions (Patton, 1980); second, the realist approach which stresses explanation of events as they occur and involves three simultaneous paths of activity, namely, data reduction, data display, and
conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and, finally, analysis that highlights categorization, description, relationship, and data explication (Dey, 1993). Despite the variations in method and terminology, in general, qualitative data analysis emphasizes data classification, connections between classifications, and explicit interpretation and understanding of the data. The method of analysis depends on the kind of data collected. For example, Miles and Huberman (1994) contend that because participatory research is an approach which aims at changing the social environment through a method of critical inquiry by acting on the world, data analysis should concentrate on descriptions in the initial stages, and go through to the search for underlying concepts or ideals. As Miles and Huberman write:

The analytic tasks emphasize the use of action-related constructs, seen in a melioristic frame and intellectual ‘emancipation’ through unpacking taken-for-granted views and deleting invisible but oppressive structures (p. 9).

Analyzing data is a continuing process in participatory research. While there are several ways to analyze data collected from interviews, discussions, field work and workshops, the data analysis of this study essentially utilized qualitative procedures with a focus on generating meaning within a particular setting (Lather, 1992). The analysis process primarily followed Owens’ (1982) conceptual funnel. Owens’ (1982) method of data analysis is an ongoing process from the inception of data collection which entails:

Working with data all the while, ever trying to more fully understand what the data mean - making decisions as to how to check and how to verify as the investigation unfolds (p. 11).

Accordingly, data analysis formed an integral part of the whole gamut of the research strategy of this study. That is to say, I analyzed the data continuously from the beginning of the research although I did most of the analysis after I had collected all the data. Therefore,
there were two major phases of data analysis in this study, namely, the collection phase, and the analysis phase. Owens (1982) contends that in the early stages of the study, the researcher devotes about 80 percent of the time and effort gathering data and spends about 20 percent of the time on the analysis; and in the latter stages, the researcher may devote about 80 percent to analysis and 20 percent to data collection. During the collection phase, while I continuously referred to, and reflected on the data being collected, I also compiled some systematic field notes that might be useful to the study. The analysis period entailed classifications, the formation and testing of ideas, making connections among ideas, and relating concepts to the literature review.

The initial stage of data analysis for the interviews was data reduction. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe data reduction as:

the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the 'raw' data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions ... data reduction occurs throughout the life of any qualitative oriented project (p. 10).

This stage comprised the preparation of interview summaries of the fifty-eight interviewees for verification by respondents. First, I listened to each audio tape and made detailed notes or transcription of the interviewees' responses. I then subjected each of the responses to a coding system I developed to identify each of the respondents and the interview questions to which they responded (see Appendix H). I separated each of the respondents/responses using as guidelines the research questions for the study. The objective was to categorize each of the responses according to common patterns, themes or ideas that fit into the research questions.

Following data reduction was a descriptive analysis which gave a feeling for the views of the participants and sorted out the actual data that would answer the research questions. This stage of analysis included the search for patterns, repeated themes or views that conform to
categories such as purpose and meaning of education, control of education, school-community relations, shortcomings and priorities of schooling. As the analysis continued, I recorded theoretical memos about what the patterns possibly meant, and drew from research questions and the analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during the data collection. I then assigned the emerging ideas and patterns to categories. For example, first, I assigned pieces of information relating to school governance, budgeting, accountability and efficiency in the schooling system to the category of control; second, I assigned issues relating to parental involvement in schooling, teacher orientation into the community, communication between teachers and parents, to the category of school-community relations; and, third, problems relating to curriculum, student attendance, school supplies, facilities, and so on were in the category of shortcomings of schooling.

In order to prevent incidents of single, possibly well-articulated or emphatic views of individual respondents from outshining the others, I counted the number of respondents who expressed a certain view or theme relating to a concept. Rather than considering the majority view of total respondents, the unit of analysis was each of the groups I invited to participate in the research. I considered groups such as the advisory committee, elders of the community, parents, teachers, and students as levels of analysis. To view a perception as a factor, a majority of participants belonging to each of the groups would have had to refer to it as an issue, and, therefore, deserving to be considered in the analysis and presentation of the results of this study. Apart from helping to shape meaning for the combined viewpoints of respondents, the counting also helped me to understand the viewpoints held by the majority of respondents. Thus, data analysis at this stage essentially, involved coding and counting the data according to
the categorized indicators and highlighting further indicators that became evident from the raw data. The counting helped me to remain objective about the meaning of the data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) write:

Doing qualitative analysis of all data with the aid of numbers is a good way of testing for possible bias, and seeing how robust our insights are (p. 254).

Lastly, I verified the final conclusions by confirming and substantiating the interpretations that appeared in the data for their validity to establish some truth in the responses of participants. In order to establish and communicate meaning from the data, and, to provide conceptual consistency by grouping details under more general ideas, I identified and labelled emerging themes and patterns (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In analyzing documents, first, I reviewed them and determined their significance to my study, and prepared a document summary form (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A series of questions guided document analysis, such as what notions of education for Native children did the documents reflect; what perceptions of viewpoints on schooling did the documents convey? The issues that arose from the analysis of the documents provided some direction and guidance in the field and enabled me to understand the problem of schooling in the Native community (for an example, see Appendix G).

Group discussions also constituted a valuable source of data for this study. I prepared guidelines for discussions and took notes which included observations about individual interactions, and group dynamics, comments by participants about schooling, and overall reflections. These notes, summary reports, and daily journal entries constituted a major part of the data for my dissertation (see Appendix D).
Given the researcher's and participants' commitment to enlightenment and action, the researcher did not intend to present the results of the study with the purpose of making them more reliable and valid than those of dominant research paradigms. However, to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data, the design of this research utilized Lather's (1986) four-way approach to validating alternative research paradigms. Lather asserts that researchers should build triangulation, reflexive subjectivity, face validity, and catalytic validity into their research designs. First, Lather addresses triangulation as the inclusion in the research design of various data sources, procedures, and theoretical outlines which seek contrasting patterns as well as similarities. This research utilized various data sources, such as field notes, interviews, discussions, meetings and workshops. Second, reflexive subjectivity concerns an honest documentation of how the researcher's personal impressions have been influenced by the logic of the data. This chapter starts with my personal and cultural introduction to enable the reader understand any subjectivity of opinion that may emerge in the thesis. Third, face validity is created by "recycling categories, emerging analysis, back through at least a subsample of respondents" (Lather, 1986, p. 78). In this study, after typing the interview summaries for example, I took the summaries back to participants in order for participants and researcher to review them and make necessary modifications. I also presented all participants with workshop summary reports (see Appendix D) in order for them to read them and make the necessary corrections. Furthermore, because I had to employ an interpreter to translate the answers of community people who could not answer the interview questions in English, there may be a possibility for misinterpretation. In order to minimize this possibility, I subjected the tape recordings in Ojibwe to a second interpretation. In all cases, the second interpreter confirmed
the translation of the first one. Finally, catalytic validity follows when there is "some documentation that the research process has led to insight and, ideally, activism on the part of the respondents" (Lather, 1986 p. 78). Catalytic validity should be crucial to this study, as its main purpose was to promote participants' understanding of their own capabilities and right to control decisions affecting them. Chapter 9 of the study addresses this concern, in that the chapter documented participants' priorities for schooling and their suggested strategies for action. Accordingly, this study meets the four criteria for judging the trustworthiness of a participatory research.

Categories of Research Questions

There are five categories of research questions in the study:

Category 1 dealt with an investigation of the viewpoints community people of Cat Lake had on education:

(a) What are the views of community people on the purpose of schooling?
(b) What do the people of Cat Lake want their children to achieve from schooling?
(c) What do community people perceive as an appropriate curriculum for their children?

Category 2 pertained to issues of Native control of education:

(a) What powers does the government bestow on the people of Cat Lake in the control of their school system?
(b) What powers do the Cat Lake people perceive they possess in the control of education?
(c) What are the actual structures that the community employs in the control of education?
Category 3 explored school-community relations:

(a) What is the nature of the relationship that exists between the school and the community?

(b) How do parents and teachers communicate?

(c) How are teachers integrated into the community?

Category 4 called for an examination of community people's priorities as to what educational issues they should be addressing:

(a) What do the people of Cat Lake consider as the most pressing drawbacks to schooling?

(b) What are community people's perceptions of their priorities for schooling?

Category 5 dealt with strategies community people suggested for meeting the felt needs of their school system:

(a) What ought to be the short term and long term solutions for problems facing the school?

(b) What strategies would community people and educators adopt to solve the problems affecting the school?
CHAPTER 4

THE COMMUNITY, INDIAN EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL

This chapter presents a portrait of Cat Lake and its school. It describes the broad geographical, historical, social, traditional and economic conditions of the community as a backdrop towards a better understanding of the conditions that directly influence schooling in the community. The chapter also reviews the various schools for Indian children in Canada, the Ontario Common Curriculum (1993) and outlines the organizational structure of the school as a basis of understanding the context of schooling.

The Community

Cat Lake is a relatively small isolated Indian reserve in the Sioux Lookout District of Northwestern Ontario. The Sioux Lookout District has over twenty small Native communities. Cat Lake, about 2,000 kilometres from Toronto, the provincial capital, relies on the metropolitan centres of Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, which are each of about 700 kilometres away, for its essential supplies of merchandise. The reserve is reached only by daily scheduled flights or by a winter road during February and March. One can fly into the reserve only when the weather permits. The first language spoken in the community is Ojibwe with English being a second language. While many people between the ages of 5 and 40 speak good English some older people speak very little and others do not at all speak English. The reserve is a member band of a number of First Nations organizations, namely, the Windigo Tribal Council, the Windigo Education Authority (W.E.A.), the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), and, the Northern
Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC). All these organizations influence the development of education in Cat Lake.

Cat Lake, Bearskin Lake and Sachigo Lake formed the Windigo Education Authority and initiated local control of their schools in September, 1988. Each of the three communities has an education authority with a local education coordinator or director.

Community History

Many elders in the community believe that the area has been inhabited by Indians for about a thousand years. Their beliefs emanate from arrow-heads that were found by airport construction workers and identified by archaeologists. The community people also believe that the area acted as a trade entrepot for the fur trade in the eighteenth century. As Keewatin-Aski Limited Consulting Engineers and Planners (1991) write:

Early recorded history of activity on the Cat Lake River system dates back to 1798, and a Hudson Bay post, and elders talk of a Northwest Trading Company agent prior to the Hudson Bay presence. In the 1930's, negotiations were generally brought about to establish a reserve on Cat Lake and in 1940 a section of land was surveyed and designated to be a Reserve. In this period, a significant community had been established at Cat Lake, as an extension of the Osnaburgh Band 63B (p. 9).

Situated on the promontory of a lake which afforded easy access by Europeans during the period of the fur trade, Cat Lake attained a band status, with its own chief in 1970.

Before the coming of Europeans, the people of Cat Lake based their livelihood on hunting and gathering. As W.M. an 87 year-old woman claimed:

*We didn't have houses like we have today. We lived in tents. We lived in the community during the summer months only. We returned from the traplines to the community by the end of May. We lived here in June and July, and by August, we started leaving for the traplines* (Interview with Community elder, Cat Lake [E0102]).
Community law and order were specifically designed to protect the people's means of livelihood. There were laws about respect for one another during hunting periods, family safety laws which specified areas that were dangerous hunting grounds particularly during the winter months, and laws that required people to notify their neighbours whenever they went hunting. The notification law, for example, meant that community people could trace hunters in case they were lost or involved in accidents and did not return to the community.

Kinship ties were very strong among community people. They did not see the need of using punishments to keep law and order. I asked an elder about the kind of punishments that existed in the past. As W.M. remarked:

*I can remember that when I was a child, they didn't use to punish people* [She paused and thought for a while]. *In fact, there were not many problems as we have now, and there were no punishments. Elders talked to the person who did something wrong. They asked the person to correct his or her behaviour. Even if the person repeated the offence, elders will still talk about forgiveness and ask the person to try and change his or her behaviour. Forgiveness is part of our lifestyle (E0102).*

Accordingly, the respondent suggested that in the past, community people resolved problems by sitting together and talking about issues until they reached a consensus. They first explored the root causes of each problem and tried to find ways and means of solving it.

Polygamy was common among the people of Cat Lake. As W.M. stated:

*I married in the church. I married in 1934 at the St. John’s Church in Cat Lake. It was during the time when the Church started that polygamy stopped. During our time, a man should have at least a five-year relationship with a woman and all the parents of both the man and the woman should agree before a marriage took place. Nowadays men just meet women and they get married without the consent of parents* (Interview with a community elder, Cat Lake [E0103]).
Native Traditions Today

I found a significant level of awareness of past traditions among the elders of the community. Younger people in general, are not knowledgeable on matters concerning past traditional beliefs, cultural patterns and expectations of the Native people. Nevertheless, data from elderly people strongly confirm that even though children are raised to speak Ojibwe, there is a comprehensive pool of information on local traditions which is virtually unknown to the young and non-Native people who teach the children.

The first group of community people to acquire formal education went to school outside the community in the 1920's. The early years of formal education attempted to replace Native traditions with western ones. Despite the effects of western education in replacing Native traditions, many elders conserve some cache of traditional knowledge. One of the most important traditions upheld by all the people of Cat Lake is the social bond that ties every community member to a common ancestry, and the Ojibwe language which conveys traditional knowledge to the people. Most community people speak the Ojibwe language fluently, and a few others who have tended to lose their language because they lived outside the community for long periods of time, wish they could speak as fluently as others. A common attitude I observed among community people is that they do not like to speak English when there is at least one person around them that can understand Ojibwe. The notes I recorded at a meeting the school staff attended with the Chief and Council on a school closure confirm how much community people like to speak the Ojibwe language:

At our meeting this morning to discuss the school closure caused by the oil spill contamination, I noticed that while we were discussing what teachers and students should be doing during the closure, in English, [Name of community member] who speaks English fluently changed to Ojibwe. Deliberations continued in Ojibwe for a period of
about fifteen minutes before changing back into English. We the non-Native participants didn’t know what was going on. Our strangeness was immediately apparent to us. Strangely, nobody explained to us what was discussed in Ojibwe before continuing the discussion in English (Field notes: April 18, 1994).

This observation would appear to support the importance of the Ojibwe language for the people of Cat Lake.

The community people feel that everybody is related to everyone else in the community. The people of the community convey this relationship during periods of joy or sorrow. Christmas, for example is a communal affair, which culminates in a community feast at the Recreation Centre. During a period of bereavement, everybody in the community takes a holiday and partakes in burial arrangements and ceremonies.

Cat Lake Native tradition has not survived in the youth of the community. I did not find much evidence of the involvement of the middle-aged and young people in traditional ways of life, and ways of thinking. Not many of the middle-aged and young people have close ties with the events of the Cat Lake past. As with all cultures, the culture of Cat Lake is dynamic. It is changing and adapting to new times. The ideals and ethics of Native life which old people take for granted are not observed by the broad spectrum of society, particularly the younger generation. The establishment of band councils by the government of Canada to administer Native communities and enforce law and order has much to do with the demise of Native culture in some Native communities of which Cat Lake is no exception. Native law has been replaced by western law and the values, customs and conflict resolution ideals of Native people are largely unknown by the present generation. For example, the present generation does not seem to uphold values such as respect for elders and helping each other.
The most significant element that has kept the pattern of life intact for the Native people of Cat Lake has been the system of kinship that developed among the people long before the influence of the whiteman. This system of common descent or lineage has been the basis of the Cat Lake society. The powerful and thorough social system gave to every individual status, virtue, obligations and responsibilities within his or her society, all through those years when Native people had suffered degradation and had no rights or responsibilities in the Canadian society. I found interest, patronage and pride in the comments of the 87-year old woman regarding some facets of Native life in the years before the advent of schooling.

_When I was a young girl, people had respect for one another. People helped each other and families that didn’t have food were helped by the others. When the head person of the family was sick other people would hunt for the sick person’s family. When people go hunting, everybody should know where they were going so that when they were lost, we would go look for them. If anybody had a problem, the whole extended family sat down to talk about it and discussed ways of solving it. Marriage issues were discussed by the two families concerned. They discussed the issue until they came to a consensus. There were never broken marriages in those days (Interview with community elder, Cat Lake [E0104])._

However, some elders indicated that the close affinity that kept the people of Cat Lake together, and which made them a common extended family is giving way to individualism among younger families. Families have started shrinking into the nuclear family system and parents do not educate children about the relationships in the community. As the elderly woman put:

_Today, parents do not educate their children about their relations. Children should not forget that they have uncles, aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers. One of my grandsons next door did not know that I was his father’s mother until recently. Although he calls me ‘kokom’ [grandmother] he didn’t know I was his father’s mother. That is not good. Parents don’t communicate much with their children (Interview with community elder, Cat Lake [E0105])._

Some young people have confirmed the loss of their tradition, particularly language. I heard M.C. in his early forties complaining about the loss of the traditional form of speaking.
As the man stated:

*Sometimes I find it difficult to know the exact Ojibwe words to use when I describe things. I have noticed that most young people mix English with Ojibwe when talking. Sometimes I wonder if our elders understand when we talk to them. The English language contains words that we can't use traditionally. But these words are very common with we the younger people. Our language doesn’t have swear words, but nowadays most of us use these words very frequently.* (C4119).

**Population**

The community has a rapidly growing population. The population has grown from 392 in 1986 to about 500 in 1993, an average annual growth of about 4 percent. The population lives in 85 households with an average of about 6 occupants per household. Unlike the general trend of an ageing population in Canada, the population of Cat Lake is young. About 55 percent of the population is under 20, and about 25 percent is at present in school in the community. There are about 20 teenagers attending high school outside the community.

For community decision making and planning purposes, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has a population projection for Cat Lake for a half century. Table 2 shows population projection from 1990 to year 2040.
Table 2: Population Projections for Cat Lake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>2,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>2,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>3,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>4,720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INAC, 1990

Table 2 shows that the population of Cat Lake may grow up to over 4,000 residents by the year 2040. The population projections are important for the future planning for the community. As Keewatin-Aski, Consulting Engineers (1991) for the community stated:

Analysis of population has traditionally been the cornerstone of community decision making and planning. It establishes upper limits or thresholds for size of services and/or facilities and it serves as an indication of future need for a variety of land uses such as housing (p. 26).

Given that the community has a higher percentage of younger population than an ageing population, if the community retains its young population, Cat Lake will continue to grow in population as these younger people grow to establish their own family units. However, in a survey conducted by Keewatin-Aski Consulting Engineers (1991), they found that because of
lack of employment opportunities in the community, people of working age leave to find jobs in other places.

Community Facilities

Cat Lake has a number of facilities that are common in most reserves in Northern Ontario. In 1988, Ontario Hydro began to supply electricity to the community. Electricity is provided by a diesel generating terminal located at the airport. The generator provides adequate power for lighting and basic needs to almost every home and community facility.

Access to the community from outside is by plane. The Ministry of Transportation and Communications built an airport in 1984 to handle air transportation needs of the community. The airport supports a small bungalow facility for its personnel, who usually come from Thunder Bay. Cat Lake’s airstrip sometimes closes down temporarily at the outset of spring. The airport is not equipped with modern technological facilities such as instrument landing. The Ministry has provided a small cabin for departing and arriving passengers. The Bearskin Airlines provide on average two daily flights to Sioux Lookout, the Sabourine Airlines, Wasaya Air, and Wild Country Airlines provide one daily flight respectively. The main aircraft that ply the routes are Beech 99’s and Cessna 180’s. The community people also make considerable use of float and ski-equipped aircraft for trapping and hunting trips and travelling to other communities. During winter months, community people construct a winter road, which usually officially opens in February until the end of March. The winter road is an important means of transporting vehicles and other heavy equipment into the community.
Other facilities in the community are a television which is mainly for the transmission of TV Ontario and CBC (Montreal) channels. Health services for the community are provided by Health and Welfare Canada, through the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital, Medical Services Branch. There is a community radio station operated by the local people as a means of communication. Almost every household has access to a telephone maintained by Bell Canada. One Northern Store supplies groceries, clothing and merchandise. There is the Wahsa Distance Learning Centre which was established in 1991 and financed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The learning centre is mainly to assist high school dropouts to complete their courses. There are two local pool houses which are important centres for the youth. The Cat River Motel, operated by a community member, is the only lodging for visitors, who are usually government employees, business consultants and contractors.

Although Cat Lake is not linked by an all weather road, many families own different kinds of vehicles, such as trucks, cars, four-wheelers, boats with outboard motors and snowmobiles. They usually bring these items into the community through the winter road. Almost every household/family owns a snowmobile, which is a major form of transportation during winter. The community becomes ebullient with the sound of the snowmobile as soon as the first snowfalls begin, usually, by the end of September or the beginning of October, until late April or early May when most of the snow thaws away. With the advent of the use of vehicles and fuels for vehicles and heating, pollution as a problem is now being recognized by the community people. Apart from scrap metal of old vehicles and gadgets lying around in some parts of the community, oil spills from old tanks, particularly, in the school yard, and sewage and material from packaged goods which community people buy from the Store account for
pollution within the community. Garbage and sewage is a problem in the community, and will continue to be a problem if the Band does not make proper arrangements for the disposal of garbage. The severity of the problem of garbage disposal has been exemplified by field notes I recorded:

*The snow had now almost thawed off the ground completely after a long, cold winter. I took a walk around the community this morning and have been surprised by the amount of garbage that was underneath the snow. It was amazing to see the heap of pop cans lying around the community. The whole community seemed to be in a blanket of wrapping papers, large moose bones and empty cartons. The airport is strewn with garbage blown from the dump site and it seemed that most of the garbage sent to the dump site was blown by ghastly winds into the community. I found the situation appalling as it may endanger the health of community residents [Field notes: April 7, 1994].*

The present system of garbage disposal does not predict the good health of community residents. A better garbage disposal system may be to bury or burn all the garbage instead of exposing it to be carried back into the community by strong winds.

There are the Anglican, Pentecostal, and a local church in the community. However, the people of Cat Lake do not, in general, seem to be religious. Although there are the three churches in the community, few people participate in worship on Sundays. Cat Lake, in many ways, does not seem to uphold its Native tradition to a very high extent as some of the Native communities I have known. Although traditional pursuits such as hunting and trapping are still a way of life to some families, most of the community people do not encourage traditional beliefs and indigenous religious practices. The most celebrated event is the "Moose Derby" which takes place in the second week of September. During this period, most of the adult male population flies out to various hunting grounds for a moose hunt. The community organizes a feast on the last day of the hunt and awards prizes according to a set criterion, usually by
measuring the size of antlers. For example, in 1994, the first prize of $6,000.00 went to the hunter who had a moose with antlers that were 52 inches in diameter.

The Productive Life of Cat Lake

Unemployment is relatively high in the community. In 1994, there were 74 full time employees in Cat Lake. Most of the full time employment in the community is at the Band Office, the School, the Northern Store, and the Nursing Station, with a few more positions becoming available with road, electrical, airstrip, water and sewerage, and telephone services. The only non-Native residents of the community are teachers, nurses, and Northern Store workers and manager. Table 3 shows a breakdown of employment of Native and non-Native employees in Cat Lake.
Table 3: Distribution of Full Time Employment Between Native and Non-Native Residents of Cat Lake in 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>No. of Native Staff</th>
<th>No. of non-Native Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Office</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Station</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Store</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that in 1994, the Band Office was the largest employer, with 33 employees. The school employed 16 staff people, 9 of whom were Native. Apart from the kindergarten teacher, all the teaching staff and the principal were non-Native. Among the Native staff were 3 tutor escorts, an assistant teacher, the school secretary, an education counsellor, and a custodian. The Nursing Station employed 2 qualified non-Native nurses, and employed 5 Native support staff. The Store manager and two other employees were non-Native.

There are very few other part time or seasonal employments in Cat Lake. The inhabitants of Cat Lake still undertake traditional pursuits of fishing and trapping on a small scale. Fishing and trapping provide a seasonal income to some families. A commercial fishing industry started in the early 1990s but could not survive because residents were not making much
income out of it. During the summer, some community people earn income as tour guides to American fishermen and hunters.

While Cat Lake seems to have many problems peculiar to most Indian reserves in Canada, it also has a vision for the future. The community is intensely interested in developing to the maximum extent fitting to its own dream of itself as a Native community and wants to be able to provide for its own needs in the near future. Although Cat Lake might not realize its aspiration for self sufficiency in the near future, there might be some progress towards decreasing the usual dependence on welfare. However, it may not be possible to decrease the average dependence on welfare if the population continues to grow at an annual rate of 4 per cent over the next few decades. At the present 66 per cent welfare recipient rate, it is difficult to see how the Band could reduce the present dependency level even if it utilizes all the available opportunities for creating employment efficiently.

Given the constant unemployment problems in Cat Lake, it seems contradictory that most people would prefer to keep the young generation at home. However, the Economic Development Office located in the Band Office is aware of the unemployment problem and has embarked on a number of job creation plans. First, the office has established a Native Residential Construction Worker Program in which the band has invited experts from outside to train community youth in construction, plumbing and electrical fields. The program started with about 10 students in May, 1994 and the first graduates would receive their diplomas by December 1994. Second, the office is embarking on a plan of creating small businesses in the community. For example, in order to take control over some of the retail trade, the band office has planned to establish a band-operated cooperative store to compete with the Northern Store.
The two pool houses in the community have started operating small grocery outlets. By far, the most ambitious projects conceived by the Economic Development Office are the construction of homes for seniors, and a water and sewerage project to commence in 1995. The construction of homes and the water and sewerage project should provide new job opportunities for the community people.

Although some of the development plans are explicitly long term, and a few might seem too ambitious to undertake in the near future, it is certain that the people of Cat Lake are definitely aware of what they need in their community that would make life easier for the residents.

Accordingly, Cat Lake stays a small Indian reserve with a vision for the future. Community administrators are becoming aware that in order to sustain an effective self government, they do not only need funds to be supplied by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), but they also need qualified personnel to administer the funds for the development of the community. This is where they see the need for young people to be well educated in order to help develop the community.

Problems

Alcoholism, teenage suicide, starvation and single-parent families are serious social problems in Cat Lake. Although Cat Lake is a dry reserve, that is to say, alcohol and intoxicants are not allowed in the reserve, people have been known to brew or distill their own sources of alcohol. Some community people become intoxicated and sometimes engage in violent activities against family members. Gasoline sniffing and alcohol abuse are serious
problems among school children. At the time of the study, twelve students were in various
detoxication and rehabilitation centres outside the community. In one year there had been two
teensage suicides.

Schools for Indian Children in Canada

In this section, I discuss schools for Indian children in Canada as a backdrop for a more
suitable understanding of the context in which to analyze schooling in Cat Lake as it exists
today.

Indian children in Canada attend different kinds of schools. Indian children attend school
according to where they are located. Although, by law, there are no schools exclusively for
Indian children, many schools in Northern Ontario are attended only by Indian children. Most
of these schools are in Indian reserves. Schooling outside the Native communities has not been
a pleasant experience for Native children. Perhaps Paquette (1986a) draws a parallel that would
capture the social world of a Native child. Paquette asserts that to educate the Native child by
mainstream Canadian standards is the equivalent of middle-class Anglo-Saxon parents making
their children educated in the Native Language, living several years with Native families on an
Indian reserve, and spending several winter months dwelling on traplines, fishing and hunting
grounds. As Paquette writes of the analogy:

While the inverted analogy of such a move is perplexing within the positivistic worldview
of non-Native world, the implications and emotional impact are perhaps worth
considering in understanding the widely observed hesitancy of the great majority of
northern Native parents to encourage their children to leave the reserve for further
education (p. 132).
The INAC Indian Day Schools

Up to the late 1980's, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provided education to most of status Indian children who lived on reserves. These schools were known as Indian Day Schools (to distinguish them from residential schools). INAC provided the financial and human resources for the Indian day schools and, maintained and administered them through regional and district offices. INAC allowed Indian communities to have differing proportions of control over distinctive areas of the school system, such as custodial services, cultural and language programs. While communities might operate and maintain the school plant, utmost control would lie in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs.

In some cases the Department of Indian Affairs encouraged Native people to form school boards or councils. The level of operation of the boards or councils would vary from one reserve to another. Where the school boards might be functional, their role would be limited to purely that of an advisory board with the ultimate authority in decision making residing in the Department.

Band-Operated Schools

Since 1973, the Department of Indian Affairs has ceded most of its day schools to on-reserve local education authorities. Band-operated schools have grown in their numbers in the 1980's and there are only a handful of Indian Day schools in Ontario under INAC's control. Whether or not local control makes the schools a better place for Indian children will form the subject of another section. However, there is growing evidence that bands are gradually moving towards controlling many facets of the education of their children. In effect, they control the
hiring and termination of teachers, they maintain and operate the school plant, and control the income and expenditure of the school. It may seem to many outsiders and Native people that local control of education was, perhaps, impossible because Native people lacked both the human and material resources to manage an educational enterprise. Individual Native communities may, certainly, lack the expertise to control the many vital components involved in the provision of educational services. An individual community may not be able to produce and support extensive and relevant curriculum and maintenance utilities for its educational system. Perhaps, too, local education authorities could not have a voice in the training of the kind of teachers they might want for their schools. It is not surprising, therefore, that bands are joining together to form area, district and regional Native Education authorities and in some cases education councils which for now are managing the affairs of primary, secondary and post secondary education.

Urban Boards of Education

There is a relatively significant number of non-status Indian students attending public schools in urban centres across the country. In some urban centres, there are public schools which are exclusively attended by Native children (an example is the Children of The Earth School in Winnipeg). While some schools across the country feel that they are ethically obliged to provide suitable programs for their Native students, in others, the Department of Indian affairs has to arrange tuition-cost contracts with school boards to make concerted efforts to modify or refurbish their programs to meet the demands of Native children.

In general, public schools have not done much to improve educational standards of Native
children: According to Paquette (1986a):

The rule [in public schools] appears to be much closer to a wholesale streaming of Native students into basic and least promising 'vocational-course' sequences. Even where a generous and carefully crafted tuition-cost agreement is in place between INAC (or band) and a board of education, no effective guarantee exists of a commensurate improvement in the relevance or quality of programs available to Native students (p. 44).

Ontario Isolate School Boards

Provincial governments across Canada have made provision for the administration of schools in remote areas. In northern Ontario, for example, isolate boards exist in all three regions, namely, the northeastern region with its headquarters in North Bay; the mid-northern region with its regional office in Sudbury; and, the northwestern region with its regional office in Thunder Bay. The provincial government provides the funds for the schools in these regions by a method of funding which depends on the number of students in the school. Many of the schools run by isolate boards are predominantly for Native children. In northwestern Ontario, for example, there are about fifteen of such boards. As the boards run the schools in a provincial manner, they are different in operation from the Indian day schools and band-operated schools. They usually follow the provincial curriculum and are controlled and supervised from the regional capital.

The Northern Nishnawbe Education Council

A recent development of a district education council for Native children in Ontario is the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (N.N.E.C.) with its headquarters in Lac Seul, Ontario. The N.N.E.C. was established in 1979 "to administer INAC's 'off-reserve' secondary and post
secondary programs on behalf of the (now) 23 First Nations in the Sioux Lookout area" (Long, 1994, p. 10). The N.N.E.C. is an education authority which employs full time staff to undertake diverse secondary and post secondary activities of Native children. According to Long (1994):

The creation of the N.N.E.C. in 1979 provided a measure of control of education by the Sioux Lookout First Nations which had not existed since the signing of treaties (p. 10). Although the N.N.E.C. regards itself as a forerunner of the establishment of local control of education in the Sioux Lookout District, local education authorities did not want the council to interfere in their educational affairs when local communities actually gained control of education in the late 1980's (Long, 1994). As Long (1994) explains the position taken by the local education authorities against the N.N.E.C.:

The situation may be because NNEC was established in a completely different way, which by-passed individual First Nation control, totally excluded L.E.A.s' and relied on a form of regional control - which by its very nature and despite the goodwill of its staff - inherently lacked an ability to accommodate community differences (p. 11).

The N.N.E.C. describes its objective for the post secondary program as follows:

To support status Indians to gain entry to post secondary education and to graduate with the qualifications and skills needed to pursue individual careers (N.N.E.C., 1993 p. 1). Thus, the N.N.E.C. provides money for the maintenance of status Indians who are recommended by their communities for sponsorship, and willing to pursue post secondary education. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) directly provides funds for the operation of the N.N.E.C., as well as local education authorities. N.N.E.C. uses INAC's funds in various ways: first, to pay school boards, colleges, and universities for Native children's education; second, as allowances for students; and, third, for the transportation of students between their communities and schools. The role N.N.E.C. plays in overseeing the
welfare of high school students by providing them with essential services such as counselling and boarding home facilities, makes it a unique education council in Canada.

The future autonomy of the N.N.E.C., as well as the local education authorities, greatly depends on their ability to develop a power base capable of controlling the numerous essential demands in the provision of educational enterprises. Indian control of Indian education would become meaningful only when Indian education authorities begin to develop their own curricula and begin to influence teacher education programs in the universities. Perhaps, it seems, INAC will continue to control Native school systems, one way or the other, as long as it continues to provide the funds for their upkeep. However, whether INAC's control remains only a fiduciary obligation will depend on the extent to which Native people have come to understand the concept and processes of educational administration.

Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Document

In order to provide a suitable background for interpreting curriculum issues in the school in Cat Lake, this section reviews the Ontario Ministry of Education Common Curriculum document.

The Common Curriculum (1993)

The *Common Curriculum* is the Ministry of Education and Training's curriculum for the Province of Ontario for Grades 1 to 9. The framers of the curriculum designed it to respond to present and expected developments and changes internally and world-wide. The intention of the Common Curriculum is to provide directions for teachers, principals, consultants, school
boards and trustees in curriculum development, implementation, and review. The document is not intended as a blueprint for schools in Ontario, rather, its aim is to enable individuals to design programs that comply with local needs. According to the framers:

The curriculum supersedes the one described in the *Formative Years*, 1975, and the subject guidelines for Grades 7 to 9, including those developed under *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (OSIS), 1989. However, these and other earlier ministry documents remain valuable as resources for program planning (1993 p. 1) [italics theirs].

The *Common Curriculum*, (1993) has five major features. First, the developers defined it in terms of learning outcomes rather than objectives or time allocation. Outcomes involve knowledge that is observable or measurable; and, values and skills that students would have to acquire and develop at specific stages of their schooling. The outcomes describe what students should know, what they should be able to do and what they should value in course of their learning experiences. The learning outcomes form the basis of the programs, class activities and specific outcomes that education authorities may develop for each grade.

Second, the curriculum planners developed it in such a way that school programs can adapt to differing abilities, needs, and interests, as well as various racial and cultural backgrounds of all the students in the school. Third, the curriculum takes a holistic view of the world by placing emphasis on links and relationships. It considers relationships among ideas, among people, and among occurrences. As a result of their holistic view, the framers of the curriculum gave little attention to traditional subject disciplines and organized subject matter and outcomes into wide syllabus areas.

Fourth, the curriculum makes it necessary for school systems and school boards to collaborate with staff, students and community people to ensure that school programs meet local
needs. That is to say, schools may be able to adapt to the varying needs of their students by organizing their programs and work towards the achievement of the stated outcomes in a wide variety of ways. Finally, the curriculum provides a basis for assessing student achievement and the effectiveness of programs by emphasizing outcomes. Continuous assessment would provide the basis for program and method modification which would gear instruction towards meeting the needs and interests of individual students.

A major appealing aspect of the Common Curriculum is that it clearly spells out principles underlying the curriculum, those underlying teaching, and those underlying assessment and evaluation of student achievement.

**Principles Underlying the Common Curriculum.** There are five principles underlying the curriculum. First, the school culture should possibly contribute to learning. That is to say, all experiences students acquire in school should directly contribute to learning. Generally, the curriculum contains all the experiences that students might encounter in school. These include all the activities and experiences that the program might contain, available learning resources, teaching strategies, disciplinary and evaluation procedures, and, staff and student relationships. The curriculum also emphasizes experiences that students would acquire from their social interaction in the classroom, the school, and the society-at-large. The Common Curriculum requires school administrators and teachers to ensure that the school climate strengthens the ability of students to achieve its learning outcomes.

Second, the curriculum should prepare students for the modern world. The framers of the curriculum suggest that in order for students to understand educational issues broadly, school programs should be integrated. The integration of programs would enable students to understand
relationships between ideas and be able to apply knowledge and skills to a wide variety of subject areas and contexts. Third, the curriculum should adapt to changing needs and circumstances. In other words, curriculum developers must ensure that programs reflect current and future requirements. Teachers and students should regard learning as a lifelong process in which the student develops knowledge, skills, and understanding by interpreting and solving problems creatively.

The fourth principle underlying the curriculum is that it should reflect the diverse groups of society and should be free of bias. This aspect of the curriculum mainly deals with the relationship of the student's culture to the curriculum. Because students' self-conception, as well as their perceptions of others and attitudes towards them, is affected by what they learn, the curriculum should acknowledge both the diversity and common aspirations of the various racial and ethnocultural heritage of all students. In other words, the curriculum must be relevant by reflecting the various cultures of all students. Finally, the curriculum should recognize individuals' strengths, needs, and backgrounds through relevant learning activities. Students need a variety of learning activities in order for them to develop their personal effectiveness and aspirations.

**Principles Underlying Teaching.** The *Common Curriculum* (1993) lists three major principles underlying teaching. First, teaching methods should respond adequately to the differing backgrounds of students, their needs and abilities. Teachers should use a variety of teaching methods to enable students of a wide range of backgrounds, interests, abilities and learning styles to learn effectively. Second, instructional methods should stress vigorous enquiry and relationship between ideas. Finally, all members of the school community should
collaborate in their search for implementing a curriculum and a learning situation that is holistic. That is to say, teachers, principals and community members should draw upon each other's resources to develop a workable curriculum.

**Principles Underlying Assessment and Evaluation.** The curriculum document specifies four major principles underlying assessment and evaluation of students. First, assessment and evaluation of student progress should form an integral part of the *Common Curriculum*. Student assessment should be based on expected outcomes. The assessment should be continuous and ongoing involving the student, peers, teachers, and parents. Evaluation results should be used by teachers to appraise the effectiveness of programs and to make modifications which would enable students to achieve the intended outcomes in the classroom. Evaluation results should also form the basis of reports concerning student achievement.

The second principle requires teachers to utilize a broad range of assessment methods that are compatible with the teaching methods they use and are appropriate in describing the progress made by students. That is to say, because of the complex nature of the learning outcomes of the common curriculum, teachers should use both qualitative and quantitative methods of assessment which should include all facets of student learning and should be relevant for students' ages and levels of maturity. The third principle requires teachers to consider the special requirements of students and work in collaboration with their parents while evaluating them. Finally, principals and teachers should base the evaluation of school programs on school board and provincial standards and should use evaluation results for school improvement.
Commentary on Ontario Common Curriculum, 1993. In a study of Native high school dropouts in Ontario, Mackay and Myles (1989) assert that curriculum-related factors are among the most significant reasons for dropping out of school. Students are not interested in school because they feel school is of little importance in their lives as much of the work they do is meaningless to them.

While many researchers of Native education give lip service to the importance of developing a relevant curriculum for Native children, the reality remains that most of the schools for Native children, including band-operated schools, continue to adhere to curriculum guidelines developed by the province for mainstream Canadian schools without any modification. Apart from the area of curriculum, teacher training and qualification, additional teaching services, and professional development are within provincial jurisdiction.

The Common Curriculum offered suggested guidelines for teaching practices in Ontario. It was the intent of the Ontario Government, and the framers of the curriculum document that classroom teachers throughout the province of Ontario would use the document as a guideline for their daily teaching practices. Unlike conventional curriculum documents that might suggest themes and topics for teaching, the Common Curriculum would enable individual school systems to plan programs that would meet their specific needs. As the framers write of the Common Curriculum:

It is intended to provide direction to all those who have responsibility for curriculum development, implementation, and review in Ontario - teachers, principals, consultants, school board supervisory officers, and trustees. Ultimately, its aim is to enable individual schools to design programs that meet local needs (p. 1).

The expositions of the Common Curriculum would definitely enhance the control of education at the local level. The relevant question is as to whether principals and teachers of
schools have clearly understood the principles underlying the *Common Curriculum*, and, whether they are prepared to follow its guidelines in designing programs to meet the needs of their communities. The study was timely, in that it was a clear manifestation of the way the school and community people could come together to identify priorities for the school, and to design programs that would better meet the needs of the school.

**Titotay Memorial School Profile**

Formal schooling in the community started in 1954 as an enterprise run by a local resident, William Titotay. The philosophy of the first school was mainly to teach community people how to read and write the Ojibwe language in syllabics. As 73-year old W.S. told me during my interviews:

*The school-teacher William Titotay spoke little or no English, I think he knew a few words in English but did not teach English in the school. The school was one open classroom for every child who wanted to learn syllabics. William did many things as you do them today in the school. For example, he had a morning and afternoon recess time and the kids went out for lunch and came back in the afternoon. My wife attended that school and she still talks about the things they used to do in the '60's* (Interview with a community elder, Cat Lake. (E0206).

The Titotay Memorial School has been named after William Titotay, its first school-teacher. In 1973, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) took over, and provided a four-classroom block for the school to accommodate 90 students. It has since expanded to accommodate a larger number of students. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) which used to provide schooling for children of Indian communities handed the school over to band control in 1988.
At present, the Titotay Memorial School is a kindergarten to grade 8 school. The staff comprises twelve members and a custodian. Seven of the teaching staff members, who are non-Natives live in quarters near the school. The Windigo Education Authority makes, evaluates, revises, and enforces policies for the school. The highest authority at the in-school level is the principal, who is directly responsible to an education coordinator. The education coordinator is in turn responsible to a local education authority and the community at large. The Local Education Authority is made up of five members and a chairman. There is a band council member in charge of education, who is responsible to the Chief and Council of the Band.

The school buildings are an assortment of permanent facilities and prefabricated classrooms. The school is housed in 6 classrooms, two of which are in portables. There are no self-contained libraries, science laboratories, technical shops or family studies facilities. There is a community centre attached to the main school building. The Centre, built in 1989, houses a gymnasium which the school uses for purposes of physical education and assembly.

The population of the school has been quite stable since 1990. Table 4. shows enrolment of students since 1990.
Table 4: Yearly Enrolment of Students (1990-1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 indicates that within a period of five years the highest number of students attending the school in Cat Lake was 119, and the lowest was 102. There has been a relative fall in enrolment in 1994. The fall in enrolment is due to movement of students between community schools rather than a real fall or rise in the number of school-age children, that is, the enrolment figures are affected by transfers in and out of the school. When I reviewed the yearly admissions and transfers records, I found that in 1990, there were 8 transfers in and 16 transfers out; in 1991, there were 9 transfers in and 18 transfers out; and, in 1992, there were 2 transfers in and 24 transfers out.

Class sizes are relatively small. Table 5 shows student enrolment by class in 1994.
Table 5 shows that the largest class size is 15 and the smallest class size is 7. Grade 7 and 8 class sizes are small because many of the teenagers who should have been attending these classes are out in detoxication and rehabilitating centres.

The school offers the type of programs offered by most Ontario school boards, particularly, the Dryden School Board. Unlike most Native schools, the Titotay Memorial School has not been offering Native language and a cultural program since the takeover from INAC in 1988.

It is unfortunate that a spill from an oil tank contaminated the school grounds and it remained closed continually for most of the 1993/94 school year. Students and teachers did part of the first term of schooling in the three churches and the boardroom at the Band Office until they returned to the proper school building in November. The band closed the school in April, 1994 and it never opened until September, 1994. The closures probably accounted for the low
enrolment in 1994, as parents moved to other communities to enable their children to gain access to schooling.

Apart from its role in educating the children of the community, the school is important for two other reasons. First, it acts as a major employer of community people; and second, it acts as an important political symbol, in that the Chief and Band Council could close down the school in demand for certain amenities from the Federal Government. The next section reviews the relationships between the school and Windigo Education Authority.

**The School and Windigo Education Authority**

Indian control of Indian Education started in many areas of Canada since 1973 when the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) first expressed the desire for Indians to control their own education. However, Indian bands in Northern Ontario, generally, did not start to control their own education until 1988, during which period Windigo First Nation communities of Bearskin Lake, Cat Lake and Sachigo Lake "recognized the potential for their children for a system based on 'Indian control' and parental involvement within that control for education of their children and themselves" (Policy for Windigo Education Schools, 1992-93: 1.1). The Windigo Education Authority was formed in 1987 to create a plan for the Indian communities under the Windigo Tribal Council towards a takeover of education from the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

**Policy for Windigo Education Authority Schools.** The Windigo Education Authority released the first policy statement for Windigo Education Schools in September, 1988. It articulated the principles of the Windigo Education Authority plan regarding full control of
education by members of each community. A basic premise upon which the policy document rested was that the transfer of management and control of the education system from INAC to the Windigo Indian communities assured that Native people would fully control the education of their children. The document clearly stated that:

The most desirable education system for Windigo Education communities is one in which members of each First Nation, through the Education Authority, and the Chief and Council, develop a system designed to meet the individual needs of the community. To ensure this, the long range plan for the Windigo Education Authority includes the following:

(a) Implementation of control at the local level;
(b) Encouragement of First Nations to develop their own philosophical statement on the purpose of education to:
   * develop long and short range goals for their education system;
   * formulate policy;
   * supervise the system;
   * ensure that their programs fulfil their needs (1992-93: 1.4.1).

The Windigo Education Authority’s responsibility was, therefore, to outline the intended structure and purpose of the new system of band management and control of education. The Education Authority was flexible in its philosophy and structure in order to allow the various communities the opportunity to offer their own input regarding the establishment of their own system of control and management. The purpose of the document was stated as follows:

The following is a working document to be used as a guide by the First Nations and the Windigo Education Authority. The Windigo Education Communities will benefit from annual revisions of this manual. The manual can also be individualized to meet community needs (1992-93: 1.6).

Nevertheless, it was not the intent of the Windigo Education Authority to imply that the Policy for Windigo Education Schools was one without grounds or direction. The Local Education Authority embraces a philosophy and a governing structure which are characteristics
of the ideals of the Windigo Education Authority policy and transmits such characteristics into its day-to-day operation of the school system. The next step, then is to outline the philosophy espoused by the Windigo Education Authority. The policy document states the philosophy of education as follows:

**Education is a life-long learning experience**

Happiness and personal satisfaction are related to one's ability to learn skills that will let a person grow individually within the society in which she/he lives.

The children have traditionally learned from their parents and their environment.

Children have the right to gain knowledge of their traditional culture and heritage, integrated with today's technology and academic education.

Windigo Education Authority schools emphasize the importance of retaining the Native language.

While formal education is centred on the young, there must be a process provided for community members to understand the importance of education.

Community members must be encouraged, and provided with opportunities, to continue their physical, mental, and spiritual growth through formal education, job-related experience or practical training (Section 1.5).

The Windigo Education Policy clearly regarded education as a life-long learning experience. The emphasis on providing education to adults as well as children in the community was a significant step ahead of the traditional INAC system which only focused on the education of children of the communities. The priority offered Native language was also an important step toward bridging the gap between the community and the school.

The fundamental principles that the framers of the policy document outlined in the philosophy of education for band-operated schools prevailed throughout the document. In particular, the roles of the principal and teachers were closely linked with educating parents
about issues affecting the school. The framers of the policy believed that the introduction of the teaching of Native language in the schools was a significant step towards cultural preservation.

Another important aspect of the Windigo Education Authority policy is the proposal for school governance and the education organizational structure. Figure 1, shows the structure for school governance in the Windigo schools.
FIGURE 1: The Education Organizational Structure of Windigo Schools
Figure 1 shows that the policy designates the Chief and Council of each community as the ultimate authority at the local level. The role of the Chief and Council are two-fold. First, they give assent to decisions made by the local education authority; and secondly, they provide the necessary political support for the implementation of the programs. Under the policy guideline, the Chief and Council can make recommendations about what they consider unsatisfactory decisions made by the Education Authority and return them for further consideration.

The Chief and Council determine the role of each local education authority. However, the Windigo Education Authority recommends that where the Chief and Council are unable to establish a written policy, the Local Education Authority (LEA) can adopt the Windigo Education Authority policy as a basis to make, evaluate, revise, and enforce policies that the community might deem necessary for the smooth running of the school. Also, with the approval of Chief and Council, the education authority adopts a budget which enables the "Education Coordinator to implement the policies and carry out the educational goals and objectives of the community" (2. 6. 2).

In order to accomplish its role in making, evaluating, revising and enforcing policies for schools and education systems under the jurisdiction of Windigo Native communities, the Education Authority is headed by a Director who carries out its policies. The Education Authority maintains a staff which assists in the supervision and management of programs previously under the control of INAC and adopts a budget which enables the Director to carry out its goals and objectives.
The are six main responsibilities undertaken by the Windigo Education Authority. First, it sets a philosophy of education for the schools under its jurisdiction. Second, it sets goals and objectives for its schools; third, it formulates personnel and program policy and provides job descriptions for each of the positions within the education system; fourth, it submits all decisions to the Windigo Education Council for ratification; fifth, it educates the Windigo Executive Council on political concerns and issues they need to know and deal with politically; and finally, the Education Authority updates the Chiefs, Band Councils and community members on activities and progress of Windigo Education Authority.

The responsibilities of the Local Education Authority (LEA) are outlined by the Chief and Council through a Band Council resolution. The Windigo Education Authority recommends eight roles for the local Education Authority. First, the LEA sets an education philosophy for the community in consultation with Band members; second, it consults Band members in setting goals and objectives for the community education system; third, it formulates personnel and program policy in all areas of education under the responsibility of the community; fourth, it submits all motions to the Chief and Council for ratification; fifth, it updates the Chief and Council on political concerns relating to the education system; sixth, it updates the Chief, Band Council and members of the community, on its own and the school's activities and progress; seventh, the LEA hires an Education Coordinator, classroom teachers, classroom assistants, Education counsellors, Native Language teachers, secretaries, custodians, and a book-keeper. The LEA has the power to dismiss employees after seeking approval from the Chief and Council. Finally, the LEA ensures that all school supplies are ordered for the school.
The Windigo Education Authority is composed of one member from each reserve. The member is designated to the Education Authority at the community level. The policy states that the teaching staff and custodians should not be members of the Windigo Education Authority. The Education Authority selects its own chairperson, and, in the event that a member is unable to attend a meeting, the community would send a replacement.

Members of the Windigo Education Authority hold meetings monthly as well as agree to hold yearly meetings in each of the communities. Board meetings are open to all members of the tribal council and the Windigo Education staff. Members only pass motions after they receive acknowledging comments from all the people present at the meeting. The Board discusses personal and budgetary matters in closed sessions. All the closed sessions are open to appropriate staff and some community members might be invited. In order for motions to be passed at meetings, a designated member of each of the communities should be present. The Chiefs, Windigo Education Authority and staff, Local Education Authorities and the schools should all have access to the minutes of the meetings.

According to the policy statement, some other responsibilities of the Windigo Education Authority are to assist the various communities in locating and hiring of teachers, arranging contracts for teachers, supervising and evaluating teachers, paying teachers salaries and assisting in the professional development of education staff.

In order for the framers of the policy statement to acknowledge that the schools in the various communities are controlled by the people themselves, they have been careful in articulating the goals of education. According to the policy statement:

Windigo Education is governed by its participating member communities. As such, it is to provide advisory services in the management and operation of the educational systems
in the way that communities want. Its goals must reflect the desires of each community (4.2).

Figure 1 shows that the link between the local organizational structure and that of WEA is through the Education Coordinator and the Director of Windigo Education Authority. This means that at the community level, the Chief and Council with the LEA cannot directly deal with WEA without going through the Education Coordinator. Similarly, at the in-school level, the principal, teachers and support staff cannot have direct dealings with the Windigo Education Authority without going through the Education Coordinator. This arrangement ensures that local control is concentrated in the hands of the local authorities.

A Review of the Titotay Memorial School Report, 1992-93

An important source of information about the Titotay Memorial School was the Learning Sources Report, 1992-93, prepared for the Cat Lake Education Authority. Learning Sources, an educational consultant firm, conducted a comprehensive review of the school in the 1992-93 school year to determine the directions, operation and extensions of the school. The comprehensive review provided an analysis of school accomplishments and needs, and offered suggestions that might lead to specific development.

A major push for change in the school system of the Titotay Memorial School came through the report released by the Learning Sources 1992-93 school review. A basic premise upon which the document rested was that the school system needed a complete overhaul in areas such as the administrative leadership of the Local Education Authority; administrative leadership of the principal; staff responsibilities, curriculum and instruction; the school and the community; board and administrative outreach; staff outreach; and the school environment. I will discuss
some of the major issues and present the recommendations that *Learning Sources* made towards the improvement of the school.

**Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development.** Since 1988, teacher supervision and evaluation have been the responsibility of the Windigo Education Authority. *Learning Sources* noted that it was necessary for the principal to deal with the direction and quality of teaching on an ongoing basis. The principal should be responsible for giving extra help and encouragement to teachers, particularly those who were new. Furthermore, at the beginning of the school year, Windigo could assist the Education Coordinator, principal, teaching and paraprofessional staff to list the things that would make good teaching and learning, such as quality in planning, instruction and student progress. Windigo could also help the principal and teaching staff to make an action plan which they would use regularly in evaluating how successfully teachers were working to meet the goals of the plan.

*Learning Sources* felt that the role of the principal in evaluation and supervision of staff should be clearly stated in the principal’s job description. It should be the responsibility of Windigo to (a) help the principal to make supervision and evaluation plans for all new staff members; (b) assist the coordinator to evaluate the principal; (c) settle disputes between local administration and teachers; and (d) to regularly spot-check the evaluation process during on-site visits.

*Learning Sources* found some staff members did not work together as a team. The Report suggested that the Local Education Authority should develop a statement of professional conduct, specifying professional rules of behaviour which could define how all staff people should act.
The Report noted that areas such as gossiping, community relations, lack of proper lines of communication, and care and use of staff quarters were significant problems that needed to be addressed by the Local Education Authority.

The lack of a set way of dealing with staff grievance and discipline was another issue addressed by Learning Sources. The report suggested four ways of dealing with staff grievances: (a) the principal should review problems presented by staff; (b) the principal should make a written statement to the coordinator if s/he could not resolve the problem; (c) the coordinator should make a written statement to the Local Education Authority if s/he could not arrive at a solution; and, (d) the Local Education Authority should consult Windigo before giving a final ruling on the matter. The principal’s role as teacher and at the same time as administrator was stressed in the report. Learning Sources noted that as the principal combined teaching and administrative duties, it was necessary to plan for the time the principal gave to the various jobs. The report recommended that the Local Education Authority should review the role description for the principal and should highlight the responsibilities that would be necessary at the community level. The principal should also be required by the Local Education Authority to submit reports on the progress of the school on regular basis.

Student Welfare. Learning Sources reported problems in the areas of meeting the needs of special learners, setting standards for student accomplishment, evaluating student achievement, encouraging student decision making, and enhancing students’ knowledge of the community.

The report indicated that the school did not adequately meet the needs of special learners. According to the report:

Based on survey results and discussion with staff, Additional Teaching services for special needs students are not being provided in the way outlined in the Windigo
Education Authority Policy Manual. A plan should be made which lists things that should be taught, how they should be taught, and check to see how well the work has been learned. Withdrawing students would appear to be the primary way of delivering special education services at Titotay Memorial School" (p. 16).

The report suggested that the principal and teachers should regularly review information on student progress and decide on those students who might need special education. Principal and teachers should inform parents of changes that their children might require and report regularly on how well these changes would have worked.

Apart from lack of provision for students with special needs, the report also indicated that teachers did not plan their teaching according to specific standards provided by the school. As a result, teachers seemed to be unsure of what was the acceptable level of work in each grade. Learning Sources suggested that if the Local Education Authority was unable to provide a course of study, the school could adopt the curriculum outline for the Province of Ontario as stated in the Common Curriculum Grade 1-9, 1993. The Common Curriculum would direct teachers' planning and would serve as the basis of evaluation of students.

Another crucial issue raised by the Learning Sources report was the lack of effective evaluation of students. According to the report:

Survey results and discussion with teachers and Learning Sources achievement screening point to a need for regular curriculum-based assessment and external group achievement testing at least at the end of each division (p. 19).

The report suggested regular evaluation of student achievement based on what the school would expect the students to learn during the school year. Teachers would use assessment information to place students in grades and programs.
Learning Sources' surveys and interviews with staff, parents, graduates and dropouts supported the need for students to make their own decisions in setting personal goals. The report suggested the need for students to actively solve their own problems and learn how to act appropriately with others. To achieve this end the report recommended the teaching of guidance courses, designed to afford students the opportunity to set goals, make plans, communicate, and gather information.

The need for students to have adequate knowledge of their community was stressed by the Learning Sources report. Knowledge of the history and operation of the community would enhance students' self esteem and self-concept. The report recommended that the Local Education Authority should assist teachers in gathering information about history and statistics of the community, and show teachers special things about the natural environment of the community. The school could also identify resource persons from the community who would be ready to visit the school and talk to students about people, history, or changes in the community.

The writers of the Learning Sources report noted the lack of information in the school. They suggested that the school should provide an information gathering facility in the form of a data bank. The information should include curriculum time allocations, all that is necessary to know about students and students' own work folder files, specific information about staff, standard forms, and future plans.
The Titotay Memorial School Discipline Policy, 1989 served as another documentary source of vital information about the operation of the school. It was necessary to review this document to determine how the school operated as regards issues pertaining to student behaviour.

The document states that the main purpose of the school is to help young people learn the skills, knowledge, and values that would enable them to live full and worthwhile lives. It stresses mutual respect among students and staff. In order to have a safe and nurturing school environment, the Local Education Authority expected students to behave in a way that would promote social, emotional and spiritual growth as well as learning. The following were what the Local Education Authority expected from students as expressed in the discipline policy:

1. to respect the rights and property of others;
2. to be positive and courteous towards others;
3. to accept leadership and authority of staff;
4. to accept responsibility for their own actions;
5. to attend and be punctual in school;
6. to exhibit safe play with peers; and
7. to use acceptable language at all times.

The Local Education Authority recommends in the policy that teachers use a reward system to reinforce acceptable behaviour. As it was stated in the policy:

Teachers are encouraged to use behaviour modification techniques at the individual, class and school levels. This means respecting and recognizing positive behaviour. A reward system will be implemented using items such as the following: small prizes, healthy snacks, special privileges, 'Student-of-the-Week' Certificates, etc. Students who achieve
these awards should receive public recognition, e.g., at the entrance of the school, in the Band Office, in the Community Newsletter (p. 2).

The policy statement indicated that the Local Education Authority arrived at methods of discipline for the school by conducting a survey of community members about school discipline policy. Some of the methods of discipline advocated by the education authority were, removal of privileges, behaviour contracts, detention, writing of lines, and in-school suspension. According to the policy statement students who infringed school rules and regulations might have privileges temporarily withdrawn from them. The withdrawal of privileges was expected to encourage students to desist from repeating unacceptable behaviour. Behaviour contracts would be signed by students between them and their teachers with parents. Students would agree during the period of contracts to improve unacceptable behaviour in a specific way by a certain period. Students who would improve their behaviour during the specified period might receive rewards and might have privileges restored to them.

Students who might show unacceptable behaviour could use recess period for work that could improve their behaviour. Teachers might assign students to write out lines that might help in modifying behaviour. Although disruptive students might remain in school, they might be working away from other students at places such as the principal’s and social counsellor’s offices. Unacceptable methods of discipline were, time-out, corporal punishment, and suspension from school.

The policy specified procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. First, the teacher might deal directly with minor infringements personally; second, the teacher would notify the principal if an incident required further intervention; third, the principal would consult the social counsellor who would contact parents and arrange a meeting to take place to discuss
the concern and to develop a plan of action to modify the behaviour; and finally, in the event of recurrent, serious misbehaviour, the Community Discipline Committee and the Local Education Authority might assist the school and parents in dealing with the problem.


Teachers working within the jurisdiction of Windigo Education Authority are required by policy to prepare personal goals and objectives, as well as long range plans for a ten-month period, from September to June. An examination of the personal goals and objectives of teachers from 1990-94 revealed that teachers, generally, spelt out their intended relationships with students, colleagues, principal, and the community at large. The personal goals and objectives convey teachers' viewpoints on the role they have in the education of Native children. Since almost all the teaching staff of the school were non-Native, the review of their personal goals and objectives was important, on the assumption that their personal goals and aspirations would go a long way in influencing the way they taught Native children.

In contrast to curriculum guidelines, teachers' long range plans were more detailed plans which spelt out specific topics that teachers would teach throughout the year. Teachers indicated how much time they would spend on each of the topics. The need to include this source in my document analysis was to establish whether there was a continuity of themes between policy and curriculum documents and whether there was continuity in face of teacher turnover.

In preparing their long range plans teachers tried as much as possible to choose topics that could be suitable for Native children. However, discussions with classroom teachers June 1994 and examination of their daily teaching plans led me to conclude that many of the teachers
were not familiar with the 1993 Common Curriculum.
CHAPTER 5

PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING

This chapter presents results on the purpose of schooling in Cat Lake. The purpose of schooling constitutes the first group of my research questions. This is important because, as stated in the literature reviewed for this study, the failure of the Government of Canada to assimilate the Native child through education, and the control of education by Native people should give Native people a new meaning for the purpose of education. The sections that follow will now present the viewpoints of community residents on the purpose of schooling.

There are two main groups directly involved in the education of children at the Titotay Memorial School. These groups are, first, local people who include the Chief and Band Council, the Local Education Authority, and parents. The second group comprises the predominantly non-Native teaching staff. As already stated in the preceding sections, the Chief and Band Council are the ultimate authority in the affairs of the school. A Band council member in charge of education conveys educational issues to the chief and other council members for consideration. The Local Education Authority comprising five members, is directly responsible for education.

Although school control lies in the hands of the local people, actual teaching and learning are based on the views of the non-Native school staff, who in many cases, are not aware of the priorities of the local people. The sections that follow investigate whether teachers and parents share the definitions, aims and objectives of schooling and whether all the groups involved in the schooling process of the children understand and share common beliefs and ideals.
for a successful educational process.

As stated in Chapter Four, families in the Indian reserve of Cat Lake are experiencing swift social and economic changes. While many of these changes such as the modernization of community facilities have been advantageous for the development of life in the community, others have been disastrous. In Cat Lake today, children grow up against a background of traditional conservatism. The children are struggling to adjust in a society controlled by an Anglo-Saxon cultural bloc foreign to the traditional patterns of their own people.

Perceived Purpose of Schooling

Respondents I interviewed about the purpose of the school in the community made it explicit that community people are intensely informed of the importance for children to obtain the same proficiencies in education as their counterparts in mainstream Canadian society, and, therefore, they find the school important. Some community people, especially those who had some education in residential schools indicated that the school is important in the community because the presence of the school would prevent children from going out to the outside world to acquire education. However, they find the need for improvements in the schooling system of the community. Most elderly people are also aware of the importance of the education of the children, but feel that the school has not tried to help children to maintain their language and culture.

Community people interviewed perceived the main purpose of the school as teaching the whiteman’s way of life. They acknowledge schools as being the 'whiteman’s' establishment, and believe that it is necessary for their children to learn the 'whiteman’s' way in order to be
able to survive in the wider society. I asked a prominent member in the community, M.T. (about 50 years old), what he considers the purpose of education for their children.

I want our children to be as competent as those in the South. In the old days, people were not educated, but that didn't mean much to them. Nowadays, you need to be educated to survive. Our children need to become lawyers and doctors if we want self government. They should be able to understand and interpret treaties and issues concerning land claims, otherwise, they will have no land to live on in the future (C3308).

For this respondent and a lot of others like him, education is an essential to self determination.

Whereas one may think that self determination may be directly linked to the extent to which Indians are able to assert their Indianness through their traditions and culture, this study suggests that perceptions about self determination go beyond culture. In fact, many believe that true self determination lies in both technological proficiency and traditional pursuits. Another renowned member of the community, 51-year old K.J., whom I asked about the status of Native culture in the school stated:

Native culture is important, but it is not as important as reading and writing and that computer stuff. Right now, we are looking for people in the band office to work, using the computer. Yes, that is the kind of stuff the teachers should be teaching (C3518).

Parents identify and value two separate aspects of education, western and traditional, and they indicate that the existing schooling system does not adequately deal with both of them. A 45-year old Band worker, O.P., whom I asked the purpose of education stated:

Our children should learn English, computer and all those things, and should be able to do all the things others are doing, but they should also learn how to hunt, make fire and the things we learned when we were small. I will go with my father on the trap line and will teach me how to make traps and catch animals. The school should teach them our own things too (Interview with Band worker, Cat Lake [B1803]).

Teachers I talked with were divided in their opinions as to what they saw as the main purpose of schooling for Native children. While some felt that the purpose of education was not
different from mainstream Canadian society, others felt the need for cultural education for the Native child. I asked a teacher, H.S. in her mid 30's what she thought was the purpose of schooling for her students:

*I don't distinguish between Native and non-Native children. I believe that the purpose of education for all children is to equip them with the skills necessary to: effectively cope with life situations, make responsible choices and decisions; and make general contributions to the general society* (T0801).

Like the teacher who does not distinguish between the purposes of Native and non-Native education, another teacher F.D. in her mid-twenties expressed a similar view as she stated:

*The purpose of education is the same for children everywhere, that is, to teach them to be responsible human beings in society and to develop in them a sense of self-respect and personal satisfaction* (T1001).

While the views expressed by the majority of teachers appeared not to distinguish between purposes of schooling for Native and non-Native children some rather contrasting views which stressed cultural education were expressed by some of the teachers. S.D., in her early 30's says of the purpose of education for Native children:

*I believe the purpose of education for Native children is to provide them with skills that will enable them to have choices, freedom and independence. Education will provide a larger pool of skills at the local level, thus enable people to be employed in their own community, and not having to look elsewhere for people to provide these services. This will also provide an opportunity for Native people to educate their children in the way that is culturally relevant, as they will have the skills required for teaching, and will not hire non-Natives to do the job* (T0901).

It was evident from the interviews that some community people and teachers felt that the main function of the school was to bring up children to fit into the mainstream Canadian society without giving up their culture and the notion of being Indians. However, some teachers and community people, saw the need for western as well as cultural education. As a 32-year old male teacher, H.D. stated:
The purpose of education for Native children is to help them learn about, and survive in their world as it pertains to them. This is also true for any child in any culture. Education can give children thinking and analytical skills which they can use to pass on their own culture to their children and people. In this changing Native culture, education is vital to help children learn skills that will be necessary to cope adequately to change. It will also provide them with skills to use if they choose to live in a non-Native community (T1101).

Similarly, a 35-year old parent W.V., educated in a residential school, expressed:

_They [children] should learn how to read and write well, and they should also learn their culture. Teachers should help children to preserve their culture by teaching programs of Native culture. Native language should be taught along with history and culture. I was taught the bible to believe in God but I want my children to be taught the culture of the people (C3408)._  

What W.V. suggested was that teachers' over-reliance on Anglo-Saxon curricular material at the expense of Native culture was undesirable given the fact that children need to develop self-respect and self-identity through the knowledge of their own culture.

The results presented above have indicated that both parents and teachers advocate a two-way or bi-cultural education. In other words, an education that will equip students with the knowledge and skills to survive in their own community and the outside world.

**The Status of Cultural Education**

This section discusses the status of cultural education. In the discussions I had with community people and teachers, it was evident that a majority of community people perceive the importance of local culture and tradition in the education of the children. However, the people were divided in their opinions as to whether it is important to teach the Native language, Ojibwe, in school. Teachers, particularly, felt that culture and tradition, including the language should form an integral part of the school program. The study indicated that there were two
groups of people who opposed the teaching of the language, culture and traditions. The groups comprised people who believed that local traditions were evil, and those who, although do not see them as evil, believed that teaching language and traditions constitutes a waste of students' time. Among those who see the teaching of the local culture and traditions as evil are people who received education from residential schools and/or are Christians. Particularly, Christians felt that tradition, language, and culture are not of much priority in the education of the children. They felt that most traditional ways of life are evil and children should not be subjected to evil ways of life. Others who opposed the teaching of the Native language, particularly, for the reason that it is a waste of time said that their children learn the language as they speak it to them at home. The views of 43-year old man, K.E., were generally representative of those who think that teaching the language is a waste of time:

*Parents speak the language to the students at home and I don't think it's important that the school wastes time on teaching Native language. The kids need to know how to speak and write English. Their language is going down. When I was in school, I learned English. We were not allowed to speak our language at school. Nobody spoke the language to me when I was way out in school. I only spoke the language when I visited my parents once a while, but I haven't forgotten it, I speak to my children at home* (Interview with a Band worker, Cat Lake. [B2309]).

The social pattern of traditional Native society today seems to be undergoing serious change. The ideals such as kinship, respect for elders, and helping, for example, taken for granted by elders, are not observed by younger members of the society. To some of the younger people, teaching the traditions of their people in school means relegating students into a primitive era. When asked about the importance of teaching the traditions in school, the views of a 33-year old man, K.K. were typical of those expressed by other people in a similar age group:
Traditions! What are you going to teach them? Pow-wow? We don’t do those things here. I think the school is for teaching the whiteman’s way. Our children don’t need to know about old things, they need to know about things such as computers (C5218).

Similarly, some elderly people who attended residential schools in the old days view the school as a place to acquire literacy and numeracy skills rather than traditional values. The view expressed by W.S., a 73 year old man who attended a residential school in the 1920s and 1930s, is not symbolic of other views expressed by elders who never attended school. When I asked W.S. whether it was important to teach Native language, traditions and culture in the school, he acknowledged the teaching of culture, but not the Native language. According to him, children already speak the language in the community and need to acquire proficiency in English for them to survive outside the community. As he stated:

When I went to school at [name of school], the teachers had a strap which they used to punish us. You could speak the Native language but the teacher would always want to know what you are saying. You couldn’t write love letters to girls except Valentine day. We were not allowed to talk. There was always a supervisor watching us. The girls were told not to speak to the boys. The girls would go out first, and the boys would follow. They didn’t teach us Native language but we never forgot to speak it. They taught us arithmetic, reading and writing. That is what the kids should learn at school. Learning the Native Language is not important. It is important for them to spend more time on English. A lot of people would like to know how to read, write, and speak English. Cultural program is important [he scratches his beard]. I think it is important. It is also good to teach them about motors. Let them take the motors apart and learn about them (E0213).

The perceptions of the old man, W.S. represent his concern about a generation that would be able to take machines apart and repair them. This concern suggests a viable message about the changing nature of the culture in Cat Lake.

While the study suggests that some people see the relevance of children acquiring proficiency in the three R’s above everything else, some others, particularly elderly people who never went to school, generally felt that the language, traditions and culture are important in the
education of the children. The views of the majority of respondents in regard to cultural
education appear to suggest that community people and teachers have one theme in mind, that
is, the education system should be able to meet the changing times of society. As J.S., a 66-
year old parent put it when asked what type of cultural program the school should teach:

When we were kids, we used to go hunting with dog-sleds in winter and summer time we
use canoes on the lake. But now we use skidoos and outboards. I remember how my
father used to teach me how to get the dogs prepared for the trapline. In my father's
days, they used bows and arrows and every child should know how to make them but
nowadays we no longer use those things. I guess the children should learn how to handle
guns properly. Oh yes, they should know how to repair snowmobiles, outboards, things
like that so that you don't get stranded in the middle of the forest (E0708).

As snowmobiles have replaced dog sleds, and boats with outboard motors have replaced canoes
in most Indian communities including Cat Lake, respondents see the need for people in the
community who are able to repair these machines. Almost every household in Cat Lake owns
a snowmobile and a boat with an outboard motor. As there are no people in the community
capable of taking these machines apart and putting them back together, many people abandon
their machines as soon as they start to give problems. Respondents feel the school should be
responsible for teaching children the skills needed to repair these machines.

Although there were divisions in opinions about teaching the Native language, it seems
that on the whole, the majority of community people and teachers will like the present day
school to become a clearing house for community traditions and culture. Evidence collected as
field notes at a meeting which the L.E.A. and the staff attended and interview data I present
below clearly suggest the importance of the school becoming a clearing house for community
culture:

At today's staff meeting the staff and L.E.A. members agreed that the school should
regularly invite elders to come in to tell stories about old times. The children should
document these stories as a form of newsletter for the community. The older children should be made by their teachers to collect pieces of information from the very elderly people and compile these pieces of information into a book which will contain traditions and culture of the past. Teacher H.D. agreed to coordinate the information gathering activity (Field Notes: February 17, 1994).

Like the L.E.A. and the school staff, a 38-year old woman, B.K., offered her opinion:

Why won't the school organize a cultural day and invite everybody in the community to bring something that has to do with our culture— a kind of cultural fair. You can ask G.M. [actual name deleted] to teach students bead-work, and W.G. [actual name deleted] to teach them Native art. They will bring all these things and then we will find the best, perhaps first, second and third prizes and then give them something for the prizes. I think this is kind of neat. It'll make people see different kinds of things about our culture. I think the school should be doing this kind of thing (C3818).

Some rather totally different, interesting views about the status of culture in the school were expressed by some respondents. One of these views was expressed by 43-year old J.M., who attended a residential school:

I went to school far away from my community and I lost contact with my parents, sisters and brothers. I remember that for a long time, I could not visit home and when I returned, I saw my sisters and brothers had grown older. It kind of kept me away from my family and up to now, we are not as close as we were before we all went to school. I kind of lose my culture. Now our kids will be together at least up to grade 8 before going out for grade 9. Actually, we have to bring in grade 9 before too late. As soon as you go out, you lose your culture (C3118).

I find the above point interesting because some people felt that the very existence of the school in the community is a means of cultural preservation. Many people acknowledged the view held by J.M. that attending school outside the community deprived children of some part of their culture. They felt that the school being in the community allows parents to be with their children for a longer period of time than they would have been with them if the children were to go out to attend residential schools. Parents, therefore, indicated that being with their children is in itself a way of preserving their culture.
Another interesting point revealed by an elderly man was that in the past parents did not want to send their children to school outside the community for fear that they would lose the children to the outside world. As 73 year-old, W.S. stated:

*Parents did not want to send their kids to school because they were afraid that they'd never come back. Sometimes they'll go with them to the trapline so that the authorities won't see them. Anyone who put children in school was given welfare support and didn't have to go trapping. It was only when this welfare thing came that parents started sending their kids out* (E0207).

This respondent further hinted that in effect, the welfare scheme received support from many parents who were compelled to send their children to school. What he felt was significant, however, was that once children went to school, they were separated from their parents and siblings by schools, missions and welfare authorities and these authorities did everything to estrange them from their traditions and culture.

The loss of the Native language, traditions, and culture are of great concern to a majority of the elderly people in Cat Lake. The elders I interviewed during the study indicate a sublime respect for their language and traditions and are disturbed about the possibility that the present generation of school children may lose their language entirely. One elder, W.C. (63 years old and never attended the Whiteman's school) remarked:

*It's very important to teach the Native language in the school. The children should be able to write syllabics [Native alphabet]. If they're not taught syllabics, how will they keep their culture? How will they write newspapers in syllabics for the elders to read? Elders like reading that sort of thing. Young people these days are losing that skill. They can't write syllabics. It is the Native people's curriculum, you know* (E0308).

The fear W.C. has about the loss of Native language and culture is also evident among many others. K.D. (36 years old, attended school outside the community, held a prominent position in the Band Office, and had a child in the school). I asked him about what he considered the
purpose of education in the community. His perceptions were typical of educated people of
similar age in the society:

**Preservation of culture.** I would like to see programs of Native culture. Native language
should be taught and teachers should teach Native history and culture. I was taught the
Bible and to believe in God, but I would like children to be taught the culture of our
people. Teachers must have the knowledge of Native ancestry, how governments have
influenced and affected Native people and their children (B2818).

As I have already stated in Chapter Four, the school in Cat Lake does not teach Native
language and a cultural program since 1988, the year the school was taken over by the band
authorities. Because some interview respondents indicated that they were concerned about the
lack of Native language and a cultural program in the school, and others did not see the
importance of teaching the Native language, the issue became an important focus of discussion
in one of the workshops. Researcher and participants, who comprised school staff members,
Local Education Authority people, Band Office personnel, and community people discussed the
importance of introducing these programs in the school at the January, 1994 workshop (see
Appendix D). At that workshop, disagreements developed into arguments. In order to reach
a consensus, participants had to vote for, or against the teaching of Native language in the
school. After the vote, we came out with a blue print which states:

*We find Native language important in the school. We feel it would enhance students’
pride in their heritage and would also help to bridge the gap between the school and the
home. It is essential, therefore, to have Native language in the school under the following
conditions: (i) there is a qualified Native language instructor who could teach both the
language and syllabics; (ii) we could use one half-hour per day for each class; and, (iii)
the Native language teacher would instruct non-Native teachers in the basics for one half-
hour per week* (Meeting of School Staff, LEA, Band Workers and Community people,
February 15, 1994).

With respect to a cultural program, we arrived at the following statement:

*There is the need for a cultural program for boys and girls from grade 3 to 8 in the
school. The school could use Friday afternoons for the students to study the arts, crafts, and survival skills of Native people. There would be two components of the program: (i) the in-school program for the study of Native art work, needlework and sewing, and Native crafts; (ii) the out-school program for the study of survival skills in the woods. We recommend that the instructors are paid employees of the school and are incorporated fully into the entire life of the school. The cultural program should start in October, 1994. We may encounter possible problems in the implementation of the program, such as: (i) difficulty of finding suitable instructors; and, (ii) budget constraints (W001).

It is important to note that discussions at the workshop revealed that those who opposed the teaching of language and culture in the school acknowledged the importance of the children acquiring both the language and culture but argued that parents were in a better position to teach their children than the non-Native teaching staff who were not familiar with the culture.

Participants acknowledged at the workshop that designing a viable and beneficial program of education for students whose traditions, language and culture differ primarily from that of their teachers requires input and collaborative planning of all the groups involved in their education. Community people of Cat Lake in collaboration with the non-Native teachers of the school see the purpose of schooling to be one which will equip the students with the ability to think and speak, first as Native children, and secondly, as mainstream Canadians. Respondents believed that in order to face the two cultures confronting them, students need a degree of competence in each of the cultures, an essentially bi-cultural system of education. When asked what teachers should teach children at school, a 49 year-old parent A.W. commented:

*They should teach them to know that they’re aboriginal people and should be proud of that. We the aboriginal people know a lot of things that other people don’t know. Our great grandfathers have survived in this part of the world without the whiteman. Our children should know that we have a culture of survival and that’s important. The children should be able to know about different parts of the world and they should know that there’s a place beyond Cat Lake. Education for the children should be the aboriginal education and the whiteman’s education. They should know how to read and write our language and they should also read and write English well* (C4407).
The comments made above by A.W. are representative of the thinking of most community people. The study indicated that community people have a notion of an education that will be meaningful to the children. They deem it important for teachers to strike a happy balance between Native and non-Native cultures in their teaching.

To go beyond parents' viewpoints to those of their children, the study showed that a majority of the children do not know why they go to school. To them, school is a daily routine imposed on them by teachers and parents. When asked why she goes to school, O.K., a grade 7 student stated:

_I don't know. I guess it's because my parents want me to go and my teacher always gives me trouble when I don't come. I don't like school. I have to wake up early everyday even when it's cold out there. I wanna quit_ [She laughed]. _I'm kidding_ (S5601).

Similarly, B.V., a grade 6 student maintained that he goes to school because all his friends attend. As he stated:

_Everybody else is going and nobody will go hunt birds with me. Sometimes me and John go hunt or fish and we don't come or when I sleep in I can't come, then I wake up am late. My mother sometime wake me and I am angry so she don't like to wake me_ (S5301).

So, the school acts as the only place for the children to socialize in the community and they cannot afford to stay at home when others are in school.
CHAPTER 6

CONTROL OF EDUCATION

This Chapter presents results of the study on the group of research questions that deals with the Control of Education in Cat Lake. The chapter draws on data I collected through document analysis, and the other data collecting procedures I have specified in Chapter Three.

Since 1988, the control of education has literally been in the hands of the people of Cat Lake, and what it really means to them to control education is the theme of this chapter.

Local Jurisdiction

The control of education by the local people of Cat Lake is a new experience. When INAC handed over the school to community people in 1988, they established a Local Education Authority (LEA) whose members are appointed by the Chief and Council. The data suggested that the most formidable task that has faced members of the Local Education Authority has been how to clearly define and identify the powers they have and use them to the benefit of the schooling of children in the community. In many cases, Local Education Authority members have not been able to identify their responsibilities and limits in the administration of education. During interviews, discussions, and meetings with community people, I found that most people do not understand what it means to be in control of a school, let alone to be prepared for the processes that involve educational governance. I asked W.D., a 48-year old woman who has never been to school to tell me what she knew about band control of education. Her response was typical of most community residents:
I don't know how the system works. I know teachers and support staff are hired but I don't know what goes on after that. Perhaps things are changing. I have never had a teacher from the school coming to my house to ask me about the school before. I am surprised you want me to talk to you about the school (C3710).

The above response was not limited to those who never went to school. Even people working in the Band Office, the centre of all control, power and authority, gave similar responses to the same question. For example, O.C., a 32-year old woman who occupied a position of great responsibility in the Band Office stated:

I started with the band but I don't know what it really means. I guess it means they are controlling the money that comes in and they hire staff. I hope I'm right (B1412).

People who showed an understanding of the concept vaguely understood band control of education to mean controlling educational finances that are sent to the community by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), hiring, and dismissing staff. K.H., in his mid forties, a former member of the Local Education Authority who has three children in the school, and a prominent worker in the Band Office, explained in impeccable English what he understood by band control of education:

I guess we are supposed to control everything that goes on in the school, but I am not sure what that is. At least we employ local staff, and I know the money comes to the band for buying stuff for the school. The band pays local staff, and of course fires them when they violate the by-laws. When I was appointed as an LEA member, I asked myself what the heck am I going to do? (B1617).

The views expressed by the majority of respondents in regard to the meaning of band control of education appeared not to have considered the importance of the curriculum and supervision of school programs. None of the respondents I interviewed felt that control meant a complete jurisdiction over all the areas of the school system, let alone did they realize that it is the community's responsibility to ensure there is an appropriate curriculum and supervision.
of school programs.

Nevertheless, results of this study suggest that whether the people of Cat Lake understand that they have control over their school or not, there is evidence that at least in recent years, they have begun to understand the enormous task, and, complexity of school management ahead of them. They are aware that it is their responsibility to amass and utilize all the resources that can make schooling better for their children. The comment by W.P., Band worker in his mid forties which appears below was indicative of the awareness:

"We're now in control and we have to do something to improve that school. If nobody does anything, nothing will happen. The problem here is nobody wants to do anything. People always expect others to do things for them. Look at D.K., he doesn't seem to care about anything. People are paid for not working. We really need to do something about that school." (B1913).

The next section provides data on the roles of Chief and Band Council in education. As a backdrop for understanding the data, I start the section with findings from documents reviewed for this study that deal with the expectation of the Chief and Council in education.

**Roles of Chief and Band Council in Education**

As already stated in Chapter Four, the Chief and Band Council of each community under the Windigo Education Authority decides on its own functions and the functions of the Local Education Authority (Windigo Education Policy, 1992-93). Windigo Education Authority policy recommends that if the Chief and Council are unable to provide a blue-print for their functions, they should "ratify all decisions and policies made by the Education Authority and, provide political support where necessary to implement programs" (1992-93, Section 2.5). As the Chief and Council have jurisdiction over all decisions made by the Education Authority, it is possible
for one to confuse their educational functions with those of the Local Education Authority. In Cat Lake, the Chief and Council wield the administrative authority of the entire community. Workers of various departments I interviewed at the Band office readily expressed their frustration about how the Chief and Council attempt to control every department in the community. A prominent official of the Band Office, and a former member of the LEA, V.C., vented the frustration most people experience working in the Band Office:

_They [Chief and Council] want to control everything and they don't manage anything well. They make us look like we don't know what we are doing. Any decision we make, there is political interference and any political interference they make costs them money. They keep on blaming people for the problems they create themselves. It’s so sickening that I am planning to resign by the end of November if the situation continues like this_ (B2502).

However, it is interesting to note that most people I interviewed, including the Chief and members of the Band Council, believe that education is an area that should be managed by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The comment by M.E., a 36-year old worker of the Band office substantiates most people’s views:

_The LEA should totally control education. The Education Coordinator should be responsible to the LEA and they must attempt to settle all school matters. I and my Council will not interfere in school affairs unless the LEA refers a problem to us. Chief and council should be responsible for political stuff. We will look after the political side of the school. If the school has a problem that has to do with politics, then it is Chief’s problem. You see, the contamination of school grounds is a political issue and no-one should interfere with that issue. I will be going to Ottawa on Monday to talk to the Minister_ (B2003).

During the 1993/94 school year, the Band administration used the school for various political ends. In the mid 1980s there was a leakage from an oil tank installed on the school grounds by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The Band Council believed that the oil spill contaminated the school grounds and that it was the government’s responsibility to effect a clean-
up of the school grounds. On August 30, 1993, the Band administration wrote a letter to the Education Coordinator, and sent a copy to the school staff. It stated:

*Please be advised that in a Council meeting this morning, consensus was for the school to be closed until the issue of contamination is suitably dealt with by Indian Affairs... We apologize for the inconvenience* (Cat Lake First Nation, August 30, 1993).

Although the school was to open on September 7th for the 1993/94 academic year, it did not open until after the school teaching staff sent a letter to the Band Council in October, informing them of the possible effects of the closure of the school on the children. The letter from the school staff stated that as there were specific skills for students to learn at each grade level of their schooling, continuous closure of the school would deprive children of the learning experiences they needed to acquire at a particular period of the year. The staff noted that there was a detrimental effect on the academic achievement of students when there was no continuous schooling process. Owing to the concern of the school staff, Chief and Council ordered the students back to school on November 2nd.

In April 1994, the Band administration again ordered the closure of the school because the government had not complied fully with the clean-up of the school grounds. Although environmental experts attested that the oil spill was not of immediate health hazard to school staff and children, the school had remained closed. The Band justified the closure of the school on the grounds that it was the only way by which government would take the contamination issue seriously. The school remained closed until September 1994. During meetings, discussions and interviews I had with community people I gathered that the Chief and Band Council use school closures as a powerful political weapon against the government. As one of the elders, W.S. said:
Whatever we say to the government, they don't listen until we tell them we have closed the school because of them. That is the only thing that seems to put them on their toes. When we use our children, we can get what we want. Without closing the school and crying out to the government that 'our children are not in school because of you', nothing happens here. I guess it is one of the reasons why the school is important. It has always been difficult to get what we want without closing that school (E0210).

When the school closed in April, the Chief, the Council and school staff attended a meeting in order to decide the fate of the students. The evidence I collected from this meeting and recorded as field notes clearly supports the data that the school is usually used by the Band Council to attain political ends:

We attended a meeting with Chief and Council this morning and Chief announced to the school staff that the Band administration would not tolerate any interference from the staff about their decision to close the school because it is a highly political decision and it's between the Band and the government. The Chief would like the principal and staff to maintain a low profile, that is, they should not embark on any activities that would negate the effects of the school closure. The closure of the school would not be a problem as far as salaries of teachers are concerned. The school staff would continued to be paid as long as school remained closed (Field notes: May 10, 1994).

Although the school staff spent all their working hours in school from April to June, they did not have children to teach. Whereas many community people showed concern about the education of their children, they, at the same time, justified the actions of the Chief and Council in using school closures to demand facilities from the government. A parent, M.C., in her mid forties remarked:

If the government will only listen to us when the school is closed, then I don't see why we should not close the school so that we get what we want. The government doesn't care about us. They only care about our children. Whenever we tell them our children are not in school because of them, they give us what we want (C4110).

While some respondents feel that the Local Education Authority (LEA) should have control over the school, and decide on all matters concerning the school including its opening and closure, they have reservations as to whether the LEA would be able to run the school
effectively. O.P, a man in his early forties commented:

*Basically, LEA has the authority to run the school. Band Council should just have ultimate control. There is no way Chief and Council can run the Band and the school at the same time. Chief and Council are there for political problems. The problem with the LEA is that board participation is not good. Most of the members are not aware of what their position on the LEA means (B1810).*

It became clear that during the period Indian and Northern Affairs Canada controlled the schools, newspaper reporters had been very much interested in reporting school closures. These newspaper reports usually made the government heed to the demands of the community since the school was directly under the government. Local control has not changed the situation. The Band Council continues to use the school as a political pawn.

**The Local Education Authority (LEA)**

This section presents results on the Local Education Authority's control of the school. To provide a background for understanding community people's viewpoints on the performance of the Local Education Authority, I first present data about the expected role of the Local Education Authority as stated in the documents reviewed for this study. Documents reviewed for this study indicated that the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) (1972) set forth the philosophy and rationale of Native control of education at the local level. According to (NIB), the purposes for local control are, first, to incorporate Native cultures into the school system; second, to foster greater involvement of parents; third to harmonize education with local development; fourth, to make community people accountable for the education of their own children; and finally, to assert the right of Native parents to circumscribe the type of education necessary for their children. A local education authority is supposed to perform its day to day
activities of the school in consideration of the philosophy and rationale set forth by the National Indian Brotherhood.

The members of the Local Education Authority of Cat Lake are appointed by the Chief and Council, who vest in them all the powers for the management of education. The Windigo Education Policy states that "under the authority of the Chief and Council, the Education Authority makes all decisions and insures the implementation of all education programs" (section 7.3). Among other things, the Local Education Authority is expected to control the budget for the school system, determine education goals and see through their achievement within a period of time. In the area of curriculum, the Authority is expected to determine and provide suitable programs, approve the subjects taught in the school, and support the implementation of all programs. The Authority is also required to hire staff and provide orientation for new staff members. In the area of support services, the Authority is expected to make necessary arrangements to transport students safely to school. Finally, the Local Education Authority is expected to assist the in-school administration in dealing with various kinds of school problems including problems of student discipline, and help to provide various policies such as those for the use of school facilities and equipment and follow through their implementation.

The study revealed that the Local Education Authority's real duties have been limited to issues such as hiring and firing staff, and providing transportation for students. The LEA faces many obstacles in its day to day activities of school governance. Some of the problems confronting the LEA are, lack of control over the budget; lack of knowledge of issues concerned with the curriculum; lack of effective planning; and, lack of policy formulation and implementation. One of the deficiencies of the budgetary procedure in Cat Lake is that the
Local Education Authority never seems to know anything about the school budget. During discussions and interviews with LEA members I asked them to explain how they control the school budget. All members of the LEA indicated that they did not know how much money INAC allocates for the school, and they also did not know the procedures employed by INAC in the allocation of funds for the school. An impression I gathered from the LEA members suggests that they do not actively engage themselves in issues regarding school budgeting. A statement by an LEA member, S.V., is typical of all the members I interviewed. As the member stated:

*I don’t know how much money INAC gives the school and I don’t know how they calculate the money. The Band Manager is in charge of all money affairs for the school and if you want to know anything about school money, you better ask him. I think it is necessary for us to know how much money is in the school account at all times. It is only then that we can determine how to spend the money. We have to know how much money we use on various items such as school supplies, salaries, heating etc. Right now we don’t have any idea about the school budget (C4311).*

Data from this study showed that although the federal government has ceded the control of education to the bands, financial and human resources for education still come from the Department of Indian and Native Affairs Canada (INAC). The Department finances education according to the nominal roll, which is, simply, the student population in the school by the last day of September of each school year. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) pays all school support funds to the Band Council directly. The Band Manager administers both the school funds and Band Support Fund (BSF). There is no distinction between the two sets of funds. The school arranges for its supplies through the Education Coordinator, who in turn seeks approval from the Band Manager or Council member responsible for education. All the bills the school incurs are paid for by the Band Manager. The L.E.A. has nothing to do with
either school funds or school supplies. The consequence of such budgetary mechanism is a Local Education Authority left without any mandate in the financing of the education the Band Council has authorized it to control.

The view expressed by the finance officer, B.M., at the Band office in regard to the failure of the Band to assign the school budget to the LEA is that the Band Council senses that while the Band Manager should have a know-how of budgetary procedures, it is not possible to entrust the education budget into the hands of the Local Education Authority members who may not be familiar with the details of government funding mechanisms and the general procedures involved in educational budgeting. As B.M. stated:

_If Education [meaning LEA] wants to control their budget, they can have it, but I'm not sure if they'll know what to do with it. They think it's just matter of taking money out of the budget and paying bills. There's a lot more than that. They don't know what goes on this office so they keep saying 'we want to control our own budget'. Let them take it and they'll see the mess that they'll make of themselves_ (B3005).

The Band, as well as the school, lacks funds for its projects. Respondents feel that INAC should review its method of allocating funds to the school. The notes I made as part of my daily journal entries substantiate this point:

_The Education Coordinator came to my office this morning to tell me I made a mistake in preparing the nominal roll for 1994. I asked him to point out the mistake and he said I had left out some of the students’ names from the nominal roll and this situation has led the school to lose as much as about $200,000.00 in funding. I checked the nominal roll with him and we both agreed that the figures were correct. What did occur was that the school’s enrolment was down by 17 students compared with the previous year. The coordinator thought that because of the cut in funding, the LEA might be forced to lay off some teachers and support staff unless INAC does something about the situation_ (Field notes: December 16, 1994).

Allocations for school supplies per student are the same as in mainstream Canadian schools.

However, the high cost of supplies in isolated communities makes a difference in spending. The
study suggests that there has been much corruption in expenditure especially on the part of suppliers to the school in Cat Lake. For example, the school has recently replaced all its fuel tanks at a startling amount of about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, only to find that suppliers have not properly hooked up the tanks to the furnaces. Any visit made by contractors or suppliers cost more money to the Band. Since the school is not financially independent of the Band, any financial problems confronted by the Band are bound to reflect on the school.

This study revealed an INAC regulation that required that the Band Office returned all unspent monies into INAC’s coffers. The Band could only spend allocated sums on projects specified by INAC. In other words, when INAC allocated funds for supplies or transportation, for example, the school could not spend the monies on any other items but those specified by INAC. In the process of keeping within INAC’s budget the Band made all attempts to deplete all the funds they received from INAC each year, sometimes by over buying the specified items. This way of spending money has not changed even though INAC no longer demands unspent monies back into government coffers.

Another area of concern for respondents is long term and short term planning. Discussions suggest that because the Local Education Authority does not control school funds, it impossible for them to embark on short and long term plans. The views expressed by this former LEA member, W.A., which appear below are indicative of how the lack of control of the budget puts the LEA in an awkward position:

*You’re asking me about how the LEA plans for the school? Are you kidding? How can you plan when they [meaning the Band administration] want to control everything? They don’t tell us how much money they have and we can’t do anything when there’s no money (C3905).*
The Authority is unable to confirm what funds are available for the use of the school, how the school would budget its spending for the present time and the future. It seems impossible for the Local Education Authority to initiate how to amass material and human resources and plan for training activities that would assist in a successful implementation of school programs. Apparently, there seem to be no specific goals that the Local Education Authority wishes to attain instantly and consequently. Closely related to lack of planning is a seeming lack of concern for the curriculum.

Interviews and observations revealed that one of the most crucial problems facing the Local Education Authority is a lack of knowledge at the local level from which members of the LEA would derive formal policy and a lack of a means of communicating formal policy to school staff. Like medical doctors who need to do their jobs without interference from lay people regarding treatment procedures, local people have always regarded teachers as professional people who know their jobs very well and need no interference. As a parent R.S. in his mid-fifties and a former chairperson for the LEA commented:

*Teachers attend school for many, many years and know what they’re doing. I can’t tell them what to do. Of course, they know better than me. I only have a grade … education. I don’t want to interfere with their job (C4209).*

Discussions with community people revealed that during the period Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) controlled the school, community people never had an input into the conduct of school affairs. At best, there were puppet school committees which had minimal influence in confined areas of the school program. The school committee neither controlled funds nor had decision making authority. The federal government never took any steps to properly transfer the power deemed necessary for decision making to the local authorities. As local people had
nothing to do with school staff and policy for the staff, the legacy of non-interference in the way teachers do their work remains. Even though teachers expect some directions from the Local Education Authority, they never receive any. As a Band worker, W.M. remarked:

*In this community, if nobody ever tells you anything, then it means you’re doing your work properly. If you do something wrong, you will find everybody blaming you and that’s where the trouble begins. Teachers have had problems here and they had to leave. Nobody bothers teachers who do their work properly. I think the teachers we’ve had from last year are a good bunch of people (B2605).*

But, a relevant question is, what do people in the community regard as proper when there are no set down criteria for assessment and evaluation of teacher performance?

From general observations I recorded as field notes, it appears that the government has not made attempts to support the LEA in its control of the school:

*I have been in Cat Lake for sixteen months and there has not been a provincial or federal education person coming into the school to view what goes on here. There has never been any concern either from federal or provincial authorities as to how the school is doing, especially as regards to quality of teaching and learning (Field notes: December 10, 1994).*

Respondents within the LEA indicated that it should continue to be the responsibility of federal and provincial authorities in ensuring that students receive quality education. They went as far as suggesting that the school should adopt provincial standards (see Appendix D) and either the provincial or federal education authorities could visit the school at any time to ensure the appropriateness of the quality of school programs.

**The Education Coordinator**

This section presents data on the role of the Education director. I use the expected roles of the coordinator as stated in the documents reviewed for this study as a backdrop for the
presentation of the data. *The Windigo Education Authority Policy* document (1992-93) defines the Education Coordinator as "the link between the school and the Local Education Authority, and the school and the Windigo Education Authority" (Section 8.2.1). The policy also states that "the Coordinator will be knowledgeable about all areas of education". According to the structure of school governance in Cat Lake, the Education Coordinator is the contact and public relations person between the school, the LEA and the Windigo Education Authority (see Figure 1). By virtue of the position, the coordinator should understand the concept of Indian control of Indian education. Among the duties of the Coordinator, the most important are: first, to ensure that community people are aware of school programs and involve themselves in the programs; second, to seek viewpoints of community people on school programs and carry the information on to the school staff; third, to supervise and evaluate local school support staff; and, finally, to assist the Education Authority to carry out short and long term planning.

The study revealed that within a period of fifteen months, there were six different Education Coordinators for the Titotay Memorial School. The Coordinator I met in the School in September 1993, was terminated by the Band Office the following month. The Band Office appointed a replacement at the beginning of November, and by the end of the first school term in December the new Coordinator abandoned his position. The Band employed another Coordinator in January, who held onto the job until July, when he took a leave of absence. An Acting-Coordinator took the position in August and relinquished it when the Coordinator returned to work in the middle of September. Early in October, the Coordinator resigned, and at the time of writing, the School has been dealing with the sixth Coordinator in fifteen months.
The frequent turnover in the position of education coordinator, by far, the most important position in the school system raises a number of questions. First, what are the causes of the frequent turnover of coordinators? When I interviewed some of the coordinators who had left the job, the most frequent reason they gave for leaving the job was that they experienced increasing stress and frustration. As one of the ex-coordinators, N.D., now working in the Band Office put it:

*I feel tense and have constant headaches at work. If I were to be working on education issues alone, perhaps, I won't be feeling this way. I do mostly Band's job at that office. They call me to attend meetings which are not in any way connected with the school. I sometimes sit in for the Band Manager and prepare cheques. When I get back to my office I find so much waiting for me that I don't know where to start. I will like to go back to work again if they will ask me to do only one job because I can't combine education work with other jobs (B2405).*

As the Education Coordinator's office is located in the Band administration building, it is easy to regard the Education Coordinator more as a band worker than a school official. As in the case of the management of the school budget, all the departments are responsible to the Band Office, and it becomes difficult to define their specific job descriptions.

Tracing the educational background of those who have held the position since the takeover from INAC in 1988, I found that the highest grade attained by any coordinator is the eighth grade. As a result of their low level of education, coordinators may simply lack the power base to control or even influence the many important factors involved in the provision of education. How, for example, can an eighth grade graduate, who has not had any training in management or school governance expect to supervise professional teachers to ensure that they are doing exactly what the community demands of them and what education is all about?
The organizational structure of the Windigo Education Authority schools (see Figure 1) suggests that the education coordinator is the only link between the local school administration and the Windigo Education Authority. Community people as well as teachers look up to the education coordinator to make all decisions about the school. However, this study revealed a Native tradition of decision by consensus. As a result of this tradition, the coordinator tends to become a rubber stamp for decision making. In other words, coordinators do not simply make decisions on their own. They seek consensus about each and every decision. Accordingly, simple administrative decisions tend to delay for days, weeks, or even months. Owing to the lack of immediate decision making on issues which demand immediate attention, coordinators seem to have too much on their shoulders as they keep on piling minor issues which they sometimes forget totally to address.

While the results above reveal a number of things that may constitute to major drawbacks for local control, none seems to be as crucial as the beliefs and traditions of Native people themselves. The Native tradition of decision by consensus, for example, causes a major drawback for school improvement. Evidence recorded as field notes clearly suggests that lack of decision making in certain cases was indeed a major problem:

*The teachers attended a staff meeting and decided that an unoccupied room within the main school building should be converted into a computer lab for students. As principal, I consulted the coordinator about converting the room into the computer lab. The coordinator promised to consult the LEA and get back to me. It has been three weeks since the coordinator made this promise. Today, the LEA, the coordinator and the staff have had a general meeting and I raised the issue about the computer lab. As one of the LEA members could not attend the meeting, the coordinator and the LEA couldn’t arrive at the decision as to whether we should use the unoccupied room for the computer lab. Instead, they would consult the LEA member who was absent and get back to us at a later date* (Field notes: November 28, 1994).
The data presented in this chapter suggest a wide array of problems facing local control of education. While admitting a lack of understanding of the meaning of control, all respondents expressed that the Local Education Authority (LEA) should be in charge of the school. The results indicated that to all respondents, the Band administration wields too much power in the control of educational finances. Views expressed by respondents revealed that the lack of control of the school budget does not allow the LEA to adequately plan for the school in the short and long run. The data further indicated that some beliefs and traditions of Native people, particularly the tradition of decision by consensus stifle the decision making process of school authorities.
CHAPTER 7

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In this chapter, I present the results of the third category of research questions which deals with school-community relations. I present the results based on the views expressed by the majority of residents on the level of community involvement in education, how the school reaches out into the community and what community people and educators do to achieve the purpose of schooling. The data in this chapter were, in some ways related to those in Chapter Five. This chapter draws on data collected through workshops, observations and discussions recorded as field notes to ascertain viewpoints of community people and school staff about school-community relationships. First, I review the school as a fenced-in enclave of the community; and second, I address parental involvement in education; third, I present data on communication between home and school; and finally, I present data on teacher integration into the community.

The School With A Fence

The present premises that harbours the Titotay Memorial School was built by INAC as an Indian Day School. The school with its teachers' quarters lies on a sandy, gentle, slope in the north-eastern corner of the community facing a sprawling lake to the south. There is a fence that clearly defines the boundaries of the school and its elite residents from the community. Within the school and teachers' quarters are modern facilities of running water, showers, water closet toilets, and oil furnaces for heating. Until a few years ago, the school and its teachers'
quarters were the only places in the community that had electricity from a small diesel generator. While the whole community slept in darkness, the lights from the school area illuminated the lake to the south and the coniferous forest that borders it to the north. Immediately beyond the fences are community houses with wood-stove heating systems, and little out-houses at the side of each of the homes. To the south of the community is the sprawling brown-water lake from which all community people acquire their water supply for all purposes all year round. During winter months, when the lake is frozen, families bore holes in the thick ice to collect water for their household chores.

Community people told me that during the period Indian and Northern Affairs controlled the school, they did not have anything to do within the confines of the school fence. The school was regarded by all community people as an ivory tower and whatever happened behind the fences was the business of professional teachers. Community people as a whole could at best only guess what actually happened at the school. As an elder, 63-year old J.S. put it:

* A bus would come round to pick our children to school in the morning and would bring them back after school. I knew they went to school but I didn't know exactly what they were doing there. They will be there, behind the fence until it is time for them again to come home (E0410).

Parents said they never visited the school nor the teachers' homes either because they were never invited or felt that there was nothing they could do in those places. The comment by this 51-year old parent, K.J., below was instructive in regard to the perceptions most parents had about the school:

* When there was no bus, we dropped the kids off at the gate. There will be one or two teachers waiting for them. We never went inside the fence except there was something wrong with your kid then the principal will invite you to the office. We had one principal here who will visit the kids home everyday after school to talk to their parents. I think he was an Irishman ... No, we never went to their [teachers'] homes (C3510).
So, the school maintains a legacy as the fenced-in modern quarter of the Indian reserve, that is, a community within a community. Undoubtedly, this legacy continues, and it seems local control has not changed the notion community people have about the school. Certainly the school has its own value systems, laws and regulations which are entirely different from those of the community-at-large. Parents feel that teachers continue to assume that as soon as children enter the school-yard, they are expected not to behave as Indians, but as "civilized" persons and could only be Indians after school. The comments by this 49-year old parent, and a former LEA member, A.W. presented below were typical of how a majority of parents felt:

_The children don't behave well at school, they carry their behaviour at home to the school. Teachers shouldn't allow them to do that. They can do what they want to do at home but when they go to school, they should behave as school children. The other day X and I went to grade ... classroom to see the teacher and the kids were swearing at us. They were calling us names. If they do that at home they shouldn't be allowed to do it at school_ (C4405).

The above quotations support the perception that the school is a fenced-in enclave, which is different from the home. As revealed in the data in Chapter 6, the change from INAC to local control does not change many of the notions community people had about the school. Based on these data I examine the extent of parental involvement in education in the section that follows.

**Parental Involvement in Education**

Results in Chapter Five indicated that most parents who participated in this study are informed of the fundamental principle of educational philosophy. That is to say, parents are aware that education should equip their children with the necessary tools for survival in both Native and western society. Furthermore, parents believed that their children should be self-
sufficient, competent, and should be able to confidently manage their lives and those for whom they are responsible.

As in all cultural milieus, young Native children in Cat Lake gain the basic concepts of the social order of traditional First Nations' cultural knowledge, first, through interaction with parents and close family members, and eventually, others in the community, that is, peers and other adults that the child notices outside the immediate family. The data in this study suggest that community people feel that in some cases teachers and school officials completely overlook First Nations' cultural values. This feeling supports data in Chapter 5 which have pointed out that some teachers do not see the difference between the purpose of education for Native and non-Native children. Whereas teachers support a view that the education of the children is supposed to continue to augment and reinforce the cultural and social experiences which the child brings from home to school, parents feel that the school is different from the home.

Results relating to school-community relations generally revealed that parents and teachers do not work together for the improvement of schooling. Parents think that they should not involve themselves in their children's schooling. Although they are in control of the school, local people do not understand and are not aware of alternatives and how to involve themselves in choosing among them. Most teachers I interviewed indicated that the most frustrating aspect of their job was lack of parental involvement. As one of the female teachers, H.S., commented:

*I find the apparent apathy in the community towards education and providing recreational opportunities for the children and the lack of parental involvement the most frustrating aspects of the job. It appears that if the non-Native people in the community did not do things for the kids, nothing would get done. There appears to be a general expectation of the community that the teachers can do everything where the kids are involved (T0811).*
Although community people I interviewed showed considerable interest in the affairs of the school and the improvement of the school system, they accepted that there was little parental participation in school affairs. Some parents did not know that there was a local education authority in charge of the school. They still entertained the notion that the school was under the control of the 'whiteman', and they did not have anything to do with the schooling of their children. Also, some parents did not know that they could visit the school at their own will and talk to teachers about the progress of their children. An incident comes to mind to illustrate this point.

During the fall of 1993, the school staff organized an open house for the parents and guardians of all the children in the school. The staff invited them by sending letters to them through their children and by making an announcement on the community radio. When the day had come for the open house, only a hand-full of parents, about five of them visited the school. I found later that those parents who visited the school were parents who had lived in fairly urban centres before moving into the community.

Perhaps the comments of a community member about the seclusion of the school from the community prior to the takeover from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), can provide a reason for lack of parental involvement. As 67 year-old, G.C. commented:

_The only time we saw our children during school time was at recess when they played within the fence. Sometimes I would like to speak to my children during recess time but teachers would not allow them to cross the fence. They are all over the place guarding the fence and since I know that they don't want us to speak to the children, I don't want to offend them. Teachers know their job and we should leave them free to train our children_ (E0510).

While parents felt that they were not welcome in the school, teachers thought that it was necessary for parents to participate in their children’s education. Another female teacher, M.C.,
in her late twenties remarked:

*To improve schooling for students, parents and teachers must get to know each other. Parents should feel that the teacher has the best interest of the child in mind, and teachers should feel that they have the support of parents in carrying out their programs. Parents should become involved in the daily programs of the school. When children see their parents taking an interest in school, they may begin to develop the attitude that school is important (T1203).*

In soliciting ideas from community members as to how much participation is fitting or preferred by community people, I found that many people felt that it was the duty of the local education authority to encourage parents to urge their children to go to school. They felt that as soon as the local education authority gets involved in schooling, parents would follow suit.

Another requirement that community people most frequently stated in our discussions regarding parental involvement in schooling was the need for more effective communication and more understanding between community people and non-Native staff. Respondents indicated that community people do not want to get involved in school affairs because there is lack of communication between the school and the community. As W.T., in his 30’s who worked in the school a couple of years ago stated:

*Community people don’t want to get involved. People are afraid to communicate. They need lot of public education. Teachers need to sacrifice their time to get to know people and try to gain knowledge from Native people. They need to establish trust and respect. Teachers should invite parents and ask them questions. They should establish friendship with parents. I have never seen a teacher going to visit a parent except report card day. Teachers go from their houses to the school, they never bother to know what is happening in the children’s homes. As I said earlier, the most important thing is getting to know people (C4613).*

As I personally found out during this study, it is difficult to communicate with Native people without getting to know them. This study has the benefit of establishing a direct contact between personnel from the school and community people. I found that the personal contact I introduced
between me and community people went a long way in enhancing the image of the school staff. One community member I visited, R.S., made a remark after I had interviewed him and his wife. As he said:

*You are the first principal who has ever visited my house since the 1970s when I started having students. I have never had anyone from the school coming to ask me what I think about the school. It seems you [the school staff] mean business this year. If teachers and principals were to be doing this in the past, our school would have become a better one. I didn't ever know I had anything to offer the school. I hope I have been able to help you. You are welcome any time you have further questions (C4212).*

This comment from the parent confirms how important it is to get to know Native people. Many respondents indicated that it will take trust, friendship and understanding on the part of teachers to get parents involved in schooling. As W.T. claimed:

*If my people don't trust you, they'll have nothing to do with you. Some of them feel that their children don't behave well at school and teachers will find fault with them so they won't get near the teachers. Teachers have to open up to parents and make them aware that they're here for the welfare of the children. As I said earlier, the only way by which to do this is ... I guess, they should be friendly towards parents. Teachers should also learn to understand parents (C4613).*

W.T. suggested that a major problem facing parental involvement in school matters is lack of effective communication between the school and the community. The section that follows presents viewpoints of school staff and community people about the problem of communication.

**Communication**

One of the drawbacks cited as facing schooling was lack of effective communication between parents and teachers. I asked a middle-aged man working at the Band Office, O.R. to tell me the way by which school could become more effective for the children:

*You see, the problem of schooling in this community is lack of communication between parents and teachers. All of you teachers are new to our way of life. You don't know
what we do with our kids at home. Ask your teachers, how many of them have ever attempted to visit a parent and spent a weekend with him, and perhaps, go on the trapline together and see what children and parents do over there. You are teaching children whose way of life you don’t understand. You are just teaching them what you think they should know. It is only when teachers know about the home environment of the children that they can teach them well. I don’t blame the teachers. It is poor parenting that brings about problems in the school. Some parents just don’t care about what their children do. Teachers and parents have to work together (B2106).

The study revealed that teachers acknowledge the lack of communication between them and parents. Teachers believe that the school can build effective lines of communication with parents by hosting school events and inviting parents, visiting parents at home, and attending community events. They suggested that it is necessary for the school to create venues, where parents can meet and discuss school issues together (see Appendix D). Teachers feel that they can become well acquainted with parents when they do things together. As a female teacher, S.D., commented:

Teachers and parents can work together to improve schooling by communicating with, and supporting each other. When the school plans an event, parents should come out and show their support. When possible, parents should be included in the planning process and volunteer to help. That way, they will see the effort that goes into the planning by the teacher, and not just the end result. Teachers and parents should communicate with each other, not only when there is a problem with a student, but when there is good news also. I think a PTA would help because then parents would have an opportunity to get inside look. If a school has an open door policy for parents, that’s great. However, parents need to use it to come in. If an open door is not used, it only lets in the cold (T0410).

Respondents I interviewed felt that what makes the problem of communication between teachers and parents more serious is that the language and cultural backgrounds of teachers differs from that of community people. As a prominent worker in the Band Office, B.M., remarked:

Non-Native teachers think that we have nothing to offer them, so they refuse to learn anything from us. How many times has a teacher gone to spend a week-end with a
family to experience real life in a student's home? I feel the main problem is that teachers don't understand the kids they teach and as they have isolated themselves from the children's homes, parents can't approach them. Teachers have to learn about our customs and tradition. They should visit students' homes, spend time with them, and talk to their parents (B3012).

Participants recommend that the initial necessity is for teachers to become acquainted with parents and develop a new footing of trust, agreement, and cooperation. It is clear from the present study that community people want to feel that non-Native teachers are reinforcing family values, that is, respect for parents, elders and Native culture, rather than teaching children only western values. I asked 38-year old M.G., a mother of two, what she would recommend for teachers to teach in school. As she stated:

Teachers should teach children our values. We were taught to respect our parents but these kids don't want to listen to us as parents. The other day I saw some of your school children in front of the school teasing that old man ... I asked them to stop, they won't listen. Some of them were even throwing snowballs at him. These kids don't respect elders, they just do what they like. I think teachers should teach them all these things like respect for elders, and our culture too (C4807).

Respondents also indicated that in order to communicate effectively with parents, teachers need to understand the cultural differences, Indians' way of life, their problems and aspirations. As B.M. of the Band Office remarked:

You the teachers are different from us and you've got the way you do things and we also have our own way of doing things. I know parents won't come to you if you don't go to them. You have to show understanding of our way of life and our problems. If you invite parents and they come late you should understand that they're on Indian time [laugh] (B3009).

Teachers believe that the problem of communication partly lies in parents' refusal to involve themselves in school affairs. Teachers expressed that all attempts they make to invite parents to school events prove futile. Thus, teachers feel that while they try all they can to keep an open door policy, parents would not make efforts to visit the school. As 30-year old male
teacher, H.D., stated, when I asked the question: How can the school build effective communication lines with the community?

*I think this question is a reflection of the problem that now exists. The onus is put on the school to build effective communication. If you look at a relationship between two people, one person cannot make it work by him/herself. If one person is a great communicator, and does everything possible to make the relationship work, yet receives little or no response from the other person, the relationship will eventually die. No matter how great a communicator you are, you cannot carry on forever alone. Quite often, teachers put a great deal of work into planning events to involve parents. Quite often, they receive little or no support, and little or no turn out for their efforts. After a while, they get tired of it, and they don’t want to try any more because there seems to be no purpose. Nobody communicates anything good that is done, only complains when they don’t like something. This is very discouraging for teachers. For a relationship to work, between two people, both partners must put effort, support, and communication into making it a good relationship. Each person has an equal responsibility. I believe for effective lines of communication to exist between the school and the community, each has to accept the responsibility for making this happen. Each has to work at making it become a reality (T1111).*

Even though a number of parents said that teachers are unable to communicate effectively to parents, some indicated firmly that the problem of communication does not lie with the teachers at school because students convey messages of invitation by notes to homes. However, it is clear from the study that as many parents are illiterate and do not read as well as speak English, they have a problem of comprehending messages sent by teachers. Some parents feel that it is the responsibility of the Local Education Authority and the Band Council to be actively involved in school events, and draw the community into accepting to be part of the school. As 66-year old J.S. commented:

*The Band Council should provide effective relationship to community people. The Band should communicate effectively with the people, for example, who are the teachers? What are they doing? What have they planned for the school? How should community people support the plans for the school? The Band Council is unable to report about the school to the people. They don’t deal with the school properly. The Band doesn’t inform us about what happens in the school. There should be a regulation that the Local Education Authority and the Band Council should report periodically to the people what*
the school is doing. They can communicate with the people through radio shows, community meetings or newsletters (E0711).

While a majority of respondents indicated that lack of communication was a major drawback for schooling, at the same time a few respondents blame parents for apathy. Those respondents felt that most parents do not care about the school and nothing could involve them in schooling matters. As Local Education Authority member S.V. remarked:

The parents just don't care. They have other things bugging them and won't worry about school. (C4320)

What this respondent suggested was that problems associated with deplorable living conditions, lack of job opportunities, lack of recreational facilities and adjoining problems of gas sniffing and alcohol abuse could contribute to parental apathy towards school matters.

Teacher Orientation and Integration into Community

This section presents results on teacher integration into the community. Teachers felt that the two-day orientation they receive before coming into the community is inadequate to prepare them to understand their students and parents. They recommended that they need two types of orientation: first, one prior to their arrival in the community; and, second, the other after their arrival in the community. The first orientation should be at least one week long. It should thoroughly explain differences in culture; it should offer some training for teaching English as a second language; it should provide an information package of the community including pictures and videotapes; and most of all, it should spell out teacher expectations. As teacher H.S. simply put it:

The orientation prior to arriving in the community should include suggestions as to how to 'break the ice' with the local people, what the community views as the role of the
teachers both in and outside of the school environment; the duties and responsibilities of
the Education coordinator and the LEA; administrative procedures/paper-work and brief
synopsis of the Windigo Education Policy (T0802).

Teachers indicated that the orientation after they arrive in the community should be
ongoing. They said they could use the first few days to familiarize themselves with community
people and the environment. As teacher M.C. stated:

Once in the community the teachers could be taken on a walking tour of the place, to
familiarize themselves with the layout; they could be introduced to the families. This
could be done in one morning or afternoon. The pot-luck dinner this year was a good
idea. It would be nice to have someone tutor the teachers for about half an hour once
a week in Ojibwe, so we could learn some common greetings, expressions and phrases
(T1203).

Some teachers also indicated that as part of the orientation process in the community, it is
necessary for non-Native teachers and community people to discuss issues directly pertaining to
the education of the children. As teacher S.D. remarked:

The orientation in the community should include: a discussion of the local goals of
education; an introduction to local resource people for cultural activities, traditional
values, and those willing to assist in the classroom and extra-curricular activities when
needed; a list of community activities in which teachers could participate; and a list of
band ‘officals [that is everyone who works in the Band Office], and their
responsibilities, and an introduction to these people (T0903).

Teachers expressed the need to have families volunteer to prepare them for some aspects of
community lifestyles, such as hunting, fishing, cooking and craft-work. These families could
‘adopt’ teachers and bring them up to know the Indian way. Teacher H.D., in an answer to the
kind of orientation to receive in the community stated:

If possible, various families in the community could adopt a teacher and invite them to
go hunting, fishing, trapping and participate in their everyday life—hauling water, getting
wood, and eating with the family. The teachers would gain valuable information and
understanding of local life that would benefit them in teaching their children. This
adoption would create a better rapport between the parents and the teachers and would
promote cooperation. Teachers would be made to feel welcome in the community and
would feel as if they were part of the community. A great benefit to the teachers would be first hand experience/assimilation into the local way of life (T1103).

When I asked teachers about how much they need to know about Native people before teaching their children, almost all of them agreed that it is important for them to understand the social and cultural realities in the community. They also indicated that they need to have some understanding of the general learning styles of Native children and how they could adapt curriculum and resources to local needs. As one of the female teachers, M.C. maintained:

*I think it is important to be aware of the realities that exist both socially and culturally in the community. We need to know what kind of behaviour is acceptable. Also, we should have an understanding of the general learning styles of Natives* (T1212).

While community people felt that teachers are unwilling to learn about their way of life, teachers, on the other hand, indicated that they are willing to learn all that they can, provided community people are prepared to teach them. A majority of teachers expressed that it is the duty of the community people to find ways and means of imparting their culture to non-Native teachers. Teachers further indicated that as part of its involvement, the community should help teachers to learn the culture, language and history of the local community.

Discussions with non-Native teachers revealed that most of them did not know anything about Native people and their culture before arriving in the community. Teachers would have preferred to have learned about Native people and their culture at the university. They felt that the university should play a vital role in improving the quality of teachers for Native children. As female teacher, S.D. remarked:

*I believe all education programs should include courses on Native studies. Some of these should be taught by Native people, and some taught by non-Natives who have worked with Native students. This would provide teachers with culturally relevant information, as well as information that will help prepare them for what they will face in working in Native communities* (T0912).
Teachers stated that universities should devote research towards collecting material from Native communities for use in courses such as in sociology of education and educational psychology. Also, teachers felt that universities should organize seminars and give presentations in classes about Native education. H.D, whom I asked how much teachers need to know before teaching Native students put it this way:

_The focus of knowledge, I think should deal with psychology. how Native children think is crucial to designing approaches to helping them learn and especially for classroom management and discipline. Teachers need to know a lot about children, their relationship with the community and how the community responds to the needs of children not as it was traditionally, but as it is today, or maybe both (T1112)._ 

When I asked the same teacher, what he thinks should be the role of universities in improving the quality of teachers for Native children, he said:

_With the help of Native organizations and committees, content can be collected and submitted to universities to use in conjunction with sociology and psychology course content; otherwise, Faculties of Education should hold seminars, have presentations in classes, and hold a Native awareness day or week annually at the universities in order to kindle the interest of student teachers in Native education (T1113)._
CHAPTER 8

PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLING

This chapter presents perceptions of community residents on the fourth category of research questions which explored the viewpoints on the problems of schooling. The focus will be on the problems associated with schooling as viewed by community people, teachers and students of Titotay Memorial School. In order to clearly identify these problems, I reviewed documents, interviewed teachers, students and community people, and held workshops to identify and discuss issues to try to answer the following questions: What do community people view as problems of schooling? What do teachers view as shortcomings of Native students? What do students perceive as inhibiting them from achieving success at school? The chapter addresses issues related to the curriculum, student discipline, school attendance, social problems that obstruct schooling, student dropout, school supplies, school maintenance and the problems associated with school governance.

The Titotay Memorial School Curriculum

This study revealed that a serious problem facing the school is the irrelevance of the curriculum. The Local Education Authority members in Cat Lake are not knowledgeable about curriculum issues, and therefore, they are not concerned about what teachers teach in school. I asked 35-year old W.E., a former member of the LEA what she thought teachers should teach at school:

I don't know. They're trained and should know what to teach. I'm not a teacher and I don't know anything about teaching so I can't say teachers should teach this or that. I
guess they came prepared and know what they’re going to do (C3507).

While there was a popular belief by community people that their children are not achieving at the same level as children in urban centres such as Winnipeg, they did not seem to know what teachers should do about the curriculum. The views expressed below are typical of the majority of educated community people in regard to the relevance of the curriculum being used by the school. M.C. in his early forties, educated in a residential school stated:

*The entire curriculum needs to be changed. Most of the things I learned in school aren’t relevant to me. Here I am in the community not using those things I learned. They should change the curriculum and teach things about our culture and our people. When you teach history, for example, and say Christopher Columbus discovered America, Native people will be wondering where their great, great grandfathers were before Christopher Columbus came. Children should know the facts about Native people (C4107).*

The views appeared to have generally reinforced community people’s perceptions about the irrelevance of the curriculum for their children. A majority of educated people indicated that there is the need for a major modification in the curriculum. Both teachers and the majority of parents specify that unless the curriculum reflects the children’s culture, values, customs, and language, education would be meaningless to them.

The study revealed that teachers do not understand how to use the Ontario Common Curriculum. A majority of those I interviewed find the curriculum document a meaningless blueprint. As female teacher F.D., in her mid-twenties stated:

*The curriculum document does not tell us anything specific. It says we should make lessons relevant to students but does not give any specific guidelines that would help our situation in Cat Lake. I have attended a number of workshops on the Common Curriculum and all that I hear about is cooperative learning. I don’t think this is new. It is the same as the group work I did when I was in primary school, and have been doing with my students since I became a teacher. The developers should come out and tell us plainly what we are supposed to teach in isolated communities such as ours (T1004).*
What this teacher suggested was that Native people knowledgeable about curriculum development and implementation should develop such a curriculum that would be relevant to their own situations.

Indeed, one of the issues that continued to puzzle me throughout my time as principal of the school was teachers' use of mainstream curriculum material to teach Native children. Through my discussions with teachers, I tried to determine what the general attitude was about the use of mainstream Canadian schools' curriculum to teach the students. At first, I thought teachers were not very concerned about the type of curriculum they implemented. However, some classroom teachers indicated they were deeply concerned but lacked any alternatives to replace the mainstream curriculum. One male teacher, M.R., in his early thirties put it this way:

*I know that these kids need something relevant to them, but I'm merely using what I found here. To teach Native children we must take into consideration the environment in which they live. The textbooks don't reflect any aspect of Nativeness, and sometimes children don't know what the books are saying when they talk about subway stations in Toronto or the Union Station (T1312).*

The data presented above revealed that non-Native teachers expect some directives from the community level as to what they should teach the students. The views expressed by the majority of teachers convey a notion that when teachers accept positions in the communities, they have a feeling that they could successfully accomplish their tasks. After a short while when they realize their students are not adaptive to their teaching, they begin to have a feeling that something terribly is wrong. As the teacher S.D. stated:

*We cannot become members of the community on our own. Often when arriving in the community, we feel overwhelmed by our lack of knowledge of the culture and the language. This leads to feelings of insecurity and loneliness. The things we know and the*
rules of social behaviour no longer apply and the acceptable rules for the culture is unknown to us. It's like trying to find your way in the dark with no light to guide, or being expected to participate in a game where nobody tells you what to do or what the rules are. Often we make attempts which are misunderstood and we become discouraged and give up (T0905).

Meanwhile, when I interviewed community people and LEA members, about what type of curriculum they would like teachers to implement in the school, I found a majority of my interview notes representing similar views. As LEA member S.V. stated:

*I want our children to learn the same things that students are learning in Thunder Bay, Sudbury or Timmins, or anywhere in Canada. They should know how to read and write English well* (C4307).

When asked who should develop a curriculum for the school, most community people felt that it was the responsibility of the principal and the school staff. Some indicated it was the responsibility of Windigo Education Authority. The data indicated that nobody among all the people I interviewed felt that the Local Education Authority should be responsible for curriculum development and implementation.

In the present study, it is clear that community people do not expect the Local Education Authority to develop and enforce implementation of a school curriculum, because the Local Education Authority members do not have the expertise in curriculum development and implementation. However, a majority of respondents indicated a similar line of thinking on the curriculum issue as was on the issue relating to the purpose of education. In both issues they indicated that students should have the opportunity to learn about their culture, history of their people, their values, customs, and language (see Chapter Five).

Both school staff and community people came to a common understanding during one of the workshops (see Summary Report for Workshop in Appendix D) that the curriculum does not
respond to the realities of the community, that is, the curriculum does not recognize the cultural and linguistic milieu of the students. Participants advocate a curriculum that responds to the realities of the community without compromising comparable standards in the province. They suggested that Native language, culture, and history must form an integral part of the children’s education.

Teachers felt that they were capable of developing a curriculum for the school. However, they cited problems such as funding and the lack of adequate knowledge of their students’ culture as major constraints. Observations and notes recorded from the discussions that occurred at one of the staff meetings confirm the point:

_We all agreed that we were willing to lengthen the school day by 30 minutes in order to close the school for the summer holidays by the first week of June. We would then spend about three weeks developing a suitable curriculum for the school. H.S. observed that while it was a good idea to develop a curriculum, we would need some money from the Band office. H.S. also noted that without the input of community people, we couldn’t develop a suitable curriculum. She, however, did not believe community people would attend the workshop with the staff for the entire period of three weeks (Field Notes: February 17, 1994)._  

When I contacted the LEA about the staff’s proposal, I was told there was no money allocated in the budget for curriculum development. I found the LEA is unable to deal with issues concerning the curriculum because they do not have both the financial and human resources that go into curriculum development.

The sections that follow present results at workshops attended jointly by school staff, LEA, and some community people to discuss problems facing the school (See Appendices C and D for the Summary Reports of the Workshops).
Native Language and Culture

In order to examine the attitudes and viewpoints of community people and teachers on the language and culture issue, I asked the question: Would you explain why you would like (or not like) your child/student to learn Native language at school? While all the teachers and a majority of parents acknowledged that they would like their students/children to learn Native language and culture, a few parents felt that since their children speak Native language at home, they would rather like them to use the time that would be spent on Native language to improve their skills in English language. While this line of thinking seems logical, it is clear that some parents do not understand that the teaching of Native language at school can be a way of enhancing self identity of the Indian child. By learning the language at school, children may give the same credence to Native language as they give to other school subjects.

When I interviewed elders who only speak the traditional language, they indicated that they want their children to be able to speak their language and in the majority of cases see it desirable for them to be able to write it. As J.S. commented:

*It is very important to teach Native language in the school. The children should be able to write syllabics. If they are not taught syllabics, how will they keep their culture? How would they write newspapers for the elders to read? Elders like reading that sort of thing. Young people these days are losing that skill. They can't write syllabics. Syllabics is the Native people's curriculum (E0708).*

At one of the workshops (see Appendix D) a discussion group felt that as the learning of Native language may bring the school and the home together, Native language and culture should be of top priority in the school. The group's presentation posed a heated argument for discussion as other participants continued to indicate that the teaching of Native language constituted a waste of resources. After several discussions, participants arrived at two conclusions: first, that
Native language could enhance children's self identity and self esteem as they give the same credibility to their language as other subjects in the curriculum; second that children will come to give more respect to elders in the community who do not speak any other language but the Native language. Participants, therefore arrived at the conclusion that Native language should be taught in the school. However, there was a feeling from participants that there was a problem of finding a qualified person in the community to teach the Native language.

Closely related to the problem of language is the implementation of a cultural program in the school (see Appendix D). Workshop participants indicated that as there is no cultural program in the school, students may tend to lose their knowledge in the arts and crafts of their heritage. Students may also not be adequately prepared to learn the necessary skills for survival in their environment.

**Religious Instruction**

When discussing the reasons for problems such as gas sniffing and suicide attempts (stated earlier in Chapter Four), some participants attributed them to lack of religious instruction in the school. They believed that religious instruction could be a means of enhancing morals, virtues and values of the students. Students could benefit from religious instruction, but since there are too many denominations in Cat Lake, some parents might be offended if religious instruction degenerates into a missionary activity. So, participants recommended that perhaps, it would be more appropriate to have a Sunday school which would be optional to students.
**Physical Education**

Although, there is a physical education instruction program in the school, workshop participants found its provision inadequate for the purpose of the nature of the students. They felt that it is very important to have a physical education specialist in the school. Owing to the high energy level of the students, and the lack of any recreational activities in the community, it is important to give a priority to physical education and have a specialist whose time would be devoted to seeing to the physical wellbeing of the students. The specialist would help to restructure extra curricula sporting activities and this may augur well in helping students burn their excess energy. Students advancing to high school would need a more rigorous instruction in physical education in order to prepare them for the task in high school.

**Home Economics**

The absence of home economics in the school program was of concern to both teachers and community people. They felt that home economics instruction for boys and girls is essential in the school. Boys and girls should be provided with cooking lessons. While there are facilities at the recreation centre for cooking, the school has not made any provision in its program for home economics.

**Student Discipline**

The problem of student discipline is of utmost concern to research participants. In this study, discipline refers to behaviour of students in the school, classroom, and community. Parents and teachers admit that students misbehave in and out of school. Peer pressures and
intergroup teasing and fighting have been among the most serious discipline problems of the school. Many times, some students have refused to attend school because of these problems. When I interviewed 46-year old C.K., a parent whose child refused to attend school because of teasing, I found that most of the teasing and fighting problems are engendered by petty family rivalries. As C.K. remarked:

The type of language children are using against their fellow students is not good. Some bad students interrupt the class and other students can't stand them. Successful students are called names and the bad students say things about the successful ones. When [name of student] went to school in September, she has been saying that this year, she wants to work hard at school but it is difficult for her to stay at school. There is something in the school bothering [Name of student]. She has always wanted to go to school but she is afraid. The students are used to these kinds of threats over the years (C5002).

I asked the parent whether he thought the problem was due to inability of teachers to control the children at school.

I don't blame teachers for the attitude of the children. It is difficult to discipline the children at school when parents do not support teachers. Parents do not tell their children to behave well at school. The problem in the school comes from the home. Students who want to be successful at school suffer the consequences of those who behave badly. We cannot also blame the children. It is the parents who do not bring up their children properly. Some parents just don't care. They leave their children to do whatever they want to do (C5002).

There seem to be no effective deterrents in place for student misbehaviour. Although the Local Education Authority has provided the school with a discipline policy, teachers indicated that available sanctions do not work. The principal's office has become rendezvous for student offenders. Student behaviour problems sometimes take up to about 70 per cent of the principal's daily routine. Student misbehaviour ranges from swearing at one another and teachers, disrupting classes, brutalizing each other, violence towards teachers to lack of attendance in the mornings, mainly due to sleeping-in. Observations I recorded as field notes may support the
gravity of the discipline problem during the early periods of the study:

Soon after the bell rang for the afternoon session, I heard a young boy crying in the hallway. The social counsellor escorted the crying boy with an older boy to my office. The older boy had hit the younger one on the head without any cause. Within a few minutes a teacher sent another girl to the office for swearing at him. Then, a teacher who has been out in the gym having physical education brought a twelve-year old boy to the office for hitting her on the chest. Just before the bell rang for the end of the school day, the grade two teacher brought in a boy who had been disrupting the class by punching classmates and throwing down their desks [Field notes: January 6, 1994].

Community people's viewpoints indicated that the school is unable to contend with the discipline problems of students. While many people felt that the school could do more to deter student misbehaviour, teachers expressed that the community as a whole faces a discipline problem and that student misbehaviour is merely a reflection of the attitudes in the community as a whole.

Results indicated that as far as student discipline is concerned, the school and the home are two opposing systems. That is to say, there is no continuity between the home and the school when it comes to the discipline of students. While students may be rewarded for good behaviour and punished for bad behaviour at school, nothing happens at home to reinforce good behaviour or deter bad behaviour. Excerpts from a journal entry I made supports the idea that Native people do not punish their children at home:

K.E. called me tonight to report to me that his nephew, A.T. beat his daughter, R.E. somewhere in the community and would like me to look into the case and punish his nephew. The incident did not happen in school and today is even not a school day. Perhaps community people view teachers as the only people who could punish children (Field notes: December 3, 1994).

The idea appeared to have been further supported by an incident I recorded about a year earlier:

My family and I returned from our Christmas vacation this afternoon. X called to report how some students, P, Q, and R brutalized dogs in the community during the holidays. According to X they were waiting for me to come and take action, that is to punish the kids for their wrongdoing. I promised I would investigate the issue and see what I could do about it (Field notes: January 3, 1994).
A majority of respondents acknowledged that the school alone cannot effectively discipline students without the support of parents and guardians. They find it important to foster a continuity between the school and the home. The school staff in collaboration with community members agreed to develop a discipline policy that would apply to students both at home and school (see Appendix D and priorities of schooling in Chapter 9).

**Absenteeism**

The study revealed that students do not attend school regularly. Many traditional parents lack an understanding of the requirements of schooling, particularly, the importance of continuity in school attendance and punctuality. Such parents do not often insist that their children attend school regularly and be punctual at school. I asked W.D., who has never been to school and whose daughter did not attend regularly to tell me why she did not encourage her daughter to attend. As she claimed:

*I think if she wants to attend, she'll attend. Sometimes she says she's tired and can't go then I ask her to stay at home. The last time I was going to visit my sister in Slate Falls, she wanted to go with me so we both went and spent a week. When her friends tease her she stays away from school. If she wants to go it is left to her but I won't force her* (C3716).

Results of this study showed that the people of Cat Lake, particularly grandparents, highly value their children and like to have them around the house. Parents and grandparents do not usually force the children to go to school if the children are not willing to go. In fact, grandparents sometimes encourage their grandchildren to stay at home. An entry I recorded in my journal as field notes supports the idea that grandparents like to have their grandchildren around:
[Name], grandfather of [Name] and [Name] called this morning to inform me that he would like his grandchildren to stay at home today because the school bus has broken down and he could not walk them to school. Last week he called to tell me that he wouldn't like his grandchildren to come to school because they were being teased by others. I investigated the allegation and found that there was not such thing as teasing going on with his grandchildren. He said that his grandchildren would remain at home until the bus was back on the road to pick them up for school (Field notes: February 16, 1994).

If there is a ceremony of importance such as a funeral or a hunting festival, the school remains closed until the ceremony is over. The Windigo Education Authority policy recognizes traditional education and allows students to leave school and go on pursuits such as trapping and hunting. During the fall of every year, whole families with their school-going children leave the community for traplines for months.

**Ill-Health**

Teachers' class registers indicate that one of the major causes for student absenteeism is ill-health. On a single day of which 12 students were absent from school teachers listed 9 of them as 'sick'. Although ill-health as such was not often listed by respondents as a cause of immediate consideration, participants found health issues as a cause of truancy among students. Often, because of the stolid attitude of local people toward pain and discomfort, children who are sick remain at home instead of seeking help from the local clinic. The coping technique adopted by local people toward illnesses works against their best interest when it comes to obtaining early help in illness or altering conditions which may cause illness.

In the present study, it is clear that partly, children’s absence from school is caused by problems such as nutrition, skin diseases, and hearing defects. Children from some homes may not eat adequately before coming to school. In some cases children said they were absent from
school because their parents did not provide them with breakfast or lunch.

While skin diseases may not immediately seem apparent as contributing to failure in educational achievement, the information I have received from parents for children's absence from school indicates a high incidence of skin diseases which may cause continuous and agitating uneasiness for children. Participants at one of the workshops noted that many children are detracted from high performance at school because they had bad ears. Some parents noted that their children had chronic ear disease and hearing loss which present a considerable problem for them at school.

**Opposition to Schooling**

Interviews with teachers revealed that one reason for students not attending school regularly is a negative attitude towards education and schooling. To teachers, sometimes, community people have demonstrated that they seem to oppose schooling. Somehow, parents and older children seem to oppose the present system of schooling or some facets of the school experience. In a few cases, parents or grandparents have telephoned school authorities to inform them that their children would not attend school because of certain bad experiences with other children or with the teacher. Some children who do not want to attend school tell stories to their parents to suggest some maltreatment by teachers. Some parents believe their children's stories and encourage them to stay away from school.

The study indicates that some older students who do not go to school find pleasure in going to hunt partridges in the woods around the school premises. I interviewed 13-year old, A.S., to tell me why he was not a regular attender:
It’s (school) is boring. I come when there is gym (meaning Physical Education or sporting activity). The work is hard in the class, I can’t do it. I don’t like school at all … I like hunting and fishing, things like that but school is too hard (S5705).

The comments by this boy in regards to things he likes to do appeared to have reinforced the data in a previous section that the present curriculum is irrelevant. Results further suggest that the school does not offer a pleasant experience to most of the students. While some parents do not encourage their children to attend, admittedly, some students stay away from school without the knowledge of their parents.

Closely related to opposition to schooling is perceived lack of interest in education. Teachers find the shortcomings of schooling in terms of the inability of children to attach value to education. Some teachers felt that cultural differences deter children from attaching importance to education. As teacher H.S. stated:

My ideas as to the shortcomings of Native students could possibly be explained by cultural differences. For example, one of the shortcomings I sometimes see is the view of the importance of education. Education is not always seen as valuable, important, or a priority. This may be the result of a different view of education. As a result, students sometimes don’t complete homework, and don’t feel it is a priority to complete work at school. It seems school is the only place for school-work, and when the kids leave, they leave work behind. There is often no place in their home life for school-work or homework. As a result, students go to high school ill-prepared for the work they are expected to do there. They become frustrated easily and give up or quit. They are unable to compete with the other students (T0807).

Teachers felt that like lack of parental involvement, the attitude of students towards education may improve through effective communication between the school and the community.

Social Problems

This section presents data on social problems that affect schooling. The study revealed that partly, student absenteeism and lack of interest in schooling are associated with problems
they face at home. At the workshops jointly attended by community people, teachers and LEA members (see Appendix C and D), a majority of participants demonstrated definitely that the existing social environment is not favourable to higher educational achievement at school. They identified several social problems such as alcoholism of one or both parents, starvation, clothing, indifference, and single parent families which do not constitute to a healthy educational environment in Cat Lake. Children whose parents experience chronic alcoholic problems do not often attend school regularly. In our discussions, we found that family break-ups, mainly due to alcohol abuse of parents constitute a major problem to students. In a survey at the school we found that about 35 percent of the student population came from broken homes. Those children we found living with single parents suffered in many ways; the consequences are that they are poor school attenders and these students have the most serious discipline problems. Children of some alcoholic parents do not seem to have enough to eat, wear clean clothes and their parents seldom provide them with moral support.

The issue of substance abuse becomes even more serious when one notes that one of the problems facing young people of this community is gas sniffing. A few students in the school, ranging from age 11 have taken to gas sniffing. Often, these students leave the community for treatment centres where they spend months in rehabilitation.

**Student Dropout**

The community offers schooling from grade one through eight. Student drop-out is generally, not a serious problem within the school situated in the community. In fact, students cannot afford to drop out from school completely as it is the only socializing place for children
in the community. They can afford to take a few days off and return to school again after they become bored with their pursuits at home. In many cases, students attempt to stay at school up to the eighth grade. However, students who leave the community to commence secondary school at places such as Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, or Winnipeg usually drop out as soon as they leave the community. Table 6 shows number of students enrolled in high school and the graduation rate for a ten-year period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grade 9</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Grade 11</th>
<th>Grade 12</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table shows that in September, 1985, three students enrolled in grade 9, one student enrolled in grade 10 and in grade 11 respectively. There were no students enrolled in grade 12 from September 1985 through September 1987. Two students enrolled in grade 11 in September, 1987, and one enrolled in grade 12 in 1988. None of the five students that enrolled in grade 9 in 1987 proceeded on to grade 10 in 1988. The table reveals a general trend which suggests that only a very few number of students proceeded on to the next grade. In some cases students went back to school after dropping out for a while. For example, in 1990, three students enrolled in grade 9 and in 1991 four enrolled in grade 10. The increase in the number enrolled in grade 10 suggests that students who had previously dropped out decided to go back.
to school. Generally, the table reveals that during the ten-year period, forty-one students were enrolled in grade 9, fifteen in grade 10, fourteen in grade 11 and five in grade 12. Of all students that enrolled in high school since 1985, only two graduated from grade 12.

Results of the study indicated that students seldom stay on in school after the first term in grade nine. In fact, at the time of writing (April, 1995), all the fourteen students that enrolled in grade 9 dropped out from school. Individual interviews and group discussions clarified possible reasons for the dropout of students who leave the community for high school (see Appendix D). The most frequently mentioned reasons are: first, students experience loneliness or boredom due to problem of adjusting to a new environment. As Cat Lake is an isolated "fly-in" community, respondents felt that students who leave the reserve may not be familiar with life outside their communities. This feeling of strangeness may cause loneliness or boredom. Students may find it difficult to be in touch with their families because not all of their homes may have telephones. Their loneliness and boredom are further exacerbated when the friends they have from the same reserve drop out from school. I asked Q.R., a high school dropout, who has a relatively well-paid job in the community why she dropped out. As she stated:

When we're out there everybody thinks we don't belong there. They look at you as if there's something wrong with you. It's really hard to be with those people. You always think there's something wrong with you. Your friends leave you and go home and you're alone there, it's boring. Some of the teachers are very nice and the students too, but those in the city, they make as if they don't want to see you. And some students too talk about you, sometimes they say you don't know Math or Language and they tease you. I can't stand all that b... I better come back to where I belong (S5809).

When asked if they would attend a high school in the community, those interviewed indicated that they would by all means enroll in the community high school.
Second, group discussions emphasized that lack of interest for school is a result of poor performance leading to lack of motivation. Third, workshop participants indicated that lack of parental support is a major cause for dropping out of school. The results indicated that students who dropped out seem to lack parental support because of a myriad of social problems that affect their families. These problems include the difficulties of living with a single parent, family breakdown, alcoholism, and financial problems. These problems may be so demanding that such parents have little time to deal with the educational requirements of their children.

In a discussion I had with a high school dropout parent, the parent asserted that the decision for the student to drop out was entirely in the hands of the student and that if the student found school a pleasant experience, she could go; if not, she could make her own mind whether or not she could stay at home. The study revealed a perceptible feeling which appears to exist in the community that it would be better for students to attend high school in the community, rather than attending out-of-reserve schools.

Finally, workshop and interview results also indicated that the people of Cat Lake, like those of most Native reserves are ambivalent in their behaviour toward the possibilities of their children leaving the community to continue schooling elsewhere. As stated earlier, many community people, as I realized from interviews, believed that it is better for their children to remain, and attend school in the community. This feeling is partly an excusable response to the dropout rate of high school students in the community. In the present study, it is clear that one reason for the dropout rate is the inability of young Native adolescents to keep up with the hustle and bustle of city life. Young, inexperienced Native adolescents might not be able to cope with the realities of high school in a more urban centre with a life entirely different from that on the
reserve. Apart from difficulties students face in the towns and cities, their parents also do not want them to leave the community because of the need to hold on to the younger generation. Many parents, therefore, indicated that it is important to establish a high school in the community to enable their children to remain in the community to attend school. As J.S. stated when I asked if he would like to see a grade nine established in the community:

Yes, there should be a grade 9 program in the school because when we send the kids away to high school, they are not able to cope with the situation out there. They acquire the habit of drinking outside the community. This is a dry reserve [meaning, no alcohol allowed] and our students must learn to stay dry when they are in school. As soon as they go out there, they are free to go drinking. I approached the Band Office that they should put a grade 9 program in the community but they haven't done that up till now (E0712).

Discussion groups listed community-related issues as contributing to the high dropout rate of high school students (see Appendix D). These are: the low value people of the community, generally, attach to education; lack of a vision for the future; and the fact that community people do not regard education as a stepping stone to success. There is a clear indication from what goes on with employment that people do not need to be educated to find jobs because the few administrative jobs available are not held by highly educated people. As teacher, S.D. stated about the shortcomings of schooling:

The most serious shortcoming of Native students is their attitude that school isn't important. I am sure, however, that it is difficult for them to appreciate education when they are not exposed to the various careers education opens up for them, when they do not receive encouragement and reinforcement from home, and when there are few positive role models (T0907).

The main administrative nucleus of the community, the Band Office, comprises mainly illiterate or semi-literate officials. Educational qualifications do not seem to be a major criterion for job opportunities. For example, the highest positions in the community, band council appointments,
are being held by people of little or no formal education. The situation does not provide any role models for students. Many dropouts find themselves holding teachers’ assistant, secretary, or tutor escort positions in the school, and some secure relatively well paid jobs in education and the Band office. As many advertised responsible positions such as those for the director of education list grade eight as the minimum educational qualification, students do not closely link higher education to future success in the community.

School Supplies, Facilities and Utilities

This section presents results on problems associated with school supplies, facilities and utilities. Workshop data (see Appendix D) indicated that a serious drawback for schooling in Cat Lake is lack of adequate educational supplies, facilities and utilities. In our discussions, we found the following lacking in the school: there is no playground equipment; the few available computers and printers are all broken down; the school bus has not been running for about a year; portables do not have washrooms and fire alarms; and, there is lack of enough space to accommodate the classes.

There have been complaints that students wander off the school premises during recess and the Local Education Authority has often blamed teachers for lack of effective supervision. However, teachers contend that as there is no playground equipment for students, they become bored during recess time and go beyond school grounds looking for playthings. The study suggests that children do not confine themselves within the school premises because they do not have any equipment with which to play. Teachers attribute cases of violence during recess to idleness of students. As female teacher M.C. stated:
Children always look for play opportunities. When they go out for recess you can’t expect them to remain quietly in the school-yard playing with nothing. If they don’t go about finding playthings, then the only thing to do is play violently with their friends. You will see boys picking on the girls, sometimes throwing snowballs at each other. Those who leave school premises usually go down the lake for sliding. The only thing which can stop the problem is for the people to provide playground equipment (T1209).

Discussion groups found the lack of computers in the school a serious drawback of the schooling system. Computer knowledge, they realized is important to student survival in the modern world. The present study indicated that a majority of parents would like their children to familiarize themselves with computers at an early age so that computers become an ongoing experience for the children as they prepare for their future careers.

While all the classrooms, including the portables are equipped with Bell Canada commercial telephones, there are no washrooms and fire alarms in the portables. Participants felt that it is improper for the classrooms to be without washrooms as children from the portables walk all the way down to the main school to attend the washroom. Participants felt this constitutes a valuable waste of time for students because they miss part of lessons being taught by the teacher. Many questioned the luxury of installing telephones in all the classrooms. The Bell Canada representative in the community confirmed that the school telephones cost the school a considerable amount of money in bills every month. People regarded the installation of telephones as a clear manifestation of misplaced priorities for the school. Instead, they would like to see the school provided with basic needs such as playground equipment and washrooms in the portables.

The lack of space for classrooms came up as one of the problems facing the school. Participants felt that because of the tender age of the junior kindergarten students, their classroom should be detached from the main school. The present situation whereby kindergarten
students share the main building with the rest of the school causes untold suffering to them. One of the associated problems is that the older students physically abuse the younger ones and scare them away from school. Similarly, there is not adequate space for special needs students and their tutor escorts. A special needs education teacher has been recently employed to cater for the increasing demands of special needs students. Respondents deem it necessary to provide the teacher and students with ample space for their activities.

School Maintenance

The study revealed that participants were concerned about the maintenance problems that beset the school and teachers' homes. They felt that it is not good for example, for the school to run out of fuel while classes are in session and teachers' quarters to go without fuel, both for heating and cooking for a number of days. As a result of lack of proper maintenance, some teachers' quarters become frozen during winter and pipes burst. For instance, the sewage system has not been emptied for many years and the toilet systems in the teachers' quarters block up. Participants expressed that there is an apparent lack of responsibility and accountability for the maintenance of the school. Observation of the school building indicates that the twenty-two years old school is poorly maintained and the building and teachers' quarters are falling apart. The field notes I recorded about the general conditions of the school and teachers' quarters on a peculiar day during my first winter confirm participants' concern about the maintenance problem:

*It was about minus forty degrees celsius this morning. As soon as we arrived in school, two teachers came to inform me that their classrooms were too cold for the students. Later, another teacher followed, and then another. I called the custodian in to check what was wrong. Fuel had run out of the tank. School closed and all the children went*
home. Later, this afternoon, the sewerage system in the teachers' House 1 wouldn't work. It was frozen. House 2 ran out of propane for the gas stove. Later this evening, the basement of House 1 was flooded from a burst pipe. It has been a hectic day (Field notes: January 26, 1994).

Workshop participants felt that the above are debilitating problems that local administrators need to address. The janitor, they say, should be responsible for the general upkeep of the school. Groups attributed the condition of the school to lack of supervision on the part of the Local Education Authority. They felt that as the janitor is directly responsible to the Education Authority, it should be the responsibility of the Education Authority to ensure that the janitor does his work properly.

To go beyond the general observation, however, interviews with the janitor have shown a particular trend for conflict. The janitor stated that the problem of school maintenance and care is due to lack of accountability and efficiency of the local school authorities. He expressed difficulty working with the present management of the school. As the janitor remarked:

_I worked with Indian Affairs for fifteen years before the band took over. When I needed something, just one phone call and the next moment I have it. I will tell you one thing. There was a time when the fan belt to my electric generator was broken. This happened at four o'clock in the morning. I made a call to the officer in Sioux Lookout at five o'clock. By seven o'clock, he flew in with a fan belt only to find that it was too short for the machine. He took the fan belt back and in an hour and a half, he brought the right one in time for students to come to school. Now when I ask for something, it takes months to get it. The repair man was always here checking on the furnaces, the electric generator, everything. The teachers' houses had everything that teachers needed. Just one phone call, you have what you need. If you ask for it today, you will have it tomorrow_ (Interview with School Custodian).

In this context, the controversy over school maintenance seems to go beyond a problem of the janitor or custodian of the school. It becomes a problem of general accountability and efficiency in the governance system.
Problems of School Governance

This section discusses the dual problems of accountability and efficiency as they are related to the problems of school governance in Cat Lake.

Accountability

One of the key issues about which I found widespread consensus among teachers and community people is lack of accountability and efficiency in the school system. Like teachers, community people are very concerned about the lack of clear assignment of responsibilities and a strategy by which to make decision makers responsible. Although the Windigo Education Authority clearly defines the lines of authority within the school system, there is general ambivalence as to who should make decisions and who should actually carry them out. This ambivalence over who should be responsible for certain decisions and who should answer for carrying them out runs through the entire fabric of the school system, and perhaps, the whole gamut of Band administration. As principal of the school, one of the most serious problems I have faced in my administrative assignment is that it seems nobody in the hierarchy above the school level wishes to be responsible for any decision. As the Local Education Authority member S.V. acknowledged:

_Our main problem is nobody wants to be responsible for anything. We can’t make simple decisions. We go round and round and come back to the same thing. Some decisions are entirely the coordinator’s responsibility. As soon as the coordinator tables anything in front of us, it means there will be no decision. When we feel the coordinator is in charge and, therefore, should be responsible, the coordinator on the other hand wants us to do his job for him (C4311)._"

As the data on local control showed in Chapter 7, the general tendency to seek consensus in each and every decision has left school authorities not to attend to many matters
of importance to the school. This has had many effects, but none has been more pervasive than
the disconnection between policy and practice in the school system. In other words, there seems
to be a ‘dead end’ of decisions as soon as they leave the school to local education authorities.

Efficiency

Interview results revealed that most people felt the school was more efficient under the
control of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) than under the control of the band. I asked the
question: How do you compare efficiency in the school system between now and the period of
INAC’s control? As W.M., a band worker stated:

The school is going down. When INAC was running the school, there was better control
of the school. Now, language is not improving. Grade 6 students can’t read, and our
people don’t seem to care about all these. This is our community and our children
attending the school but the school authorities don’t know what they’re doing (B2607).

For an answer to the same question, the custodian who has been working in the school for more
than twenty years remarked:

When Indian affairs was in charge, if I wanted something for my job, I just take a
telephone and phone the office in Sioux Lookout, and the next morning I have what I
want. I asked for javex for the water treatment plant in September and I was told they
would get it for me. I keep on reminding them but up till now [it is now January] they
haven’t given me the javex. Indian Affairs, those people are very good. They do things
immediately and they make your work go on smoothly. You see this door [pointing at the
main door to the school], it has been spoiled for more than five years. I told them we
need a new school door and they haven’t done anything about it. I told them the school
is now old and they have to be changing a lot of things (Interview with School
Custodian, Cat Lake).

The custodian took me to the outside, behind the school to show me the foundation level of the
building. He noted that there is massive erosion taking place and that he has reported it to the
authorities but they have not done anything about it. He feared that the whole building will one
day collapse and there will no longer be a school for the children to attend.
CHAPTER 9

PRIORITIES OF SCHOOLING

This chapter presents results of categories of questions that deal with community people's viewpoints on schooling issues they perceive to be of the highest priority and strategies they suggested for dealing with the issues. I examine the issues that came to light and present details of proposed immediate strategies for dealing with the issues, and specific strategies of implementation suggested by community people. Discussions, interviews and workshops revealed that community people consider that a wide range of issues need to be addressed for the improvement of schooling in Cat Lake (see Appendix F for a list of all the issues). While some concerns were reported by a few people, others constantly came up during the study. In order to maintain a broad range of the needs that people perceive as important to schooling in the community, I have included in my analysis all the issues mentioned by people. For example, concerns such as computer education, teacher turnover, and economic development were mentioned by only a few people. In order to ascertain which problems community people perceived to have the highest priority among the range of issues that came up from the initial period of this study, first, we listed all the issues; second, we categorized them; third we discussed them in groups and group members jointly arranged them in order of priority. Each of the groups then submitted a list of issues that the group members deemed to be of the highest priority. Finally, participants jointly agreed on the matters that they thought were very important and came up with categories of issues that were of the highest priority. In the present study, a priority issue means a matter that demands urgent, immediate attention and action for
the improvement of the school system.

In light of the wide range of issues, I explore the priorities that community people indicated as the most pressing. Although most of the concerns identified are closely interrelated, participants were able to group them into seven categories. Table 7 presents the issues in the order in which community people prioritized them. It also presents a summary of the suggested strategies for dealing with each of the priority needs and specifies strategies identified by the community people for implementation.

The pages that follow present community people's perceptions of their priorities for schooling, and their suggested strategies for addressing the problems associated with them. The data come mainly from conclusions drawn at workshop discussions. In some cases, I support statements with views expressed by respondents during interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Issue</th>
<th>Fundamental Strategy Suggested to Deal with the Issue</th>
<th>Detailed/Specific Implementation Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Discipline** | a) Discipline policy  
b) Collaboration between home and school  
c) Traditional discipline | a) Parent-teacher workshops/conferences  
b) Effective parent-teacher communication  
c) Awards/certificates  
d) Band Influence |
| **2. Parental Involvement in Schooling** | a) Band Council to advertise school events  
b) Parents to provide management goals for schooling  
c) Socialization of staff and parents  
d) Parents to participate in all school events | a) Parent-teacher events  
b) Teachers to invite parents  
c) involve grandparents, uncles aunts, older siblings in school affairs |
| **3. Traditional Education** | a) Cultural revival  
b) Cultural education for teachers  
c) School as clearing house for tradition | a) careful teacher recruitment  
b) community orientation for teachers  
c) community reach-out |
| **4. Purpose of Schooling** | a) School philosophy/mission statement  
b) LEA to establish school policy  
c) School to adopt a suitable curriculum | a) Training for LEA  
b) Marketing school  
c) two-way/bicultural education  
d) Relevant school content  
e) Workshop for parents |
| **5. Attitudes Towards Education** | a) Band to build a congenial educational environment  
b) School to collaborate with grandmothers | a) school to invite grandparents  
b) Career counselling services  
c) incentives/rewards |
| **6. Facilities and Special Services** | a) LEA to renovate the school  
b) Training for bus driver | a) school renovation/repairs  
b) More accommodation and equipment |
| **7. Control of Education** | Elected school officials | Training for LEA and Coordinator |
Priority 1 - Discipline

Table 7 shows that the people of Cat Lake perceive the discipline of students to be of the highest priority. They expressed a belief that students will achieve at a higher academic level if they are disciplined. Comments suggest people are aware that the problem of discipline is not only a problem of the school but of the home as well. Many parents have blamed the advent of television in the community for discipline problems. Parents have reported that their children have become more aggressive than when they themselves were growing up as children. They feel that children no longer listen to parents and teachers. As elder W.S. stated:

Children of today are different from us. We listened to our parents and teachers and respected their opinions. Nowadays, children don’t listen to anybody. They do what they want to do. They’re aggressive towards each other and don’t care about any consequences for misbehaviour. I don’t know if it is because of the television they watch. As soon as the television came into this community, the children have become different. We have to do something about it otherwise we will produce a next generation that is irresponsible (E0208).

Fundamental strategy suggested to deal with priority 1. As indicated in Table 7, participants suggested the need for a comprehensive discipline policy for the school. Discussions about school discipline policy centred around who should be responsible for preparing such a policy, how often it should be revised, and who should revise it. Participants suggested a committee composed of the school counsellor, principal, parents, Local Education Authority members, elders, Education Coordinator, and at least one teacher and one student (see Appendix D). Participants recommended that the policy should address the issues of acceptable and unacceptable methods of discipline and a general procedure for dealing with problems. They said that the discipline committee should consult community elders about traditional forms of discipline that are workable with students. Participants found it important for the committee to
revise the discipline policy at the end of each school year.

For effective discipline of students, respondents requested a greater collaboration between the home and the school. They suggested that since the school alone cannot effectively instil discipline into the students without the support of parents and guardians, the school staff in collaboration with community people should work together in ensuring that students understand and obey the rules. The participants further suggested that the discipline policy should reflect effective traditional methods used in maintaining law and order because they felt that modern forms of discipline do not work with Native children.

**Detailed implementation strategy for priority 1.** Table 7 shows that community people identified the creation of parental awareness as one specific way of dealing with the problem of discipline. They suggested that parents and teachers should come together and attend a workshop on discipline. At this workshop, parents and teachers should become aware of various ways of dealing with students at home and school. In addition to the workshop, participants suggested teachers should intensify parent-teacher conferences in order to solicit parental support for sanctions, which should apply to students both at home and school. That is to say, when teachers withdraw privileges, they should ask parents to do the same at home.

The data revealed that parents and teachers do not work together towards a solution of the discipline problems faced by the school. Participants believed that parents fail to cooperate with teachers because parents do not clearly understand the importance of their children's education. Participants, therefore, suggested that both the school and the Local Education Authority are to utilize the media (radio) to advertise the importance of education to parents. Participants further recommended that it is important for teachers to keep parents informed about
children’s behaviour at school by sending “good news, bad news” letters periodically to parents about the performance of their children. Parents and teachers should agree to apply certain deterrents for bad behaviour, and they should also agree to reward students who have been chronic offenders for not misbehaving.

Finally, participants suggested that the school should introduce award certificates, a points system, and healthy snacks; every teacher should present a student of the week who would receive an award at a weekly assembly. Periodically, teachers should invite the Chief and Council members to the assemblies to distribute prizes to students. The Chief and Council should also visit classrooms to speak to the children about good behaviour.

**Priority 2 - Parental Involvement in Schooling**

Participants said that parents and teachers need to work together to bridge the gap between home and school. They indicated the need for more understanding and better communication between parents, school staff and community-at-large. Participants also felt that parental involvement should be a strong impetus for student success.

**Fundamental strategy suggested to address priority 2.** The need to inform parents about the importance of active participation in school affairs became clear. Participants suggested that parents should provide management goals for the education system. They should participate in school activities such as open houses, professional development days, helping in the classrooms, sports activities, and so on. Participants also recommended that the Band Council should be actively involved in advertising school events to community people and should encourage them to take part in the events. Teachers should use various means such as the community radio and
bill boards to inform parents about school events and encourage them to attend. Parents and school staff should socialize at the beginning of each year and get acquainted with each other.

Specific implementation strategies for priority 2. As part of this study, participants sought the best possible ways to maximize parental involvement and the general relationships between the school and the community. Having established that community people are willing to communicate with teachers and involve themselves in the education of their children, and that teachers are also willing to learn the culture of the community, the participants deliberated issues concerning how to bring parents and teachers together to work for a common goal. In order to establish a continuity of parent-teacher cooperation, participants suggested that the following specific implementation strategies should be ongoing:

(a) teachers should organize parent-teacher events (without children);

(b) teachers should periodically invite parents to their classrooms to teach a skill or tell a story to the students;

(c) the school should regularly send a newsletter or school newspaper to parents' homes;

(d) the school should organize parent-teacher games nights; parents should submit a list of skills they can offer the school;

(e) the Local Education Authority should clearly understand issues arising in the school and should properly communicate these issues to the parents;

(f) teachers should reach out into the community by visiting parents of their students at least once a month;

(g) the Band Council should provide more social gatherings and make it possible for teachers and parents to meet outside the school;

(h) teachers should make learning relevant to home conditions of students;
(i) the school should involve children's extended family members such as grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and elder brothers and sisters in school affairs.

Although tentative, a trend of improved school-community relationships appears to be emerging in Cat Lake. There has been direct consultation between school staff and community representatives in educational matters that they deem important in the education of the children. Apart from meeting regularly to discuss matters pertaining to the school, school staff and community people have collaborated in attending workshops for school improvement. They have also jointly established policies on the problems of discipline, attendance, school maintenance, parenting, and interpersonal relationships within the school system.

**Priority 3 - Traditional Education**

Participants observed that the disintegration of traditional values in the community is a major cause of the problems facing the community as a whole. They said that since tradition is the passing of beliefs or customs from one generation to another, and a way of doing things in a particular setting, lifestyles should be passed on from the elders to the children. Many elders believed that the disintegration of traditional beliefs causes lack of identity and self esteem in young people. Therefore, in order for children to develop self esteem, they need to identify themselves with traditional values of Native people. This study revealed that community elders are aware of certain traditional recreational activities, traditional ways of healing, and a myriad of ways in which to make people happy. Participants said that children should have the chance of learning from elders those traditional values that may be relevant to their wellbeing.

The view that it is critical for children to identify themselves with their own traditions, customs and values, and teachers to understand more fully Native people's lifestyles was evident
in most responses. Particularly, many respondents felt that there is the need for non-Native teachers involved in Native children’s education to be well informed about the Indian way of life. Many people believed that teachers, as well as children, should clearly understand the Native way of life. They said that since teachers are in a position of trust, they are capable of helping children embrace the Native culture and tradition. People expressed the fear that if the school does not encourage traditional education, children would lose the tradition, customs and values of their own people. The decline of traditional values, generally, was a major concern, not only for the children, but for the community-at-large. Participants felt that there was a need for a cultural revival in the community as a whole. In other words, participants believed that the community needs to identify a common way of life—a traditional path by which to lead the community; the community should identify the institutions to respect and festivals to celebrate.

In response to the first interview question (How much do teachers need to know about Native people before teaching your children?) M.G. said:

*The teachers should know our way of life and should appreciate that we are different in the way we do things. If they’re going to stay in our community and work with us then they should know something about our tradition, customs and values. For a long time nobody has respected our own way of life and because of this our children don’t want to identify themselves with our lifestyle. The children have almost lost their culture and have taken to a ‘rock and roll’ culture. If teachers respect our way of life, then our children will also begin to identify themselves with our traditions and customs. It is necessary that all teachers who come here to work should know our lifestyle and should be prepared to accept, and respect the way we do things (C4801).*

The issue of teaching Native language and a cultural program emerged as the central issue in traditional education. Closely related to teaching children language and culture is the issue of non-Native teachers appreciating the culture of Indian people. Therefore, participants suggested that strategies should reflect the goals of educating both students and non-Native
teachers.

**Fundamental strategy suggested to deal with priority 3.** A majority of participants at the workshops and respondents to interview questions favoured an idea that the community as a whole should adhere to a cultural revival enterprise. Recommendations that emerged from one of the workshops (see appendix D) are:

(1) it is necessary for all people in the community to respect old ways of doing things, especially, Native spirituality; there is the need to blend Native spirituality with Christianity. Church leaders should understand the importance of respecting traditional spirituality and be willing to pass on Native culture to the youth;

(2) there is the need to educate people in traditional beliefs and the school should play a part in teaching traditional ways, for example, through legends, local traditional historical information, technical skills of hunting and trapping, gathering, and preparing traditional food items;

(3) the school should invite elders to tell stories about the past and community people should organize spiritual events in which elders would teach the youth;

(4) awareness of respect for the land and environment should be promoted and people should be taught to avoid waste and respect nature;

(5) more traditional teachers should be included in school-work to teach both teachers and students traditional way.

**Specific implementation strategies for priority 3.** Participants suggested that one of the most important ways to address the issue of traditional education is for the school to start a Native language and cultural program for students. Each grade level should have at least one half hour of instruction in Native Language each day. The Native language teacher should instruct non-Native teachers in the basics of Native language at least one half hour each week. The school should devote Friday afternoons to a cultural program for students in grade three to eight to study the arts, crafts and survival skills of Native people. The cultural program should comprise two components--an in-school and an out-of-school program. The in-school program
should instruct students in Native art, needle work, sewing, and Native crafts. The out-of-school program should instruct students in survival skills in the woods. The instructors should be community people, paid employees, who should fully integrate themselves into the school system.

Furthermore, almost all participants felt that it was necessary for all Canadian children to have the opportunity of learning about Native languages and culture at school. Particularly, it is necessary for teachers who teach in the school to be cognizant about lifestyles of Native people. Teachers should have a more general understanding of the Native situation within the reserve. They should have access to relevant information about the community before coming to take up their jobs. Specific implementation strategies suggested by participants to educate teachers traditionally are:

(1) the Local Education Authority should base teacher recruitment on capability to teach in an isolated, multilingual, bicultural community, where the school population is of a different culture from the mainstream Canadian population;

(2) teachers should take planned courses in Native language and cultural aspects of life in the reserve before coming. Such courses must involve Native instructors with accurate and pertinent knowledge of the reserve;

(3) teachers should have an orientation when they arrive in the community;

(4) teachers should reach out into the community, talk with people, get to know people and show interest in understanding the traditions of the community.

Priority 4 - The Purpose of Schooling

Community people acknowledged the need for children to understand clearly why they go to school. Respondents to interviews and participants at the workshops indicated that since many parents have never attended school, they do not instantly understand the purpose of
schooling because the effects of schooling are not immediately apparent to them. Workshop participants said that it is for the school and the community to make the purpose of schooling obvious to students and parents. They indicated that parents have sometimes felt that the effects of schooling have not been positive because school deprives their children of necessary life skills for survival in the Native society. As parent W.C. remarked:

*My son is fourteen years old and he doesn’t know how to cook anything. He can’t even make a fire to heat the house. He doesn’t know how to make traps for animals. I killed my first beaver when I was ten years old, and since then I have been hunting to feed my family. If you don’t know how to hunt, how would you provide meat for your family? The kids go to school to spend most of the day and they can’t do the things that are necessary for them to survive in the community (E0308).*

Parents clearly indicated that they prefer an education system that would prepare children for both survival in the community and the outside world and that the relevance of schooling should be obvious to the child and the community-at-large. They felt schooling should be able to make a total being out of the student; that is, the student should acquire self identity and self esteem and at the same time, people should accept the student as a person growing up competent in the community.

As described in Chapter 5, the community viewed the purposes of schooling as two-fold: to provide children the necessary skills to compete equally with children from the mainstream Canadian society, and to provide each child the opportunity to attain the highest possible educational level that the student is capable of attaining without sacrificing the values of Native society. They expressed the desire for their children to graduate from high school and for these graduates to be equipped with the ability to negotiate the conditions of Native self determination and be able to return to develop the community. So, they suggested that apart from fostering a cultural identity in children, education should equip students with the basic skills in numeracy
and literacy.

**Fundamental strategies suggested to deal with priority 4.** At one of the workshops attended by the school staff, LEA and community people, participants agreed to adopt the following recommendations (see Appendix D):

(1) the school should adopt a philosophy and a mission statement;

(2) there is the need for knowledge at the community level from which to derive formal policy and a means of communicating this policy to teachers. It is necessary to establish a school policy which takes into consideration community people’s viewpoints on schooling;

(3) the school should adopt a curriculum that responds to the realities of the community without compromising comparable standards in the province.

**Specific implementation strategies for priority 4.** Participants indicated that the Local Education Authority and the school should play a vital role in giving meaning to the purpose of schooling. In order to accomplish the task of making schooling meaningful to parents, it is important for school management and school staff to understand their own goals and objectives for schooling. Participants suggested the following strategies:

(1) Local Education Authority members should attend training sessions for school management;

(2) teachers and the education coordinator should each year produce their own personal goals for education and submit these to the Band Office;

(3) the school should use the media to market the school to the community; that is, adopt slogans that clearly give meaning to the purpose of education;

(4) school and community people should collaborate to establish a bicultural policy that recognizes a two-way approach to schooling;

(5) school content should be relevant to life in the community. That is, the school should teach students things that will be relevant to them in the community, for example, the repair of small engines, plumbing and electrical courses;
(6) the school should conduct workshops for parents clarifying the purpose of schooling;

(7) for school to become purposeful, better communication and understanding should be developed between teachers and parents.

Priority 5 - Attitudes Towards Education

While workshops, meetings and discussions made it clear that parents want their children to be able to read and write well, there are also indications that there is a negative attitude generally towards education. Respondents attributed student absenteeism, dropout, and lack of motivation towards school-work to negative attitudes, particularly by parents. In a discussion at one of the workshops (see Appendix D), participants attributed parents' negative attitudes towards schooling to several reasons: first, these attitudes may be a result of the history of residential schooling in Canada. Participants observed that parents who experienced residential schooling, were physically separated from their families and might have endured hardships and indignities of various kinds could adopt negative attitudes towards education. They also noted that in many cases, the experiences of schooling for these parents might have been so disturbing that they do not wish their children to go through schooling with similar experiences.

Secondly, participants suggested that some families may encourage their children to neglect schooling if the children are unable to cope with the rigours of school work, or if they are experiencing difficulties at school, which may jeopardize their self confidence in the society. This supports other data in this study which suggest that parents in Cat Lake do not think that they are compelled to subject their children to continued unpleasant social experiences at school. This study revealed that in order to make their children happy, and restore pride and self confidence in them, some parents actually encourage their children to drop out from school.
The comments of J.M., a parent who did not allow his daughter to proceed on to high school outside the community support this idea:

_I won’t like my daughter to go out there and suffer. I prefer she stays here with me. I think she’ll be happier staying here with me than going where she doesn’t know anybody. Many of them go out and they don’t do any school work. They just go on drinking and smoking and after a short while they come back home. Why not make her stay here so that she doesn’t go through all that. Those who come back say the work is very hard out there and they can’t handle it_ (C3115).

Thirdly, participants indicated that, as alcoholism is major problem in Cat Lake, impoverished living conditions and alcohol abuse in certain families may contribute to their negative attitude towards schooling. Parents who abuse alcohol usually do not seem to care generally about their children, let alone their schooling.

Finally, participants said that the lack of inducements such as inadequate job opportunities for school leavers does not build a positive attitude towards schooling. There was a general feeling from participants that the existing socio-economic environment is not favourable for giving a high priority to schooling.

**Fundamental strategy suggested to deal with priority 5.** This study revealed that grandmothers, aunts and uncles seem to be the backbone of family life in Cat Lake. Many of the school-going children revealed that they live with their grandmothers and that these older women are the most important people to them. Perhaps grandmothers’ experience and the security they afford these children enable the children to pay heed to their judgments and respect their decisions. Therefore, participants suggested that the first necessity is for educators to work with grandparents and begin to form a new basis of confidence, bond, and cooperation.
Specific implementation strategies for priority 5. Participants arrived at the following recommendations:

(a) the school should regularly invite grandparents to tell stories or speak to children about life in older times;

(b) Band Council should provide students career counselling services and promise them career opportunities;

(c) Band Council should provide incentives or rewards systems for students who remain at school, e.g.,
   (i) give a reward to each high school student after the completion of each term;
   (ii) encourage parents and community people to visit their high school students regularly when they are out of town;
   (iii) provide summer jobs for all high school students who remain in school; and,
   (iv) establish a special scholarship fund for students who attain a certain level of education;

(d) the school should establish a "parent of the week" award for parents whose children attend regularly and are serious with their school-work;

(e) the community school should organize cultural, sports and activity days and invite parents and grandparents.

Priority 6 - Facilities and Special Services

Respondents indicated that the quality of school facilities and special services such as transportation are appalling. For example, community people felt that there is the need to replace the twenty-two year old dilapidated school building. My field notes illustrate the state of the school building:

I visited the school for the first time this morning. The main door was chained with a padlock. As soon as I entered the mud room, I noticed that the glass at the upper part of the door leading to the hallway was shattered and would give way at any time. The glass at the display cabinet in the hallway was half-broken and I felt it was extremely dangerous to leave the other half hanging. The Principal's office was relatively small and crammed with two desks, one for the secretary and the other for the principal, a bookshelf and three filing cabinets. The classrooms were in a fairly good shape, except
for a few broken windows. The back door was completely broken and could not be used. One of the doors to the showers in the boys' washroom was hanging and would take only a light push to bring it down. The prefabricated buildings housing two of the classrooms were about twenty and forty metres away, respectively, from the main building. These prefabricated facilities were not equipped with washrooms. There was a Bell Canada telephone in each of the classrooms [Field notes: September 6, 1993].

Community people demonstrated that apart from a new building, the school needs more teachers' quarters and playground equipment.

In the area of special services the emphases were on transportation of students. Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) bears busing costs for the transportation of students from home to school. Although the school has a school bus, students do not have the opportunity of coming to school by the bus. Respondents suggested the lack of a competent bus driver and the poor maintenance of the bus as reasons for its inability to carry students to school. A general observation I recorded as field notes will help to explain the condition of the bus:

At a meeting by the school staff and the Local Education Authority this afternoon, the Local Education Authority expressed the need to put the bus on the road for transporting students to school. I took it upon myself to personally inspect the condition of the bus. I found the bus parked under a tree in a former Education Coordinator's house. I counted eight windows that were shattered. Two of the tyres were flat, and inside the bus was a heap of garbage made up of pop cans and chip wrappers [Field notes: October 12, 1994].

Fundamental strategy suggested to deal with priority 6. This study indicates that all parents would like their children to attend school in a clean and safe environment. Community people acknowledge that under local control, it is the responsibility of community people and the school personnel to ensure adequate maintenance of school property. However, they also felt that it is important that INAC, the agency responsible for providing the necessary funds for purchase and maintenance of school equipment, provides adequate funding for these purposes.
Participants recommended that the Local Education Authority should ensure the renovation of the dilapidated school building and teachers' quarters. The Authority should employ a carpenter to change the doors to the school and replace all broken windows. They expressed the need for a qualified mechanic to repair the school bus and the need for the training of a qualified driver who is capable of maintaining the bus. They would like the bus to be secured in a safe place away from inclement weather and vandalism of children.

Specific implementation strategies for priority 6. Participants arrived at the following suggestions:

(1) the Education Coordinator should ensure that the school is regularly inspected to detect obsolete facilities and those that are in disrepair;

(2) school authorities should ensure that they do all repair work and replace obsolete facilities during the summer months;

(3) preschoolers should have their own building equipped with a washroom and fire alarm;

(4) washrooms and fire alarms should be provided for classrooms in the prefabricated units;

(5) special needs students should have their own classroom for remedial work;

(6) Band Council should provide playground equipment for the school, and a hockey rink with lights for children to play during the winter months;

(7) the school bus should be repaired and the driver should be properly trained for its operation and able to undertake its proper maintenance;

(8) Principal and Education Coordinator should administer money coming from teachers' rent and use the money to maintain the teachers' quarters;

(9) grass should be planted in front of the school to create a small park so that children will be able to play in school and during the summer holidays.
Priority 7 - Control of Education

In choosing their priorities, community people indicated that there is a need to improve the level of competence of local people in the control of education. The training of the education director and school board officials for managing the school is a subject of serious concern to community people. They observed that while the education director and board members play a crucial role in determining the success or failure of the education system, in most cases, the director and board are simply not prepared to understand or cope with issues pertaining to schooling. As E.L., 52-year old employee of the school remarked:

That position [director] should go to a good man. They can't just give it to anybody who does not know what school is all about. If you give the position to a careless person, all of us are going to suffer in the school. The director should be able to keep up with his word and work hard instead of just sitting there and get paid. Anybody who has that position should not abuse substances and alcohol. As soon as a person like that is in control, everything will fall apart. Our children need a role model from anybody who works in the school and if the director is the biggest man in the school, then he should be a superman (C3214).

Fundamental strategy to address priority 7. Participants suggested that the Chief and Band Council should ensure that they carefully select local school officials through a screening process. They recommended that members of the LEA should be elected rather than appointed and that the Band Council should leave control of school affairs in the hands of an elected Local Education Authority (LEA). The Education Coordinator/Director, according to participants, should possess a reasonable level of education and should be knowledgeable about issues concerning schooling, and members of the Local Education Authority should be interested in the improvement of the school system.
Specific implementation strategies for priority 7. Participants suggested that the Education Coordinator and Local Education Authority should accomplish the following:

(1) attend educational courses and workshops to upgrade their knowledge about the governance of education;

(2) develop a mission statement, a philosophy of education, and a school policy and assist the school in dealing with problems of discipline;

(3) communicate school issues to community people and update them on the progress of the school;

(4) adopt annual budgets for the school and set priorities for spending school money;

(5) advise on the school curriculum by approving programs of study and offering suggestions to meet community requirements;

(6) employ school staff, supervise, evaluate the job performance of all educational workers, and ensure that all employees are responsible and accountable to their job performance;

(7) ensure that non-Native staff are properly integrated into the community by acting as an intermediary between them and community people.
CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discuss the study. The first part presents a summary of the study. The second part discusses viewpoints of the community on schooling. The third part discusses the limitations of the study; the fourth part discusses the implications of the study for policy; the fifth, implications for practice; the sixth part provides suggestions for future research in light of the results of the study; and I provide a concluding summary of the study.

Summary of the Study

This study examined the perspectives of Native people in the Indian reserve of Cat Lake in Northwestern Ontario on schooling; their priorities as to what issues they and the Government of Canada should be dealing with, and their recommended approaches for accomplishing an educational system which would comply with Native values, culture, and the distinctive needs of a remote Native community. The study formed the basis for assisting Native people in the reserve in taking action in the development of education in their community.

Cat Lake, as a fly-in isolated Indian reserve in North-western Ontario, experiences many social and economic problems. While the the population of the reserve continues to grow at a rapid rate, economic conditions have not kept pace with the population growth. Unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, teenage suicide, broken families and starvation are serious problems in the community. The Band Council considers the improvement of the education system as one way of finding solutions to the social and economic problems.
In examining viewpoints of Native people on education, I sought to answer five categories of questions: the first category called for an exploration of perspectives Native people residing in the reserve had on the purpose of schooling; the second category dealt with the issue of local control of education; the third category investigated school-community relations; the fourth category concerned an examination of perceived problems associated to schooling in the community; and the final category identified community priorities for schooling and suggested strategies for meeting the ideals of a fitting educational system for the community.

I designed the study as participatory research which integrated the following data collection activities: first, a review of the literature dealing with Native and minority group education; second, an analysis of all available documentary evidence relevant to the school system I studied; third, open-ended semi-structured interviewing of a broad spectrum of all interest groups involved in the process of education in the reserve; fourth, several meetings, discussion groups, and workshops with participants; and finally, in-school participant observation in my capacity as principal of the school. I tried to establish the pattern of preference in which community residents held educational issues. I also explored the everyday practices of local culture and lifestyles of education authorities, community members, leaders, and teachers in their school system by observing and participating in committee meetings and classroom practices and by talking to local education authority members, community people, leaders, students and teachers of Native children.

The study documented the educational aspirations, purposes and priorities of the community and, through collaborative action, found strategies they felt might be appropriate in achieving these purposes and priorities.
Also crucial for this study were the data analysis procedures which constituted a central part of the research design of this study. I began the analysis from the start of the study although I analyzed most of the data after completing data collection. Thus, data analysis proceeded through two major phases, namely, the collection phase and the analysis phase. In analyzing interviews, first, I transcribed interview responses and categorized each of the responses according to common patterns, topics or perspectives that fit into the research questions; second, I searched for concepts, repeated issues or ideas that matched the research questions; third, I prepared notes to explain the opinions that emerged and assigned these opinions to the various research categories such as purpose of schooling, control, school-community relations and challenges of schooling. Fourth, to remain unbiased about the data, I coded and counted the data according to the categories of respondents and research questions, and highlighted issues that further emerged; and finally, I utilized the data collected through other methods such as document analysis, workshop group discussions, meetings and field notes collected from observations to provide a check on the data. When I found a discrepancy between interview and some other source of data, I assessed the practical significance of the differences by comparing persons, roles or activities that I found to differ in some other respects.

Results of the study indicated that there is lack of understanding of the concept and processes of local control of education on the part of community people. The understanding of the purpose of education seems to be in the terms of the mainstream Canadian society. Whereas community people continue to perceive schooling as a "whiteman's invention", that is, a western concept, alien to the traditions and values of Indian people, they deem it important for their
children to obtain quality education and to achieve standards comparable to those of their counterparts in the mainstream Canadian society.

Furthermore, the study shows that while there are many drawbacks which impede the achievement of an improved quality of education in Cat Lake, certain factors stand out clearly as the main problems of education. These factors are: first, the apparent irrelevance of the curriculum; second, problems of student discipline; third, absenteeism and dropout of students; fourth, inadequate school supplies and services and lack of maintenance of existing facilities; and finally, the problems associated with school governance.

The study shows a general consensus between non-Native teachers and community people about the importance of traditional education in the curriculum. Both groups of respondents attributed the lack of an effective working relationship between the community and the school to cultural inadequacy of teachers. The cultural orientation of non-Native teachers of Native children emerged as a crucial means of fostering effective communication between the school and the community.

Other results of the study show that while community people view the solutions of a myriad of issues as essential for the improvement of education, seven categories of the issues appeared to be of top priority. The first of these issues deals with the discipline of students; the second concerns parental involvement in education; the third deals with traditional education; the fourth involves the purpose of schooling; the fifth concerns attitudes of community people towards education; the sixth deals with school facilities and special services; and, the final priority issue concerns the control of education.
As participatory research, this study goes beyond merely describing and interpreting Native people's viewpoints on schooling. Rather, the study is a direct connection between research and action; that is, it has the dual quality of contributing to knowledge about schooling and equipping community people with the tools for implementing change. Accordingly, the study did not only identify the shortcomings and priorities of schooling, but also established strategies for dealing with the priorities and identified specific ways of implementing the strategies.

Discussion of the Results

Three key issues emerged from community people's viewpoints on schooling. These were: a two-way approach to education; problems associated with local control of education; and, problems relating to schooling in the community. I discuss each of these three basic components within a reflection of the literature review as well as within the social and economic realities of the community of Cat Lake.

A Two-Way Approach to Education

There were three perspectives that emerged about the purpose of schooling in Cat Lake: first, community people indicated a widespread acceptance of the significance of children acquiring the same skills as those in the mainstream Canadian society; second that children should learn their language and culture as a way of preserving their identity as Indians; and finally, that the school should aim at a two-way approach or bi-cultural education. Put together, the perspective that emerged in the study is that education should be means of engendering a
continuity between the Native and dominant Canadian cultures. This viewpoint on schooling should not be surprising since the erosion of the Indian social and economic tradition of hunting, trapping and gathering by a modern, industrial society has left most Indian reserves susceptible both economically and politically, and, therefore, have to seek survival and advancement through the mainstream Canadian economy. Perhaps the people of Cat Lake see that their survival and growth in a modern industrialized world lies in equipping their children with the technological skills required to survive and flourish in the mainstream Canadian society. So, to them, it seems apparently important for their children to acquire the language and technology necessary to compete in the industrial economy. By viewing proficiency in the basics important, community people indicate that a crucial instrument for acquiring the skills that would lead the community to self determination in the future lies in some of the ideals of the dominant culture. However, although the need for their children to obtain the same skills as in mainstream schooling seems to be important, community people, particularly, the elders do not seem prepared totally to relinquish their own traditional way of life. Therefore, the present study revealed that in order for their community to advance harmoniously and steadily in the modern world, the people of Cat Lake felt that the members of the younger generation should clearly identify themselves with their cultural heritage while they also gain proficiency in the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. A two-way approach to schooling which involves the reinforcement of the children's cultural identity is considered as one of the ways by which the people of Cat Lake could have some control over the education of their children. Given the changing nature of the social and economic conditions in Cat Lake, as described in Chapter 4, it is not surprising that community people consider the need for a bi-cultural education significant to their children. They feel that
confronting two cultures, their children need a level of proficiency in each culture in order to make a living in present-day Canadian society.

The present study revealed that the lack of bi-cultural education is closely associated with the failure to achieve an improved quality of education in Cat Lake. However, notwithstanding the credibility given to bi-cultural education and, particularly, the need for children to hold on to their language and culture, the concern of some community people that language and culture could not be taught at the school level came up in the study. The apprehension shown by some of those who attended residential schools, and Christians towards the teaching of language and culture supports the evidence in the literature that education in residential schools isolated Native people from their language, culture, beliefs, and attitudes, and taught them to despise anything that has to do with Native culture. The line of reasoning of those who felt that parents were in a better position to teach their children the language and culture has some credibility in that the different worldviews of non-Native teachers constitute cultural discontinuity. The data in the present study supports the literature which attributes the failure of Native children in schools to cultural discontinuity (Hawthorn, 1967; Hampton, 1988; Atleo, 1990; More, 1986). An aspect of cultural discontinuity in the education of Native children exposed in the literature is differences in the worldview of Native and non-Native people (DeFaveri, 1984; Hampton, 1988). The literature suggested that because teachers did not understand and appreciate the traditions and values of Native people, attitudes and actions of residential schools toward Native children and their culture did not take into account the psychological and emotional needs of Native children, and these attitudes and actions betrayed the trust of Native parents whose tradition, expectations and upbringing differed from those of
Among the factors that became evident in this study as contributing to cultural discontinuity are the differences between the general way of life of Native students and their non-Native teachers. These differences were seen to be crucial in making education seemingly meaningless to Native children. It became apparent during the present study that lack of effective communication between teachers and parents is due to different worldviews of both parents and teachers. As Hampton (1988) asserts, it takes more than "learning about each other's culture" (p. 82) to bring about a more effective education of the Native child. Rather, teachers of Native children must try to understand the differences in cultural values, Native people's actions and style of communication, their thoughts and purposes.

A successful implementation of a two-way approach to education would depend on teachers' understanding of the Native worldview, their recognition of traditional education and their ability to adapt teaching programs to suit the special conditions of the children. This study showed that in order for the school to reinforce traditional values, the school should work towards the implementation of Native language and cultural programs as a first essential. However, while the implementation of Native language and cultural programs may be an important step towards enhancing the cultural identity of students and effecting continuities in schooling, their overall impact may be negligible if non-Native teachers do not possess the necessary tools to reinforce traditional values in their classrooms. It is, therefore, crucial that teachers of Native children should be carefully selected and given the proper education and orientation needed for their task in the community. The study showed that teachers' use of the mainstream Canadian schools' curriculum material in teaching Native children, and above all, teachers' lack of recognition of differences between the purpose of education for Native and non-
Native children implies that teachers teach Native children the way they were taught by their teachers in the mainstream schooling system; and therefore, do not make education meaningful to the Indian child. So, despite the need for children to acquire literacy and numeracy, community people feel that schooling should be on their own terms and those of their children and not be at the expense of the traditional values of the Indian people. Many people think that owing to the complexity of the social and economic circumstances in which the children of Cat Lake find themselves, the restrictions imposed by distance and limited resources, differences in living conditions, family background, and general life experiences that characterize the Cat Lake Indian reserve, for education to become beneficial to the Indian child, teachers should recognize different ways of learning and use different methods of teaching. They should particularly make teaching relevant to the social and economic conditions of the children. In educating the Indian child about his or her tradition and culture, teachers must aim at maintaining the child's cultural identity. Teachers who better understand and appreciate the traditions and values of the community should be capable of winning the trust of parents as means of a successful implementation of bi-cultural education. The present data showed that non-Native teachers in Cat Lake would like to have had exposure to material on Native culture and traditions while at the university. These data support those of the Report of the Royal Commission on Learning (1994) which in recommendation 127 strongly advocates the inclusion of Native content in teacher training programs. While many universities in Canada offer a variety of courses in Native education, these courses are mostly offered to students of Native origin. However, the irony is that Native children are mostly taught by non-Native teachers. Therefore, planning a dynamic and functional program for Indian students in Cat Lake, demands
enthusiasm and collaborative planning from both Native and non-Native educators.

Problems Associated with Local Control

The problems associated with local control of education were among the most significant considerations that emerged from the study. As I have shown in the literature review, advocates of decentralization assume it to be a structural change that would inject efficiency and accountability into the school system. This line of thinking derives from the reasoning that local authorities may have better information about day-to-day operations of the school than central school authorities (Brown, 1993; Hannaway, 1993). In fact, the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) bases the handing of schools over to Indian bands on the claim that local control may yield considerable efficiency in school governance. This claim involves two basic expectations: first, that local control will mobilize and create resources that the federal and provincial governments may not be able to generate; and, second, that local bands can utilize available resources more wisely and efficiently. These expectations are based on the assumption that as bands are more familiar with local conditions and needs, local systems of governance will be able to pool together those local resources that are relevant to the education of their children.

It would seem reasonable, for the Local Education Authority and for the community-at-large, therefore, to have a substantial interest in knowing how the school system procures and uses its resources.

It would also seem reasonable for them to know how well students are gaining the knowledge and skills that will equip them to function in their own society and the outside world (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972). Likewise, it would seem reasonable to expect the
education authorities and community people to have a substantial interest in how well particular students perform and in whether their parents are engaged in student learning and satisfied with the results.

The expectation which focused on the possibility of procuring added resources through local control contains a somewhat baseless assumption. It is apparent from the findings that while the Cat Lake community possesses a wealth of resources in the form of local traditions and customs that could be useful to students, the community has not made these resources available to the educational system. Local people do not have the information and know-how to influence important decisions. Bolman and Deal (1991) state that "power flows to those who have the information and know-how to solve important and vexing problems" (p. 196). It is logical to assume, therefore, that without any real transfer of power, that is, without vesting in the people the information and know-how to manage the school system, the local community is unlikely to add resources to the educational system. Therefore, by concentrating solely on the political aspects of decentralization of Indian schools, advocates would seem to have overlooked or undervalued its educational impact on Indian students.

The present data suggest that the hand-over process of the school by federal authorities to the people of Cat Lake without preparing community people for proper control of the school constitutes a serious drawback to the efficiency and accountability in the governance of the school. There seems to be no clear assignment of responsibilities, school authorities do not seem to have information on finance and performance, and there seem to be no effective mechanisms in place by which to hold decision makers accountable. The most plausible theory that best describes local control in this study is Weiler's (1993) theory of compensatory
Weiler (1993) asserts that governments tend to decentralize schools in order to enhance their own image among disadvantaged groups. That is, by giving them some control of their own education, disadvantaged groups may perceive the state as accommodating to their internal differences, needs and conditions. Decentralization may also be a deliberate attempt by the government to enhance the cultural and language education of minority groups. Thus, decentralization may be a way of gratifying Native people. This study clearly supports Weiler's view of political decentralization. In other words, decentralization of the school in Cat Lake seems to have had nothing to do with either structural reform or with classroom instruction, but rather, to have been a means of the government's redistributing political power to the Indians (Weiler, 1993).

However, the study does not support Weiler's (1993) view that governments utilize decentralization to assert more control and legitimacy over education. First, there is no evidence in the study that identifies more government legitimacy over the school system in Cat Lake. Secondly, there is no indication that government employs any specific structures to ensure that the children of Cat Lake receive quality education. If anything, the results reflect a widespread perception that after the handover of education, government does not seem to care about what happens to the education of the Indian children. Perhaps the handing over of the school to local authorities is entirely a political move, which in Bolman and Deal's (1991) terms, is a form of co-optation. In other words, the federal government's intention of handing over the school for local control may not have been caused by a need for structural changes, but rather a political drive meant to persuade Indians to identify themselves with the government's needs and purposes. Possibly, one could also term the decentralization process as a "democratic wish"
(Elmore, 1993 p. 35) of the government. From this point of view, the federal government's handing over of the control of the school to the people of Cat Lake was a means of returning power to the Indian people.

The lack of understanding of the very concept of local control on the part of most community people, as revealed in the present study, would inadvertently mean a lack of preparedness for the proper management of the school system. The enormous powers wielded by the Chief and Council in the administration of all the departments of the community, including the school should mean that the control of the school lies in the hands of the Band Council instead of the Local Education Authority (LEA) appointed by the Chief and Council. The meshing of school funds with the Band Support Fund (BSF) which leaves the LEA without any mandate in the financing and planning for education is a clear indication of the powerlessness of the LEA, and the lack of understanding of the role of the LEA when it comes to budgeting and planning for the school. To most people the answer to this problem lies, at least in part, to some degree of decentralization of control of the school budget. The feeling that the Band Council should relinquish its control over the budget to the Local Education Authority is appealing. Yet, based on the results of this study, it may seem questionable to delegate the education budget into the hands of the Local Education Authority members who may not be conversant with the mechanisms of government funding and details involved in educational budgeting and planning. This was the argument advanced by the Band Council for controlling the school budget. However, members of the Local Education Authority do not buy the argument that they would not be able to control the school budget. Even though some Education Authority members acknowledged that they were not familiar with educational budgetary
mechanisms, they were convinced that it is fitting for them to control the budget. If the Band Council assigned the portfolio of school governance to the Local Education Authority (LEA), it is reasonable to expect that the LEA should have control over educational finances. However, the devolution of spending authority should be preceded by some education or professional orientation for the LEA members.

One of the profound problems related to school governance revealed by this study pertains to long and short term planning. Suggestions from respondents that the Local Education Authority and the in-school administration should plan ahead for the future work of the school support those of the Learning Sources (1993) report. The short term plans should be able to substantiate what funds will be available for the use of the school, how the school will spend the money, and how much money the school should need for future spending. In their long term plans, the Local Education Authority and school staff should be able to establish how to accumulate material and human resources and plan for training activities that would help to successfully implement the school curriculum. A typical plan should include goals the school system wishes to achieve immediately and subsequently, review work the Education Authority and the in-school administration wishes to do on the curriculum, extensions in the school program, supplies the school may need to purchase, staff/professional development, upcoming school improvement projects, estimates for equipment and resources, and, the evaluation processes of short and long term plans (Learning Sources, 1993). However, while there are clearly adverse effects from a lack of planning, it is equally clear that where there is a Local Education Authority without a budget to manage, it is difficult to see how it could embark on any meaningful planning.
Another problem of school governance revealed by the study concerns the method of allocating funds for the school. Researchers such as Paquette (1986a) have stressed the importance of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) allocating sufficient funds for band-operated schools. Given distance and the isolation of most Indian schools, the nominal roll method by which INAC allocates funds for these schools seems to be improper since the allocations for school supplies per student are the same as the mainstream Canadian schools. The study suggests that in allocating funds for supplies, it is necessary for INAC to consider the high cost of transporting school supplies to these communities.

One source of dissension that was revealed in the study centres on the issue of policy formulation for the school system. Ideally, local control means some incremental shift of responsibility from the federal and provincial school authorities to the local people. However, the study suggests that local control of the school in Cat Lake does not primarily seem to alter the web of school policies which originated from the federal level for the operation of the school. Examination of existing school policies and discussions revealed that the governance of the school, curriculum practices and routines still continue to resemble those enacted by the federal government. The Local Education Authority whose responsibility lies in policy formulation seems to lack knowledge at the local level from which to originate formal policy and lacks the means to communicate such a policy to the school staff. In spite of the numerous powers that the Education Authority may wield to effect school outcomes, it seems to lack bases of power, particularly, the requisite knowledge for school governance. The study revealed that there has been a very high turnover in the incumbents of the position of Education Coordinator/Director, and this may be due to the low level of education of the officials who take
up the position. A general conclusion emerging from the present study is that before handing the control of the school over to the local people, federal authorities failed to prepare the grounds for proper governance of the school. There were suggestions from community people that it is necessary for the Education Director and the members of the Education Authority to receive adequate training in school governance before taking up their jobs.

Furthermore, the study uncovered the adverse effects of local politics on schooling in Cat Lake. As local politics seem to pervade every sphere of community life, and as education seems to be the most political of all the community institutions, it is most vulnerable to local politics. In a community that looks up to the government for the provision of various kinds of needs and services for its people, the Band Council treats the school as a political football. That is to say, many political issues are explicitly and calculatedly designed by the Council to use the school as the mid-point between the government and the band administration. As was seen in Chapter 6, the Chief and Council can close the school at their own whims and caprices in demand for certain services from the government. This general tendency to treat the school as political ammunition has had many effects on schooling, but none has been more pervasive than the loss of instructional time leading to low academic achievement of students. The interplay of political interests around local control of education leaves discrepancies in the operation of the school system. To say that local control should provide quality education for the children of Cat Lake is to say very little, in the absence of some set of assumptions about who are the objects or beneficiaries of local control, whose interests are to be served by local control, and how the
Band Council is supposed to serve those interests. This study showed that community people see the need to detach what they see as the unhelpful control of the school by the Band Council and to hand the school over to an independent, elected school board (see recommendations for Priority 7).

A final and somewhat similar difficulty in the control of education in Cat Lake is the dual problem of efficiency and accountability in the school system. As I have already noted, local control seems at least to provide very credible solutions to the harmful effects of a federally centralized education system. The present study, however, shows that in general, local control of education has had little perceivable effect on the efficiency, accountability, or effectiveness of the Cat Lake school system. To say that local control of education in Cat Lake increases efficiency, is to ignore the area of education in which efficiency is important and to ignore how resources are used in the school system.

This study suggests that Cat Lake has an educational system which seems to replicate the model of Indian Affairs, without procuring the necessary expertise to carry the program through. For example, to some people, the lack of Native language instruction and a cultural program in the curriculum indicate that nothing has changed much since the Indian Affairs period. The difficulty associated with efficiency and accountability of local control has been perceived by respondents as directly related to the low level of education of those in charge of the school system. There were speculations that if the Local Education Authority could become more responsive to school issues, then the quality of schooling could improve in the community. This speculation focused on proper training of school management personnel in order for them to have the information and know-how to influence decisions.
However, even with the present quality of local control one can claim that some efficiencies have occurred in certain specific areas. First, the Education Authority (LEA) is aware of its enormous powers, and exercises them in areas such as hiring and firing education personnel. The LEA hires all the teaching and support staff and decides on whose teaching contract could be renewed. The very high turnover in the Education Coordinator/Director's position is more due to firing of incumbents than a decision by them to relinquish their position. Second, the Authority is also able to act, even if not quickly, on issues that they find unpleasant to the well-being of the school system and have made some decisions without going through the web of bureaucracy which characterized the INAC period; for example, they decided to provide secondary education for children in the community and have implemented a grade nine program in the 1995/96 school year.

**Problems of Schooling**

The previous section dealt with the problems associated with local control of education in Cat Lake by discussing how, in the views of community people, the federal government's decentralization policy has failed to serve the interests of the school system. This section discusses a different but related issue, namely, that the community of Cat Lake faces severe challenges in the improvement of its school system. The theoretical basis of this discussion results from the perceptions community people had on the shortcomings of schooling in Cat Lake and their priorities for change in the school system.

The study shows that perceptions about the problems posed by schooling in Cat Lake are concentrated in the areas of curriculum, student discipline, absenteeism, dropout of students,
and, lack of school supplies and maintenance facilities. Although, in Chapter 8, I discussed each of these factors as if they were separated from each other, in reality, they are closely interrelated and cannot be dealt with in isolation.

A basic assumption underlying the decentralization of Indian schools is that the schools will modify their curricula to suit the needs of the students and that local education authorities will be responsible for curriculum decisions. The literature review stressed the effect that a curriculum could exert on the success and failure of Native students. Research reports such as those of Hampton (1988), the National Indian Brotherhood (1972), and the Hawthorn Report (1967) identify the irrelevance of Native schools’ curriculum as a major factor leading to the failure of Indian children at school. The present study suggests that unless the curriculum of the school in Cat Lake incorporates the culture, traditions, language, values and customs of the Indian people in the education of children, students may not appreciate the meaning of schooling. The ability either to create a new form of curriculum or to use the existing mainstream curriculum or to do both depends on the Local Education Authority’s ability to manage and contain the kind of controversy that tends to arise around critical curriculum issues. In speaking of a change in curriculum, we assume that the Local Education Authority is very much aware of the problems inherent in the present curriculum and have an interest in innovating and carrying out the implementation of an appropriate curriculum. We can further assume that an important consideration for those who design a curriculum for Native children is that they should not only be knowledgeable about the culture, language and traditions of Indian people, but they should also be knowledgeable about curriculum development and implementation.
Like school governance, curriculum standards for schooling in Cat Lake used to be regulated by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Thus, typically, community people view curriculum as the specialty of experts of federal school authorities. While this study revealed the need for integrating traditional education into the curriculum, the most crucial question that came up was who should develop a suitable curriculum for the school after INAC handed the school over for local control. So, the challenge facing the Local Education Authority is the provision of a suitable curriculum and how to oversee its successful implementation in Cat Lake.

The study revealed a notion about schooling that reinforces the perception that a centralized curriculum (other things being equal), supplemented by a local curriculum would tend to be a greater advantage to schooling than having a curriculum that only reflects either local content or that of the dominant culture. Because the community accepts the development of literacy, numeracy and other skills valued in the dominant society, and at the same time acknowledges the importance for the children to maintain their traditions and culture, it is apparent that there is the need to have two curricula in the school system. In Cat Lake, continuously relying on the mainstream curriculum without supplementing it with local content poses a dilemma because of the differences in social and economic conditions between the Indian community and the mainstream Canadian society. The present data suggest that these differences do imply that Indian children in Cat Lake may not succeed in school by using only the mainstream curriculum.

One of the main problems confronting the development of a curriculum that reflects local needs lies, at least in part, in the Education Authority’s lack of know-how of curriculum
development and implementation. Apparently, the Authority may not seem capable to undertake such a venture because of the low educational level of its members. This study indicated that although teachers are willing to adapt their teaching to the special needs of the children, they lack direction from the local authorities as to what they should be teaching the children. In the absence of a curriculum that reflects the special needs of the children, teachers can only rely on what they find available in the school. It is, however, shown clearly in this study that the failure to develop a suitable curriculum and provide direction for teachers has little to do with lack of commitment on the part of local school authorities for an improved education for their children. Rather, the failure is due to lack of requisite knowledge in curriculum development and implementation. While local school authorities and parents have control over the school system, they do not have an effective control over schooling. That is to say, an effective control over schooling should entail the ability to direct the school toward the kind of curriculum that would best serve the interests of the children. This study clearly showed the importance of collaboration among local school authorities, parents and teachers for the improvement of schooling. The study suggests that working together with teachers, parents should have more voice in curriculum issues and they should be committed to the educational process of their children.

Perhaps the area of schooling that community people perceive most challenging is lack of student discipline. The data in this study support the studies of Knoll (1994) and Bowd (1977) that have suggested that discipline problems Indian students face at school may be a reflection of home situations. In Cat Lake, the opposing environments between the school and the home cause discontinuities in the behaviour of students. But the study also suggests that
parents blame student misbehaviour more on the advent of television in the community than on discontinuities between the home and the school. However, understanding the discipline problem of students seems to go beyond the kinds of blames that are typically advanced by both teachers and parents. Effective discipline of students demands a concerted effort by both teachers and parents, particularly their ability to have a common goal toward the education of the children. Perhaps the children’s response to discipline measures would depend on the support teachers receive from parents. Bowd’s (1977) assertion that typical Indian homes are incapable of nourishing skills likely to help school discipline implies a dilemma that becomes particularly acute when teachers of Native children are non-Native. Because Native parents and non-Native teachers have different worldviews, reconciling their opinions on student discipline may prove an extraordinarily difficult task.

However, as part of this participatory research process, parents and teachers have attempted to come to a common understanding that they have to work together toward solving the discipline problems. This understanding has shown some tangible results. A parent-teacher workshop, organized by some professional educators, was attended by parents and teachers in January 1995. Parents and teachers have agreed to develop a discipline policy for the school (see Appendix D) and use the media to reinforce rules. It has also been agreed that teachers will keep parents regularly informed of student behaviour at school, and the school and teachers will use award systems to reinforce discipline. This type of parent-teacher involvement is likely to have motivational benefits for the students.

The study revealed several reasons for student absenteeism in Cat Lake. While the traditional background of the Native child plays a major part in non-attendance at school, it also
became evident that students are irregular at school because of problems such as ill-health, parents' negative attitude towards education, and social and economic factors operating in the community. Thies (1987) asserts that in Native communities, children absent themselves from school because competing priorities between schooling and traditional pursuits seem to get in children's way. The present study supports Thies' assertion, in that the school policy in Cat Lake allows students to leave school and go on traditional pursuits such as trapping and hunting, especially during the fall. While advocates of traditional education may view these absences as a way of providing a functional bridge between learning at home and learning in school, there seems to be a mismatch between traditional learning at school and traditional learning on the trapline. In principle, there should not be much of a problem if the home and the school have a common understanding of what students should be accomplishing on the trapline. On a closer inspection, however, there is no method of assessing knowledge students acquire on traplines when they absent themselves from school for long periods of time.

Apart from absences due to traditional pursuits, students also absent themselves from school because of ill-health. Problems such as nutrition, skin diseases and hearing defects are major causes of non-attendance at school. The method of sewage disposal could also be a potential source of diseases in the community. While cynics may demand that the community as a whole needs lessons in primary hygiene and preventive attitudes towards illnesses, others will insist that the Government of Canada should provide proper facilities for garbage disposal. It is also the case that while the local clinic may be of help to school children, often the impasive attitude of parents toward illness makes them keep their children at home instead of sending them to the clinic.
The study suggested an attitude relating to a general opposition to schooling. This attitude was seen to cause student absenteeism. Perhaps because of lack of effective communication between teachers and parents, teachers feel parents have a negative attitude towards education. However, because many parents within the community do not speak English, perhaps it was difficult for them to talk with teachers about their children's achievement at school. Until recently, there is little or no interaction between teachers and parents, and this has often made teachers to feel that parents are not interested in the education of their children. On the other hand parents feel that teachers do not want them to interfere with their job. Hampton (1988) contends that Native students protest non-Native domination of schooling by not attending. While Hampton's postulate may be valid, the present study suggests that in the case of Cat Lake, opposition to schooling may be due to the lack of incentive for schooling. Because of lack of employment opportunities, students may not see the value of schooling.

Yet still, the mere geographical isolation of a small segment of the population "in the middle of nowhere" does not generally seem to favour educational attainment. The common amenities which people who live outside reserves take for granted are non-existent in the reserves. Therefore, the existing geographical, social and economic environment affects schooling in Cat Lake. Among the social problems causing an undesirable educational environment are, alcoholism, poverty, indifference, and broken families. As I have stated earlier in this thesis, family breakups due to alcohol abuse of parents has left most of the students living with grandparents or single parents.
At the level of the community, solving the non-attendance problem calls for the Chief, the Band Council, the LEA, parents and teachers to work together to bridge the gap between the school and the home. This study suggests that the maximization of parental involvement in schooling and the improvement of working relationships between parents and teachers would go a long way in motivating students to attend school.

Another factor that poses a challenge to schooling in Cat Lake is the dropout of students. Students who leave the community to commence high school in urban centres drop out of school after a short period (see Table 6). Results of this study indicated that like student absenteeism, one of the reasons for the dropout rate of Cat Lake high school students was seen as parents' negative attitudes towards education. Among several reasons for parents' negative attitude towards schooling is the effect of residential schools. Experiences of residential schools seemed to have developed a growing consciousness of racial injustice which continues to generate a reaction to schooling outside the community. Parents seem not to condone the physical separation of students from families because this separation may cause hardships and indignities of various kinds to the children.

Results of this study suggest that the physical separation of students from their families may have deleterious effects on students and cause them to drop out from school. These results support Mackay and Myle's (1989) findings which link dropout rate of Native students to parents' fear of losing their children. The study further indicated that some families seem to encourage their children to drop out of school if the children are unable to keep up with school work, perhaps because of Native people's belief that they are not obliged to expose their children to unpleasant school experiences. In most instances, parents leave the decision of whether to
drop out of school or not to the children themselves. It may be that for these parents, allowing their children to do what most pleases them is a way of trying to restore their pride and self confidence.

In addition to consequences of parental attitudes towards education, social factors operating in the community no doubt also have significant consequences for dropout. Notwithstanding the notion that community people want their children to acquire the same competencies as children in the mainstream Canadian society and some parents attach importance to schooling, others seem to attach low value to education. Those who attach low value to education seem not to regard it as a stepping stone to success, and they lack a vision that education would result in a better future. This study revealed that parents—even those who attach importance to schooling do not seem to be eager to let their children leave the community for higher education for fear that they may lose them. Put together, the problems of school dropout suggest that one of the best solutions would be to establish a high school in the community.

The problem of the availability and maintenance of school supplies, facilities and utilities surfaced in this study as a significant challenge to schooling in Cat Lake. Lack of adequate school supplies appeared to have been the product of inadequate federal funding and/or budgetary procedures of the Band Council. It was noted in Chapter 6 that, as the Band Council does not separate school funds from the Band support fund, the school is left without a budget within which to operate. The lack of a school budget means that the Local Education Authority is unable to plan for adequate provision of school supplies and facilities. The study found an extreme lack of adequate equipment in the school for teaching and learning, as well as a lack
of good storage for such materials as were available. While the study indicated that community people would like their children to acquire the same competencies as children in the mainstream Canadian society, there seem to be no opportunities for the children of Cat Lake to learn technological skills through the use of equipment such as adequate supplies of computers, calculators, and measuring tools.

The availability of educational facilities in any school would depend on the supply of money or support available and the priority financial administrators attach to the facilities. The situation in Cat Lake suggests that prevailing fiscal provisions are extremely unsuitable. Whereas some of the problems are caused by the method used by the Department of Indian Affairs to provide funding for the school, many are questions of control of the budget at the band level. The study showed that the Local Education Authority is unfamiliar with the school budget and may not be able to appropriately understand the needs of the school in relation to the available budget. To be able to work with the budget, the Local Education Authority must not only be knowledgeable about the methods used for funding but must also have the ability to interpret the budgetary statement meaningfully and plan the expenditure of the school. In Cat Lake, the lack of adequate supplies may be due to both inadequate funding and lack of planning for the school. As I have already stated, the Band administration is responsible for the school budget and it is the administration which decides on what the school should purchase. However, there is an indication that present band administrators lack experience with educational decision making and finance. Perhaps in order to develop a school budget, short and long term plans that will cater for the needs of the school, Band administrators should, first, have an orientation to educational matters, and second, acquire training in educational financing to enable them to
meaningfully translate the school budget and develop the necessary strategies for disbursing educational funds. The administrator should be able to manage the budget according to priorities established by the Education Authority, and at the same time the Authority should be free to consult the Band, make suggestions and revise the budget as it sees fit without directly relying on the Band. This study suggests that one way in which the Education Authority can take full control of the school is by maintaining a significant degree of control over its budget.

While the problems associated with the lack of supplies and school facilities seem to be serious drawbacks to schooling in Cat Lake, the problem of maintenance of existing facilities seems to be even more important. In a discussion with an Indian friend, I heard, through a jesting remark, that Indians do not repair things but acquire new ones. If this statement were a sinister joke, it does not apply to the school in Cat Lake. In fact, most respondents feel that the twenty-two year old school needs to be replaced instead of repaired. Apart from the lack of maintenance of the school building itself, the teachers quarters are also in disrepair. As I have already described in Chapter 8, the pressure that teachers expressed about their having to put up with dilapidated living conditions further complicates other factors such as the escalating stresses experienced by some teachers and the relationships between teachers and the community.

Finally, a conclusion arises from the study that the Local Education Authority, the Band Council and the in-school administration can exert some influence over the conditions of schooling in Cat Lake by being less concerned with the local politics of control and more concerned with the substance of decisions and their effects on the conditions of teaching and learning. The politics of school governance seems increasingly to have become a politics about authority and the legitimacy of various customary arrangements, detached from any serious
approach of whether management can expect to have any impact of what students learn at school. School management does not seem to calculate the stakes of governance in terms of whether administrative procedures lead to changes in the conditions of teaching and learning in the school, rather, in terms of who gains or who loses in the power structure. In other words, to school authorities, local control does not mean students achieving high standards of learning at school. It means teachers and school staff should comply with orders given by the Local Education Authority even if these orders do not seem to have anything to do with the improvement of classroom instruction or teaching.

This study went beyond simply locating problems about schooling. Identifying their priorities and suggesting solutions for the priorities, community people sent a message that they can do a good job in school decision making roles if they are offered the controls in defined technical issues pertaining to school governance. In other words, because community people generally poorly understand the nature of the process of educational control, its outcomes and its barriers, they should be helped by the government and organizations in establishing premises underlying the control of schools. The strength of the effect of this study was particularly noticeable in the high level of recommendations community people offered for the solutions of problems facing the school. Notwithstanding the present difficulties in understanding educational matters, these recommendations are a manifestation of the growing consciousness of community people's roles towards the organization of their school.

Drawing from observations (see Table 7) among community people's priorities for schooling and their suggested solutions, this study reduces all the concerns to the central issue of training and orientation to educational matters. The literature suggested that it was not the
intent of the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) that the government hand schools over to Indian communities without first training local people about school management. Recommendations offered by community people in the present study suggested that non-Native teachers as well as local managers of Indian schools need training. In fact, in one of its recommendations, the Royal Commission on Learning (1994) Report stated that the Province of Ontario should incorporate courses on Native issues in education for both Native and non-Native teachers in-training and those already in the teaching field. First, the training of non-Native teachers of Native children will ensure that all things being equal, teachers will behave in accordance with community priorities; and second, the training of local management personnel will ensure that the personnel will be empowered to precisely define such technicalities of schooling as appropriate teaching content. The resulting mixes of appropriate training of all teachers of Native children and the training of local school managers are what lead to the description of an entire community education system as locally controlled.

To end the discussion of this study, I would like to note that both the results and the discussion of these results attempt to reveal the viewpoints about schooling in the context of the Cat Lake Indian reserve in Northwestern Ontario. Viewpoints uncovered in this study are those concerning the purpose of education for Indian children, the problems associated with the concept of Indian control of Indian education, the shortcomings, and priorities for schooling for Indian children on the reserve. The study revealed that community people expect education to endow their children with the skills and proficiencies acquired by children in the mainstream Canadian society. The study also established that there is a minimal understanding of the concept and processes of local control, and that a well articulated meaning of education should
involve a two-way approach to education, that is, bi-cultural education.

**Limitations of the Study**

In using participatory research as an alternative research paradigm that may contribute to social change, this study encountered several impediments and limitations. In the first place, I do not intend to create the impression that the study was an easy going enterprise that achieved high-minded goals of bringing about changes in the school system under study. Perhaps the limitations of this study are typical of those that attempt to study social phenomena within specific contexts, and particularly, those that relate to research that pursues the goal of empowering disadvantaged people to bring about a radical change in their social situation.

Although one may see participatory research as an alternative research paradigm that is intended to contribute to radical social transformation, many researchers (Participatory Research Network, 1982; Maguire, 1987; Horton, 1981; Hall, 1993) criticize it as an approach to social enquiry. As Maguire (1987) writes:

> Herein lies a dilemma for the participatory researcher. To purposefully embark on a research approach that promotes oppressed people's empowerment as an explicit goal requires a belief that people need empowerment or conversely that people are oppressed and powerless (p. 45).

One of the assumptions guiding this study, that I would be able to switch the power and control into the hands of community people because they were aware of the power relationship involved in the problem of schooling is high-minded. Perhaps community people need more empowerment for the control of the social and economic problems confronting them than for the control of the school.
Another limitation of this study was that although some community members participated fully in the study, I felt that others lacked commitment, will and resources to participate effectively and act collectively. The seeming inactiveness of some participants made me feel that change was not coming at a faster pace. This was a frustrating experience. However, the Participatory Research Network (1982) makes it explicit that participatory research has more to it than bringing about social change. As the Network writes:

Participatory research is not a recipe for social change. It is a democratic approach to investigation and learning to be taken up by individuals, groups and movements as a tool aimed at social change. We do not, however, under-estimate the obstacles to effective social change (p. 4).

Tandon (cited in Maguire, 1987) candidly writes that most of his practice of participatory research had been a failure because of his underestimation of participants' passivity. Horton (1981) and Kanhare (1982) warned that participatory research might not be a panacea for the immediate solution of social problems.

One major limitation of this study concerns the question of whether or not a study conducted in a fashion of ongoing participation of community people is likely to contribute to knowledge that can be generalized. Speaking of knowledge contribution, the documentation of the results of this study is meant to generate knowledge about viewpoints Indian people living in a reserve, had about schooling. Whereas dominant social science attaches great importance to generalizations, the alternative paradigm concept employed in this study attaches a greater importance to the advancement of conditions in a particular social context. Accordingly, as Maguire (1987) writes:

In contrast [to the dominant research paradigm], the alternative concept of uniqueness brings the focus of research back to individuals and groups in the particular social context being investigated. The purpose of research is shifted from constructing grand
generalizations for control and practicability by detached outsiders to working closely with ordinary people, the insiders, in a particular context. The purpose is to enhance local people’s understanding and ability to control their own reality (p. 26).

So, the results presented in this study do not invite any comparisons with those of dominant research paradigms. They are only part of the study and as far as they help in the advancement of schooling in the community, the study will have achieved its purpose.

If there were an ethical limitation to this study, it concerns the very genesis of the research. Several participatory researchers (Maguire, 1987; Hall, 1993) propose that a participatory research enterprise should be initiated by participants involved in the research process. For example, writing on the role of the university in participatory research, Hall (1993) argues that since participatory research is a domain of oppressed groups such as the homeless, women on welfare and trade unionists, universities or similar certified researchers are not supposed to activate a participatory research process. Hall says if these groups:

wish to invite a university-based group to become involved they need to set up the conditions at the start and maintain control of the process if they wish to benefit as much as possible" (p. 20).

Similarly, Maguire (1987) contends that it is not fitting for an outsider to launch a participatory research. As Maguire writes:

Ideally, participatory research is initiated at the request of a community group which is involved in the entire research process (p. 53).

However, what is ideal is not usually always real. As Maguire accepts:

Realistically, participatory research projects are more likely to be initiated by outside researchers (p. 53).

Also, Hall (1993) concludes that since members of universities possess skills which, if combined with the skills of community members, can contribute to community action, it is necessary that
people of the university become well acquainted with participatory research. In this case, there was clear indication that community people in the Cat Lake Indian reserve were willing to participate in matters relating to the improvement of schooling of their children. But the problem of how to transfer the control of the project to participants to ensure ongoing participation still remains.

I would be remiss not to mention that the excessive demands imposed on me as the principal researcher in this study constitute a major limitation. Many research findings (Participatory Research Network, 1982; Maguire, 1987; Horton, 1981) assert that one of the limitations of participatory research that is usually overlooked by researchers is the demands it makes on researcher’s and participants’ time. The difficulty arises for example, when the researcher is unable to determine how much time local people are required to devote to the project, and what kind of time commitment the researcher is required to make to an area. As Maguire (1987) writes:

One difficulty is that participatory research makes great demands on researcher. The researcher’s role is expanded to include educator and activist and in this role, the researcher is expected to take a value position and act accordingly. The participatory researcher is also called upon to transfer organizational, technical and analytical skills to participants. This transfer of skills is not easy to accomplish. It requires commitment, teaching skill, and the ability to set up a project structure and processes to facilitate the transfer (p. 52-53).

In Cat Lake, my study nearly expanded into a community-wide study as I became involved in too many areas of community life, particularly in helping to restructure the various departments such as the Band administration, the economic development office, and the recreation department.
My status as principal of the school may seem to have put me in the position that helped me to effectively mobilize community people for action on school issues. At first sight, it may seem as if I attempted to use my leadership position to enhance my own research enterprise. However, if the practice of this participatory research in Cat Lake has succeeded in enhancing community people's understanding and ability to control their own school, then one would agree that my status as principal on the whole, was more of an advantage than a limitation.

The study attempted to investigate viewpoints on schooling of Indian children. Yet because of its concentration on the viewpoints expressed by community people, parents, teachers and students, it led to the exclusion of the views of other policy actors for Indian education such as officials of INAC, who continue to fund the school, and faculties of education which train teachers for the school. This exclusion does not mean that I considered the viewpoints of these policy actors unimportant. Rather, as a participatory researcher, what I sought was the active participation of local people in implementing changes they deem fit in their school system.

Implications Arising From the Study

The results of this study carry some implications for matters relating to policy, practice, and further research with respect to schooling within the context of the Cat Lake Indian reserve, and, possibly, other Indian reserves in Ontario in particular and Canada in general. In this study, while implications for policy mainly pertain to those policy issues and actions that can be addressed more expeditiously on federal and provincial levels, those for practice concern issues of jurisdiction that can be addressed more effectively at the local level.
Implications for Policy at the Federal and Provincial Levels

The present study suggests that the issue about quality of schools for Indian children boils down mainly to policy considerations. Educational researchers (Paquette, 1986a; Hampton, 1988) interpret government policy towards Native education, both past and present, as bigoted, and at its worst, unscrupulous. If the quality of education for Native children in Cat Lake is to improve, then the Government of Canada should be assisting the people of the Cat Lake community in dealing with the issue of re-examining and redefining policy for Native students. At the moment, the notion of Native control of Native education is almost entirely the product of both Native and non-Native politicians, and local control seems to be a way of making the government of Canada look more accommodating to internal differences of needs and conditions of Native people (Weiler, 1993). There is little or no evidence that policies of control have any direct or predictable relationships in the improvement of learning and teaching in the classroom. In principle, the policy of local control of education seems desirable; however, in circumstances where local control conveys only political undertones and does not carry a grassroots meaning, it becomes difficult for local people to understand educational policy. If the control of Indian education by Indians is to carry any meaning, those who plan educational policies for Indian children should consider outcomes such as the achievement of improved quality of education, efficient management of educational resources, or job opportunities for school leavers.

This study implies that educational change for Indian children, particularly, those living in reserves, is one that should involve not only a segment of politicians or federal and provincial school authorities, but also community members, in-school administrators, teachers, parents, and students working collaboratively. If quality education for Indian children is important, then
educational priorities for the children should include a re-conceptualization of local control, the articulation of a new meaning and purpose of education, the development of a fitting curriculum, and the provision of adequate support and maintenance facilities for the school system.

The rhetoric about Native control of Native education, leaves government obligation towards Native education limited to the provision of funds for Native schools. Apart from providing the necessary funds, government officials should also focus their efforts in ways that would lead to greater student achievement. The expectation that community people should assume responsibility for the education of Indian children does not necessarily mean that federal and provincial authorities should have nothing to do with band-operated schools. They should have the same obligation towards schooling of Indian children as they have towards the children in the mainstream Canadian society. It may seem to the federal and provincial authorities that by adopting a policy of non-interference in the affairs of schooling for Indian children, they are giving a chance to local people to control their own education. But local people are not equipped with the expertise to ensure how well their school is doing. In order to ensure effective local control, federal and provincial authorities should help in formulating an educational policy that would provide the bases of control for local people. This study suggests that while federal and provincial authorities have left the control of structures and resources in the hands of local people, local people still continue to view the school as a creation of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and have continued to adopt the policy of non-interference towards the school. To put the issue another way, everybody and nobody seems to be in charge of schooling for children in band-operated schools as long as government officials fail to use their good offices to ensure that communities understand that they have an important part to play if
Indian children are to obtain quality education.

A prominent result in this study is that decentralization of control of education to the Cat Lake Band did not go hand in hand with decentralization of educational content. In other words, while there is the expectation that educational policy for Native students will accommodate local conditions both in terms of local economic and social realities, and in terms of awareness and sensitivity to the special attributes of Indian reserves, the curriculum and methods continue to be those used in the mainstream Canadian society. Both human and material resources in the Indian reserve of Cat Lake, for example, are so limited that local control of education would not in itself simultaneously adjust education to local conditions. Accordingly, it is necessary for federal authorities who hand over schools, to focus on strengthening the local resource base, both in terms of human and material resources. Hampton (1988) rightly asserts that Native control of education should be linked with control of structures, methods, and school personnel. In other words, there is the need to establish a body of knowledge that can genuinely be called a philosophy of Native education. In the absence of such a philosophy, local control of education and community participation in schooling would remain just a prototype to which it is fashionable to pay lip service.

If the results of the present study were to be taken seriously by those concerned with the education of Native children, it is necessary to recognize the importance of Native traditions and culture in the mainstream Canadian society. While the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) has stressed the importance of Native students learning their language and culture at school, there has been too much emphasis placed on limiting the learning of Native language, traditions and culture to only Native children. There have been studies that have supported cultural education
that represents interests and values of both dominant and minority groups of society (Giroux, 1991; Andereck, 1992; Freire and Giroux, 1989). Freire and Giroux (1989) contend that in a democratic society, it is necessary for all people from both dominant and minority groups to learn each others' cultures. As stated in the literature reviewed for this study, Bouvier (1991) points out the importance of all schools in the mainstream Canadian society adopting a curriculum policy that reflects the Native language, history, and culture of Native people, and these should also form an integral part of the Canadian teacher training program. Paquette (1986b) contends that for Native education to be meaningful, there is the need to organize an agreeable balance between Native and non-Native teaching material. Similarly, Douglas (1987) advocates the integration of Native content into provincial curricula.

In a study of Australian Aborigines of the East Kimberley region, Thies (1987) documented the importance the Aborigines attached to bi-cultural education. Thus, it is necessary for all Canadian children to have the opportunity of learning about Native ways. Since most of the teachers of Native children are non-Native and are educated in the mainstream Canadian society, it becomes essential that both the mainstream schools and faculties of education should incorporate Native history, language and culture in their programs. Further, it is important to review teacher education programs and their compatibility with teaching in Native schools. Special courses at the bachelor of education level should ideally be available to those whose careers will carry them into the teaching of Native students. Also, special courses at the master's level should be available for those who aspire to become Native school administrators. The Ministry of Education should acknowledge a principals' course option to deal with the exceptional professional growth needs of administrators who aspire to use their
principals' certification in Native schools.

In principle, the thinking that local control of education, freed from federal and provincial interference would focus efforts that would lead to greater achievement of Indian students has some hypothetical justification and extensive political attraction. However, it is difficult to reconcile this thinking with the manner in which federal authorities hand over schools to Indian bands. For example, the federal authorities handed the school over to the Cat Lake band overnight, without preparing community people for the task of school governance. If decentralization of schools to local people is to have any beneficial effects on what happens in terms of teaching and learning, then the federal authorities should hand over schools only when both parties are sure that they have adequately articulated the meaning and processes of control and the local people understand and are prepared to take over all facets of educational management. For example, in a gradual handover process, one of the central objectives of federal authorities should be to promote local people's understanding of the process of education as well as enhance their understanding of new and more effective ways to carry out their work.

Finally, if Native education in Indian reserves such as Cat Lake is to be successful, then politicians and policy makers should reverse their attitudes and outlook toward Native education. They should clearly define objectives concerning curriculum, student achievement and policy formulation and implementation. The proposition of a genuine devolution of power should entail the empowerment of local people to maintain control under conditions of increasing and multiplying awareness of a philosophy of education that is capable of enhancing the social and economic lives of Indian children.
Implications for Practice at the Local Level

Educational researchers and scholars of Native education consider the extent of local jurisdiction over education as a major factor for the success of Native education. Jurisdiction in this case implies the need for an effectively complete Native control of educational governance at all levels. Based on the results of this study, the question of who really controls the school in Cat Lake becomes relevant when one considers that major policy making in Native education remains the prerogative of non-Native civil servants and politicians. A crucial aspect of the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) paper was its significant recognition of jurisdiction and control at the local level (Cassidy and Bish, 1989). However, the continuity in school practices from the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) era suggests that band-operated schools are not able to adhere to the fundamental issues of value and purpose of Native education. While the school in Cat Lake, for example, continues to bear all the hallmarks of the mainstream Canadian educational systems, the structures employed in the mainstream to ensure how well education is doing do not exist. The governance of education by local people does not exercise the control mechanisms that ensure efficiency and accountability in the school system. The question of jurisdiction over the school system becomes even more aggravated when school funding comes from the federal government, yet federal authorities do not give instructions as to how to spend the money or evaluate the programs for which they provide funds. In order for local people to exercise jurisdiction over their school, schooling practices should be in the terms set out by Indians themselves. With the assistance of federal and provincial experts, local people should be trained to develop their own philosophies, structures, resources, and methods of evaluation and supervision of education (Hampton, 1988). Unless federal and provincial
authorities are ready to fully commit themselves to giving full jurisdiction over education by providing the bases of control to community people, schools for Native children are liable to remain unsuccessful and mediocre in quality.

Admitting that present school programs for Native students in Cat Lake are not of the high quality desired by community people, then the results of this study suggest that the community school should minimize its reliance on mainstream school programs and develop a new school orientation which emphasizes local programs and user preference. The notion that community people would like their children to attain similar competencies to those acquired by children in the mainstream Canadian society is laudable. However, this study suggests that Native parents need to have a primary interest in ensuring that students are equipped to participate effectively in the social and economic life of the community.

The results of this study confirm the Learning Sources (1993) report that the Local Education Authority in Cat Lake did not possess a working plan for the future. It is difficult to imagine how a school system will operate successfully without short and long term plans. This study suggests that the Local Education Authority should develop a long term strategic planning process. The Education Authority should make the plan public, and make it a priority to spend money only on the most pressing needs. It would be necessary for the Local Education Authority to plan for at least a year in advance, how it would spend money and what materials would be required for the school. In its plans, the Local education Authority should clearly state what it wishes to accomplish in areas such as curriculum work, textbooks, furniture and equipment it intends to purchase and how it would like to carry on staff development and evaluations. The Authority should also specify projects it wishes to undertake to improve the
school and playgrounds and the money and resources that will be required in carrying out these projects. Here again, the suggestion for a financial plan would work, only if the Band allocates a separate budget for the school.

This study also indicated that one of the areas of local control that needs serious attention is the quality of local school administrative personnel. Indeed, the study suggests that there is a complete disconnection between qualifications of local school administrative personnel and anything that has to do with school governance. This disconnection between qualifications and the main idea of the technicalities of schooling means that despite the physical presence of administrators, there still remains a management vacuum in school governance. In other words, the employment of unqualified people to positions of responsibility do not have any perceivable effect on the improvement of schooling, particularly on what children learn at school. Furthermore, because the process of selection of administrative personnel such as coordinator/director of education is limited to community people, and because community people do not have the educational qualifications of school administration, the cumulative effect is to employ people with little or no educational qualifications, and therefore, make education less manageable.

Against the background of the seemingly convincing rationale for Indian bands to employ their own community members to administrative positions in their schools systems, attempts to ensure that these positions are held by Indians themselves are conspicuous for their frequency, but not necessarily for their success. In order to train education personnel in the processes of school governance, it is necessary that at least, at the initial stages of band control, the band may employ, say two education directors, that is, a qualified administrator from outside and the
assistant from the community. The assistant should understudy the director until she/he becomes conversant with the tenets of school governance. Although this may be costly in terms of financial resources, it will, in the long run prove a viable venture.

In the search for a balance between the development of a Native education system, and a considerable measure of dependence on financial support and services provided by federal authorities, Native people should identify what really hinders their educational development, whether the hindrances are the result of the politics of external agencies or internal community priorities. Doubtless, the proper management of the school system and the solutions of educational problems require appropriate training of educational personnel and their orientation to educational matters. Therefore, the answers to schooling problems do not lie outside the community, but within the community itself.

Suggestions for Further Study

By exploring community people's perceptions about schooling, the study sought to reveal the myriad of problems surrounding issues such as local control of education, meaning, purpose, shortcomings and priorities of schooling in order to find practical solutions for them. Future researchers should be committed to finding ways by which we can better understand the perceptions of Native people on schooling and ways by which we can initiate action to bring about the desired social change.

The recognition of the shortcomings of schooling and the identification of priorities and strategies for action in Cat Lake is a first step towards effective local control. The next step should be the development of commitment on the part of the school staff, local education
officials, parents, community people, and students to put the suggested strategies into action.

A further study should focus on how to promote an ongoing participation of community residents in the solution of schooling problems in Cat Lake.

Although an inquiry that concentrates on understanding viewpoints on schooling of Native people living in a reserve is certainly significant, it would also be important to understand the viewpoints of politicians and policy analysts concerned about Native education. In a society beset by the opposing claims of various political interests, issues such as Native education and self determination are among many political interests with a stake in public decision making process. This study suggests that the ceding of the school to the people of Cat Lake has nothing to do with either organizational structural change or with teaching or learning of students but rather, it has to do with things like the exercise of political power. Therefore, an exploration of the viewpoints of both Native and non-Native politicians and educational policy analysts will provide educators of Native children information about what they can do to enhance the quality of education for Native children. Native education requires an understanding of both the common school of thought pertaining to school management and of analysis that explains the atypical considerations pertinent to school management in a particular Native context.

Since the majority of teachers of Native children are non-Native and they are originally trained to teach students of the mainstream society, it would be important to explore the effects of non-Native teachers on educational achievement of Native students. This study supports research that links lack of achievement of Native students to cultural differences (Atleo, 1990; Ogbu, 1987; Erickson, 1987; Hampton, 1988).
In addition, it is important to address the impact of isolation on the performance of teachers and achievement of students. In a study of teacher satisfaction in the Indian reserves of Northwestern Ontario, Agbo (1990) found that teachers cited the very isolation of the communities as one of the most dissatisfying factors of their job.

To conclude, some lessons emerged from this study for others who want to do participatory research on other reserves. First, the study indicated that it takes considerable time to build trust and confidence in community people for a working relationship. Second, in order to prepare participants for action, it is necessary to educate them and establish mutual trust between them and the researcher. Finally, while it might seem to a participatory researcher that the empowerment of community people would inadvertently lead to taking action on the solution of problems, this study reveals that some issues and actions cannot be addressed at the local level. Rather, these must be addressed at the provincial and federal levels. Because the improvement of education depends on some policy issues, such as level of funding, which could only be dealt with at the provincial or federal level, some data must be gathered and analyzed on provincial or federal levels. Depending exclusively on local people for the improvement of education may not bring about the necessary results for achieving improved quality of education. So, this study suggests that for researchers to gain the utmost in participatory research, they should supplement it with other forms of research to enable them to more effectively address research questions that are beyond the community.


Indian Act, Canada R.S.C. 1970.


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Sample Interview Questions

Guiding Interview Questions with Community Elders

(01) I know that many things have changed since you were a child. Please tell me about some of the things that are now different.

(02) How did you keep law and order during the old times?

(03) Can you, please tell me about marriage in those days?

(04) What were some of the most important values that community members kept among themselves?

(05) How was the family unit during those days?

(06) Please tell me something about the first school you had in the community.

(07) How did your parents feel about schooling?

(08) What things would you like teachers to teach the children of the community at the present time?

(09) How much did you involve yourself in your children’s schooling during the INAC days?

(10) What would you say about the school closure due to contamination?

(11) Our school in the community is now under local control. Which group of people would you like to directly control education?

(12) How do you feel about your children going outside the community to attend high school?

(13) Do you want your community to preserve the Native language? What should be the role of the school in preserving the Native Language?
Guiding Questions for Interviews with Community People

Introductory Comment: I very much appreciate the time you are devoting to this interview. I've been looking forward to hearing your viewpoints on schooling in your community. This is a discussion that will help all of us to know what we should be putting right in the school for it to become a better place for the students. I thank you very much for your time.

(01) I have noticed that most of the teachers in the school are Non-Native, and, therefore may not know much about the community and the children. How much do teachers need to know before they come in to teach your children?

(02) In every school, there are a lot of things going on. You may not like some of the things that are going on in your school. What things do you not like about the school?

(03) What things do you think the school is doing well and would like it to maintain?

(04) What do you consider to be the purpose of the school in the community?

(05) Which areas of schooling would you like to see changed?

(06) What would you not like teachers to teach at school?

(07) What are the most important things that you would like teachers to teach your children?

(08) What do you think is the purpose of your children's education?

(09) What are some of the things you feel teachers should do in order for your children to gain most from education?

(10) What does Band Control of education mean to you?

(11) Who or which group of people should directly control education at the community level?

(12) What should the school and the community do to work together?

(13) What should community people do to improve the school?

(14) How can the Band Council Communicate effectively about school to the community? Which type of communication do you want to go on between the Band Council and community people about school?
(15) Many of community students dropout, especially from high school. What reasons would you give for the dropout of students from school?

(16) What do you think the community should do to minimize the dropout rate of students?

(17) Would you like your community to have a high school, that is, grade 9 next year? Why?

(18) How important do you think it is for your children to learn your culture at school? [If respondent indicates the importance of learning culture in the school:] What type of cultural activities would you like your children to learn at school?

(19) Do you want your community to preserve its Native language? What should be the role of the school in preserving the Native Language?

(20) In what way(s) can you as a parent/community member help in running the school?
Supplementary Guiding Questions for Interviews with Band Workers

(01) What does Band Control of Education mean to you?

(02) Who or which group of people do you think should control education at the band level?

(03) What role would you expect the chief to play in the control of education?

(04) What should be the responsibilities of the education coordinator?

(05) What should be the duties of the Local Education Authority?

(06) What should the band council do to improve schooling?

(07) In what ways do you think band control of education is different from that of Indian Affairs?

(08) In what ways do you think the Ministry of Indian Affairs still controls the school?

(09) What should be the priorities of the community on schooling?

(10) What would you say about school closure due to contamination?
Guiding Questions for Interviews with School Staff

(01) What do you consider as the purpose of education for Native children?

(02) What kind of orientation should non-Native teachers be given before arriving in the community?

(03) What kind of orientation should they be given in the community?

(04) How long should each of these orientations take?

(05) How can non-Native teachers integrate themselves into the community?

(07) What do you view as the shortcomings of Native students?

(06) What should be the priorities of schooling for Native children?

(08) What do you expect the band to do to improve schooling?

(09) What changes would you advocate in the in-school administration?

(10) How can teachers and parents work together to improve schooling?

(11) How can the school build effective communication lines with the community?

(12) How much do you need to know about Native people before teaching their children?

(13) What do you think should be the role of universities in improving the quality of teachers for Native children?

(14) What is most satisfying to you as a teacher in the school?

(15) What is most frustrating or dissatisfying to you as a teacher in the school?
Guiding Questions for Interviews with Students

(01) You come to school almost everyday. Can you tell me why you do that?

(02) What things do you not like about school?

(03) What things do you like about school?

(04) What would you like your teachers to do to make you stay in school?

(05) What subjects do you like best at school?

(06) Apart from what you learn at school, what other things would you like your teachers to teach you?

(07) What would you like your parents to do to improve your schooling?

(08) What benefits do you think you would have from going to school?

(09) What can the students do to make their parents part of the school?

(10) What would make you to drop out of school?
Appendix B

Letters of Contact and Consent Forms
LETTER OF CONTACT -

CHIEF AND COUNCIL

August 5, 1993

The Band Chief & Council
Cat Lake Band
General Delivery
Cat Lake, Ontario
POV 1J0

Dear Chief & Council:

Re.: Research on Community People's Viewpoints on Schooling.

I am writing to invite your community to participate in a study entitled: Viewpoints of Native People on Schooling.

I am a student pursuing doctoral studies at the University of British Columbia in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education. I am now in the process of writing a dissertation for my degree. Dr. Kjell Rubenson is my Research Supervisor as well as the principal researcher for my study. Dr. Rubenson does not intend to accompany me to Cat Lake for field work although I shall incorporate his suggestions into the research activity. At the same time, while in Cat Lake, I shall keep him informed about the progress I make in the data collection process on a regular basis.

The purpose of this study is to investigate community perspectives, opinions, and attitudes about issues concerning schooling, and enhance community people's understanding and ability to control their own education. To accomplish this purpose, the study will in part document
CONSENT FORM -

CHIEF AND COUNCIL

The Chief and Band Council have read, understood, and retained a copy of the description of the research project entitled: A Study of Native People's Viewpoints on Schooling.

[ ] We do consent [ ] We do not consent to our community's participation in this study.

__________________________________________
Name (please print)

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Title

__________________________________________
Date
LETTER OF CONTACT -
EDUCATION DIRECTOR

September 10, 1993

The Education Director,
Titotay Memorial School
Cat Lake, Ontario
P0V 1J0

Dear Director:

I would like you and your school to consider participating in a study entitled: A Study of Native People's Viewpoints on Schooling. The study approved by the Chief and Council of the Cat Lake Band and the Windigo Education Authority will be conducted by me, a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education, in collaboration with your community members. The purpose of the study is to investigate community perspectives, opinions, and attitudes concerning the education of the children in your community. This study will document viewpoints of the community people on education and this will form a basis for mobilizing the community people for action on issues involving their children's education.

For the purpose of this study, research procedures will involve document analysis, group discussions, meetings, and interviews. The study will involve carefully examining documents produced by the Ministry of Indian Affairs for Native schools, as well as those documents
CONSENT FORM -
EDUCATION DIRECTOR

I have read, understood, and retained a copy of the description of the research project entitled:
A study of Native People's Viewpoints on Schooling.

[ ] I do consent [ ] I do not consent to my school's participation in this study.

____________________________
Name (please print)

____________________________
Signature

____________________________
Title

____________________________
Date
CONSENT FORM -

PARENT

I have retained for my own records, a copy of the consent form on the project entitled: A Study of Native People's Viewpoints on Schooling.

[ ] I do consent [ ] I do not consent to my child's participation in the study.

[ ] I do consent [ ] I do not consent to the use of my child's viewpoints for analysis.

_____________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian

_____________________________________
Signature of Student

_____________________________________
Date
Appendix C

Problem Identification Workshops - Suggestions for Discussion

To all Workshop Participants:

Please note that the main issues that were identified by all those who submitted lists of problems have been listed first. Following these are suggestions for discussion in your groups. Some of the questions were found in your submissions. Please feel free to pose more questions.

Education-Related Matters

- school curriculum;
- problems of dropout from high school
- lack of community involvement in education
- inadequate number of teaching assistants
- lack of an up to date discipline policy for the school
  - training for local school staff
  - high turnover of local staff

Suggestions for Discussion of Education Related Matters

(1) School Curriculum - (a) What is wrong/right with the curriculum?
   (b) What courses/subjects would you like the school to teach?

(2) High School Dropouts - (a) Why do students drop out?
   (b) What can we do to encourage students to remain in school?
   (c) What incentive/rewards system can we provide for students who remain in school?

(3) Community involvement - (a) Why do community people not involve themselves in school affairs?
   (b) How can teachers and parents work together?
   (c) How can we let parents understand the importance of schooling?
(d) How can parents contribute to the discipline of students?
(e) In what ways can we foster communication between parents and teachers?
(f) What should teachers do to attract parents to the school?

(4) Teacher’s Assistants - (a) Why should there be teaching assistants in the school?
(b) How many assistants can the school afford to hire?
(c) What qualification of people can become teacher’s assistants?
(b) What should be the age limit of those who should be hired as teacher’s assistants?

(5) Discipline Policy - (a) Who should prepare the discipline policy for the school?
(b) What issues should the policy stress?
(c) How often should the policy be revised?
(d) Who should revise it?

(6) Training for Local School Staff - (a) Who should provide training for local school staff?
(b) When and where should the training take place?
(c) How should the employee account for the training?

(7) High Turnover of Local Staff - (a) What are the causes of the high turnover of the local staff?
(b) What should we do to keep local staff on the job?
(c) How can we help local staff members who might be in drugs or alcohol?
(d) What should be the procedure for dealing with local staff who do not conduct themselves in an orderly manner outside the school? - Should they be fired immediately? No! Many people do not think so. Perhaps, there is a way to help them. Let us think of it.
Culture-Related Matters

- need for cultural revival
- need to establish a tradition in the community
- lack of spirituality
- problem of alcohol and drug abuse
- health problems
- poor housing facilities
- financial problems
- too many welfare recipients

Suggestions for Discussion of Culture Related Matters

(1) Cultural Revival - (a) What are the community people’s ways of life?
   (b) How can we promote our way of life?
   (c) What institutions should we respect?
   (d) How can we enforce respect for our way of life?
   (e) What festivals and celebrations can we revive?

(2) Tradition - (a) What traditions are important to our way of life?
   (b) How can we revive these traditions?
   (c) How can we enforce that community people obey the traditions?

(3) Spirituality - (a) What way do we go - traditional or Christian?
   (b) What can we do for people to become spiritual and meditative?
   (c) How can we help community people to realize the importance of being spiritual? (People have to believe in something).

(4) Drug and Alcohol Abuse - (a) What causes drug and alcohol abuse?
   (b) What should we do to minimize drug and alcohol abuse?
   (c) What plans long term plans can we make for an alcohol- and drug- free society?
   (d) How can we help people who are in alcohol and drugs?
   (e) How can we stop young people from going into drugs and alcohol?

(5) Health - (a) How can we help people to become aware of personal hygiene?
   (b) What facilities should the community provide for people to exercise themselves physically?
   (c) What facilities should the community provide for the elderly to enable
them live a fulfilling life?
(d) What facilities should the community provide for the children to maintain their physical wellbeing especially during summer months?

(6) Housing -(a) What can we doing to increase the quantity of housing facilities in the community?
(b) How can we improve the quality of housing?
(c) How can we ensure a clean environment?
(d) Who should be in charge of ensuring adequate and proper housing?

(7) Water - (a) How can we assure safe drinking water for all?
(b) Who should be responsible for safe drinking water?

(7) Financial Problems - (a) Why do people have financial problems in the community?
(b) How can we help people with financial problems?

(8) Welfare Recipients - (a) Can welfare recipients be gainfully employed?
(b) What type of jobs can we create for able-bodied people who receive welfare? e.g. garbage collection, street cleaning, janitorial duties in the school and recreation centre; instructors in Native skills at the school.
(c) How can we encourage welfare recipients to take up paid jobs?

Child care-Related Issues

- lack of effective parenting
- youth suicide problems
- lack of respect for parents and elders
- physical and emotional abuse of children
- lack of discipline among children
- lack of communication between children and social workers.

Suggestions for Discussion of Child Care Related Issues

(1) Effective Parenting - (a) What should we do to make sure that parents take good care of their children?
(b) How can we find out about parents who are not taking good care of their children?
(c) What should be the consequences for parents who neglect their
(2) Suicide Problems - (a) Why do young people attempt to commit suicide?
   (b) How can we determine youth that suicidal?
   (c) What should we do to help youth that show signs of being suicidal?
   (d) What long term projects should we initiate to occupy children of the community?
   (e) How can we encourage children to talk about their problems?

(3) Lack of Respect - (a) Why do children not respect their parents and elders?
   (b) What can we do to build trust and respect among children?
   (c) What should we do to help parents build the respect of their children?

(4) Physical and Emotional Abuse - (a) What problems cause parents to physically and/or emotional abuse their children?
   (b) What should we do to stop parents from abusing their children?
   (c) How can we help abused children?

(5) Discipline - (a) What causes discipline problems in children? (sleeplessness is a major cause).
   (b) How can we enforce a curfew for children?
   (c) When should there be the curfew?
   (d) How should parents help in enforcing a curfew?
   (e) What punishments should be appropriate for children who commit serious crimes in the community?
   (d) Who should be responsible for punishing children at the community level?
   (e) What type of awards can we institute for good behaviour?
   (f) Who should be responsible for giving out the awards?

(6) Communication - (a) How can social workers communicate effectively with children?
   (b) In what way should social workers encourage children to communicate with them?
   (c) How can social workers find children who are in trouble?
   (d) how should social workers communicate with parents whose children are in trouble?
Suggestions for Discussion of School-Related Matters

Discipline

-Deterrents to swearing at (a) student (b) teacher.
- deterrents to hitting (a) student (b) teacher;
- fighting; spoiling other student’s work;
- picking on little children;
- disruptive behaviour - e.g. throwing spitballs;
- lack of enough sleep at home causing bad moods.

(1) What other discipline problems can you think about?
(2) What do you think causes each of these problems?
(3) Discuss preventive methods, and (b) consequences - rules and relating punishments.
(4) Discuss incentives, e.g. house system, awards (different kinds).

Maintenance

- Day to day upkeep of the school premises
- periodic check of fuel supplies for school and teachers’ quarters
- broken school doors
- responsibility and accountability of school custodian

(1) Think about more of the maintenance problems.
(2) Discuss (a) preventive measures (b) responsibility (c) accountability (d) consequences.

Interpersonal Relationships

- Relationships between: principal and staff;
- principal and students;
- staff and students; social counsellor and staff;
- social counsellor and parents;
- coordinator and staff; staff and LEA;
- local and non-Native staff;

1) Think of ways of bettering these relationships (fault-finding is not the answer).
(2) Responsibilities and accountability. You may consider the following:
   (a) What should the principal do to ensure that staff members are comfortable in their roles
   and are doing their job properly?
   (b) What should the staff do to help the principal in doing the job?
(c) what is the role of the social counsellor in helping teachers to accomplish their task (what should the social counsellor do)?

(d) what should be the responsibility of the LEA in ensuring that the school is achieving its purpose?

(e) how can local and non-Native staff benefit from each other? (e.g. How can non-native staff help local staff to become skilled in working with children?

Contamination of School Yard

-Effects of school closure on students;
-proposals for the spring, summer, and fall.

(1) Come out with a plan. Assume the following: (a) the clean-up has not been done; (b) it is dangerous for the students to play at the school yard in spring, summer, and fall.

Discuss the following:

1. should the school continue in the building?
2. if the Band Council closes the school, should teachers and students hold classes elsewhere? If yes, where?
3. How can students be made to benefit from a closure of school?
4. Think of other questions that may arise and provide suggested solutions

School Facilities, Supplies, Utilities and Student Transportation

-Playground equipment,
-fencing the schoolyard
-separate building for kindergarten equipped with washrooms and fire alarms for the portables;
-hockey rink with lights;
-Equipment - computers and printers;
-slide projector; VCRs, TVs;
-carpets in the classroom;
-utilities - cutting school hydro costs.

-responsibility and accountability of school bus driver.

(1) Think of more supplies.
(2) Prioritize the list.
(3) Make estimates in dollar costs for the items.
Extra-curricula Activities
and General Supervision of Students

- Problem solving groups for boys and girls;
- use of gym - after school gym activities;
- Sunday School - how do we organize it?
- open house for parents - when, how, who?
  - Field day - What type of events?
  - fundraising; family nights; field trips.
  - supervision - duties and responsibilities
    of staff on yard duty and for extra curricula activities.
- parents helping in extra curricula activities.

(1) Discuss the importance of each of the items and how it could be organized.
(2) Think of problems and suggested solutions.
Appendix D

Summary Report for Community Workshops

WORKSHOP 1 - JANUARY 1994

CURRICULUM

Present situation: First, there is a lack of body of knowledge at the community level from which to derive formal policy and a lack of a means of communicating formal policy to the teachers.

Second, the curriculum does not respond to the realities of the community, that is, there has been no systematic modification of the curriculum to recognize the cultural and linguistic milieu of the students. Since the Indian Brotherhood document entitled Indian Control of Indian Education issued in 1972 stressed the importance of First Nations developing their own philosophy of education that would adapt First Nations schools to modern society, many bands have established cultural survival schools and have attempted to develop local curricula products. Our school does not have a cultural program let alone a Native Language program. It would be necessary to establish a desirable balance between First Nation and non-First Nation curriculum content.

Recommendation: (1) It is necessary to establish a school policy, taking into consideration community people's and teachers' viewpoints on schooling. (2) We advocate a curriculum that responds to the realities of the community without compromising comparable standards in the province. We, therefore, look at the following areas as a source of deriving formal policy:

(a) Provincial School Act:
Present situation: There is lack of effective policy and strategy towards education at the community level.
Recommendation: (a) The school needs a mission statement. (b) It is necessary to have knowledge of the provincial School Act and decide whether the school can adapt it to the conditions in Cat Lake.

(b) Native Language:

Present situation: There is no Native Language instruction in the school. Bouvier (1991) suggests that Native language, culture and history must form an integral part of Native children's education.
Recommendation: We find Native Language instruction important in the school. We feel it would enhance students' pride in their heritage and would also help in bridging the gap between the home and the school. It is, essential, therefore, to have Native Language instruction in the school provided (i) there is a qualified Native language instructor who could teach both
the language and syllabics; (ii) we could use one-half hour per day for each class; (iii) The Native Language teacher would instruct non-Native teachers in the basics for one-half hour per week.

(c) Religious Instruction:

Present Situation: There is no Religious Instruction in the school.

Recommendation: Religious instruction could be a means of enhancing morals, virtues and values of the students. Students could benefit from Religious instruction but there are too many denominations in Cat Lake and some parents might be offended if Religious instruction degenerates into a missionary activity. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to have a Sunday school which would be optional to students. Experience has shown that younger students enjoy singing hymns and would like to attend a Sunday school.

(d) Physical Education:

Present Situation: There is Physical Education instruction in the school but we find its provision inadequate for the purpose of the nature of our students.

Recommendations: It is very important to have a Physical Education specialist in the school. Owing to the high energy level of our students, it is important to have someone special whose time would be devoted to seeing to the physical wellbeing of the students. The specialist would help to restructure extra curricula sporting activities and this may augur well in helping students burn their excess energy. Students advancing to high school would need a more rigorous instruction in Physical Education in order to prepare them for the task in high school.

(e) Cultural Program:

Present situation: There is no Cultural Program in the school. Students may tend to lose the knowledge in the arts and crafts of the community, and may not be adequately prepared to learn the skills necessary for survival in their environment.

Recommendation: We find a cultural program for boys and girls from grade 3 to 8 worthwhile in the school. The school could use Friday afternoons for the students to study the art, crafts, and survival skills of Native people. There would be two components of the program: (i) in-school program for the study of Native art work, needlework and sewing, and Native crafts; (ii) the out-of-school program for the study of survival skills in the woods. We recommend that the instructors are paid employees of the school and are incorporated into the life of the school. The cultural program should start in October, 1994.

Possible problems: (i) difficulty of finding suitable instructors; (ii) there may be lack of commitment on the part of instructors; (ii) budget constraints.
(f) Home Economics:

Present situation: There is no home economics instruction in the school.
Recommendation: We find home economics instruction for boys and girls essential in the school. Boys and girls should be provided with cooking lessons. The school could utilize the facilities at the recreation centre. There should be a budget allocation for home economics supplies.

(g) School hours for Junior and Senior Kindergarten:

Present situation: Junior and Senior Kindergarten utilize one classroom space with one teacher without a teacher’s assistant. Altogether, there are about 30 students. Senior Kindergarten comes to school for the whole day while Junior Kindergarten comes in the afternoons only. The teacher finds afternoon classes too congested to organize effective play activities for the students.

Recommendation: Senior Kindergarten comes to school for the morning sessions only while junior Kindergarten comes for the afternoon sessions only. This recommendation should take immediate effect.

(h) Subject Integration:

Present situation: Teachers teach subjects in isolation of one another.
Recommendation: Teachers should integrate their subjects. For example, they could integrate Maths and Language Arts.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

Present situation: Teachers feel that parents are unsupportive of their children’s education and do not involve themselves in the affairs of the school. In a study of teacher satisfaction in isolated communities of Northwestern Ontario, Agbo (1990) contends that the reasons for parents’ seemingly negative attitude towards education could be lack of effective communication between parents and teachers. Many of the parents in the community do not speak English and, therefore, seldom talk with teachers about their children’s achievement at school. There is minimal or no interaction between parents and teachers and this has often made teachers to feel that parents are not interested in the education of their children. On the other hand, parents also feel that teachers do not want them to interfere with their job.

Recommendation: In order to attempt to bridge the gap between the school and the home, staff and principal should do the following:
(a) visit parents at least once a month;
(b) make learning relevant to home conditions of students;
(c) invite parents individually to partake in certain school activities, such as hot dog lunches for students;
(d) conduct workshop for mothers of teenage students on the purpose of education;
(e) involve parents in the discipline of students both at home and school; that is, cooperate with parents on sanctions and rewards for student behaviour;
(f) involve other relatives such as uncles, aunts, elder brothers and sisters in the schooling affairs of students; and
(g) use the media, workshops, meetings and group discussions to promote education.

DISCIPLINE

Present situation: The problem of student discipline is of utmost concern to both staff and the local education authority. Students perform atrocious acts in and out of school. There seems to be no effective deterrents in place for student misbehaviour. Available sanctions do not work. The principal's office has become rendezvous for student offenders. Student behaviour problems take up about 75 per cent of the principal's daily routine. Student misbehaviour range from swearing at one another and teachers, disrupting classes, brutalizing each other, violence towards teachers to lack of attendance in the mornings, mainly due to sleeping-in. The school and the home are seemingly two different systems, that is, there is no continuity between the home and the school as regards the discipline of students. While students may be rewarded for good behaviour and punished for bad behaviour at school, nothing happens at home to reinforce good behaviour or deter bad behaviour. The school finds itself at square one as long as students get away with misbehaviour at home.

Recommendations: Since the school alone cannot effectively discipline the students without the support of parents and guardians, we arrived at the following suggestions, some of which are long term:
(a) the school staff in collaboration with community members should develop a discipline policy;
(b) the school should help students to thoroughly understand the rules;
(c) the Chief and Council should take the onus of advertising school rules to community people;
(d) teachers should intensify parent-teacher conferences in order to solicit parents' support for sanctions which should apply to students both at home and school, that is, when teachers withdraw privileges, they would ask parents to do the same at home.
(e) utilize the media (radio) to advertise importance of education to parents;
(f) send "good news, bad news" letters periodically to parents about the performance of their children.
(g) reward students who are chronic offenders for not misbehaving (use award certificates, points, etc.)
(h) every teacher will present a student of the week who would receive an award at the weekly assembly;
(i) LEA and staff would adapt provincial School Act to serious offenses;
(j) develop students' self esteem;
(k) invite Chief and Council to classrooms to speak to students;
(l) it is necessary for the children to have positive role model.

*Note that we found the discipline topic to be "a can of worms" and would be discussing it from time to time and attempt to arrive at effective solutions.

MAINTENANCE

Present situation: The school is poorly maintained. The building and teacherages are falling apart and there is absolutely no maintenance. There are no proper locks for the doors to the main school and the access to the gym. The school is usually not very clean, the washrooms are usually very dirty, and the floors are often dusty. The system for heating the school and teacherages is uncoordinated. School runs out of fuel while classes are in session. Teacherages go without fuel, both for heating and cooking for a number of days. As a result, some teacherages become frozen and pipes burst. The sewage system has not been cleaned for many years; toilet systems in the teacherages block up. There is apparently no accountability for the maintenance of the school.

Recommendations: The janitor should be responsible for the general upkeep of the school. The following projects should take place as soon as possible:

(a) a contractor should install fuel tanks that would hold a substantial amount of fuel for heating the school;
(b) the janitor should check fuel levels on regular basis;
(c) principal should contact coordinator in case of a problem and coordinator would in turn contact the LEA;
(d) the janitor is responsible to the LEA;
(e) the janitor should clean the washrooms everyday;
(f) the janitor should sweep the school everyday, and wash the floors at least once a week during winter, and more often during spring, summer and fall;
(g) a member of the LEA should visit the school at least once a week to check on its upkeep;
(h) janitor's room should be clean and all supplies labelled, and janitor should provide an extra key to the principal;
(i) the LEA should provide a job description for the janitor;
(j) sewage should be cleaned at least once a year;
(k) teachers should provide a list of repairs needed in the teacherages.
In all, 32 participants attended Workshop 2. The second workshop started with a plenary session to discuss the report of the first workshop. The discussions mainly centred around discipline problems. Some participants felt that there had not been adequate communication between the teachers and parents of students who misbehave at school. Although the school notifies parents about students who misbehave, teachers and parents do not know how to work together to improve the behaviour of students.

The education coordinator expressed that parents are often reluctant to take time out and come to the school to attend problems concerning their children. A parent once told the principal that it would be appropriate for the chief of the community to pass regulations which would inform parents about their parental responsibilities. Such regulations would be a take-off process which would allow teachers and parents to work together in the discipline of students.

The LEA chairman remarked it was becoming obvious that the school had begun to motivate parents about the schooling of their children. Some parents have recently indicated the willingness of cooperating with the school in the discipline of students. They would be willing to applying sanctions such as withdrawing privileges at home any time their children misbehaved at school. The second workshop, like the first, was meant to identify problems pertaining to the present situation and find desirable solutions.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND WELFARE OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Present Situation: Members of the school community are not aware of their proper roles and responsibilities. The principal, LEA, social counsellor, Native, and non-Native staff do not know how to support one another in performing school duties. For example, LEA members do not know their specific responsibilities beyond hiring and terminating appointments of local staff. The social counsellor does not know whether he is directly responsible to the principal, coordinator or the LEA.

Recommendations: (a) Every position in the school should have a well defined job description. Employees should receive copies of their job description on appointment; 
(b) to establish lines of authority as from the beginning of the school year - an early meeting at the beginning of the school year should clarify this line of authority; 
(c) supervisors must conduct periodic evaluations of teachers and staff - the first evaluation should be done within a three-month period from the beginning of the school year; 
(d) the social counsellor should follow the job description as specified in the Windigo Education policy; 
(e) teachers should make attempts to know about children's home situations; 
(f) the LEA should be aware of what happens in the classrooms by doing regular visits; 
(g) Native and non-Native staff need to communicate effectively - Native staff must
have a liaison person to represent them in the school;
(h) principal has authority over teachers, social counsellor and tutor escorts;
(i) classroom teachers are responsible for teacher's assistants;
(j) the LEA should discuss education coordinator's working conditions and with the assistance of the auditor, provide an acceptable package for the position;
(k) the high turnover rate of local staff should be addressed by the band office and the office should arrange for the members of the local staff to obtain help when they have problems;
(l) the school should regularly issue newsletters to up date the community on school matters.

CONTAMINATION OF SCHOOL YARD

Present situation: For the past 8 years, the school grounds have been contaminated by oil which leaked from a tank installed on the school grounds. The band council refused to open the school in the first week of September as planned. The school opened in mid-October, 1993 and teachers and students held classes in the band office and the three churches in the community. The school moved into the proper building in November. There were no outdoor recesses until January, 1994.

Students and teachers encountered immense difficulties in doing school work. The situation was very frustrating to both staff and students as the band office and churches, where they held classes, were inappropriate for effective school work. Spring is at the corner and the situation in the fall may repeat itself. Teachers would not want to go back to teach in the churches.

Recommendations: One of the following may happen if the clean-up starts in the spring:
(a) students would be allowed to remain in school during the period of the clean-up but there might be no outdoor recess for them.
(b) the school will close for the period and teachers would remain in the school during school hours to do their preparation;
(c) school will close and teachers would work at home;
(d) students would be separated as follows: grade 5-8 will remain in the school; grade 4 in the band office; and grade 1,2,&3 at the learning centre;
(e) cultural program during the period - students would learn cultural activities outside the school.

SCHOOL FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, UTILITIES AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Present situation: There are no playground equipment in the school. Students become bored during recess time and they go beyond school grounds looking for playthings. Kindergarten students' presence in the main school building poses problems for them in the hall-
way. There are no washrooms and fire alarms in the portables. There are no computers and printers in the school that are working and students do not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with computers. The school bus does not operate effectively.

**Recommendations:** (a) the entire school yard should be fenced during the summer;
(b) the school yard needs landscaping - there is the need to plant grass in front of the school (if possible);
(c) kindergarten students should have their own classrooms equipped with a fire alarm and washroom - kindergarten would move to the learning centre in September, 1994;
(d) the portables that house grade 4-6 should have their own washrooms and fire alarms;
(e) the band council should provide a hockey rink with lights for students to play during winter;
(f) the school as a whole needs maintenance - fix new doors and repair/change damaged locks;
(g) the band should provide classrooms with carpets;
(h) school should make attempts to lower hydro costs;
(i) LEA should investigate the luxury of having phones in every classroom and cut down phone costs;
(j) the school needs a room for high cost students - high cost and special education would occupy the present kindergarten classroom if kindergarten moves to the learning centre in September, 1994.
(k) the school bus should be repaired and driver properly trained for its operation and maintenance;
(l) Windigo would send teachers’ rent money directly to the school; coordinator and principal would be signatories to the rent account; staff would use rent money to maintain the teacherages;
(m) band office should allocate petty cash for the school for minor purchases.

**EXTRA CURRICULA ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

**Present situation:** Students do not have any methods by which to solve their problems. There are not many activities for students to engage in after school. Parents and teachers do not work together to provide extra curricula activities for students.

**Recommendations:** (a) school to train peer counsellors who would involve boys and girls in problem solving - students should have sessions where they would share problems with peers;
(b) school should have a list of students with problems;
(c) whoever might be using the gym on a day that would deprive the school from
using it must inform the school staff at least one full day prior to the day the gym would
not be available for the use of the school, i.e. the school should be notified of dates
for court proceedings, workshops, and meetings;
(d) there will be activities for students in the gym immediately after schoo every
Tuesday and Thursday and volunteer teachers would supervise the students;
(e) parents should assist in supervising students during extra curricular activities;
(f) members of the community would organize Sunday school for the students;
(g) there should be regular open house activities to enable community people to
gain access to the school;
(h) the school would announce open house activities on the radio and arrange
appointments with parents by telephone contact or personal visits;
(i) there will be a field day for the school held in June - field day should seek the
input of parents;
(j) the school would hold a family night by the end of March - staff would plan
activities to integrate parents into the school;
(k) teachers may arrange for periodic field trips with their students;
(l) staff should set boundaries for students during extra curricula activities;
(m) the school should encourage parents to participate in extra-curricular activities
by sending sign-up sheets to parents at home;
(n) school should have adequate communication with parents and should
effectively communicate with them about events in the school - write note to
parents, phone, or visit to invite them;
(o) there should be a janitor specifically employed to take care of the gym.

CONCLUSIONS

These are the first workshops of their kind that have ever been done by the school in
collaboration with the LEA, community members, and Windigo personnel. Participants have
felt that the workshops are important first steps toward the improvement of the school. Once
we have recognized the shortcomings in our school system and have understood the problems
of schooling for the children of this community, it is possible that we could plan for effective
provision of education for the students.

The results of these workshops would not remain on the shelves. The staff and LEA are
committed to put findings into action. In fact, to date, many of the suggestions have been put
into effect. For example, the following have been implemented and have taken root:
(1) senior and junior kindergarten have their classes separately;
(2) a weekly award system for "student of the week", "parent of the week" and
"best attendance of the month" are being implemented;
(3) the school has been inviting LEA and community members to come to the
school weekly to distribute awards;
(4) parents whose children are regular and hard-working at school are invited to
receive "parent of the week" award;
(5) the school is using a "house system" to effectively motivate students;
(6) extra curricula activities for students take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays;
(7) LEA has organized regular Sunday school for students;
(8) the economic planning office of the band has started repair work around the teacherages;
(9) fuel supplies to the school are regular;
(10) an open house and family night have been scheduled for March 30;
(11) the LEA has revised the education coordinator’s working conditions and salary;
(12) the LEA has employed at least one teacher’s assistant since the workshops.

Apart from identifying problems, recommending solutions, and putting some of the solutions into action, the workshops had certain advantages:

(1) the workshops created a situation where people felt comfortable and free to speak about the shortcomings of the school;
(2) they acted as collective educational activities which might help participants to further examine their interpretations of issues concerning the school;
(3) they increased the understanding of issues concerning the school and cultivated a preparedness for the participants to assume fuller responsibility and commit themselves to solving problems;
(4) they built a sense of trust, support, and solidarity among participants who shared the same problems but might not know it until they talked to each other;
(5) the workshops used the labour of all the people in the school system efficiently by assigning particular topics to small groups of people for discussion; and,
(6) they were good ways of maintaining communication among non-Native staff, local staff, support staff, the LEA, Windigo personnel, and people of the community who are separated in their day-to-day work or by their time commitments or even by their ideological orientation.
Appendix E

Letters of Consent
Appendix F

Scope of Issues

Appendix F lists themes (in alphabetical order) that came up during the entire study to illustrate the extent of reflection community people gave to the issue of schooling. Although many elements such as discipline and manners of students, or traditional education and customs and values are interrelated, we have included all of them as issues provided the issue was mentioned or specified by more than one person.

Absenteeism of students
Accountability of education personnel
Alcohol - abuse in the community
Attitudes towards education
Computers
Communication between school and community
Community Centre
Community involvement in education
Contamination of school grounds
Control of Education
Curriculum change
Customs and values
Discipline
Economic Development
Education Policy
Education of non-Native Teachers
Equipment
Extra-curricular activities
Family relationships - single parents
Health
High School dropout
Homework of students
Going out for secondary school
Jobs for school leavers
Local Education Authority
Maintenance
Manners of students
Motivation of students
Native Language
Parental involvement in schooling
Parenting
Priority setting for education
Purpose of education
Recreational activities
School building
Teachers' assistants
Teacher turnover
Traditional Education
Training of local staff
Training facilities in the community
Transportation of students
Appendix G

Document Summary Form

Location: Sioux Lookout, Ontario
Document: 1
Date picked up: August 31, 1993

Name of description of document: Windigo Education Authority Policy Manual

Event with which document is associated: Titotay Memorial School policy

Significance or importance of document:
Provides all information about school governance.
Lays down policy for the school system.
Give schedules for all school events for the year.

Brief summary of contents:
History of local control of education.
Profile of Windigo Education Authority Schools.
Outline of structure and purpose of new system of band management and control of education.
Philosophy of education for Windigo schools.
Responsibilities and duties of Chief and Council, Local Education Authority, principal, teachers, and support staff.

A description of relationships between Windigo Education Authority and the Cat Lake Local Education Authority (who does what, gives working philosophy e.g. "we set goals and objectives for our schools; we educate the Windigo Executive Council on political concerns and issues, and update the Chief, Band Council and community on our activities and progress; we assist the various communities in locating and hiring teachers; we arrange contracts for teachers; we supervise and evaluate teachers and pay their salaries; and we assist in the professional development of teachers").

Additional teaching services.
Principal's monthly checklist.
Outline of procedures on leaves and disciplinary action.
Samples of Schedule forms for all school activities and events.

(It seems the policy is revised every other year.)
Table 8 shows the initials and codes of all the respondents that took part in this study. The initials do not represent the real names of respondents. The first two digits signify the respondent’s interview number and the last two digits signify the question number. Each respondent’s code comes after a respondent’s quotation. For example, where E0102 comes after a quotation, it means the respondent is an elder, first interviewee overall, and a response to the second question for elders; T1111 means the respondent is a teacher, the eleventh interviewee overall, and a response to the eleventh question for teachers; B1405 means the respondent is a band worker, fourteenth interviewee overall and response to the fifth question for band workers; C4119 means the respondent is a community person, the forty-first interviewee overall and a response to the nineteenth question for community people; and S5805 means the respondent is a student, fifty-eighth interviewee overall and the response to the fifth question for students.