ARTICLES

NOT ESSENTIAL TO TEACHING AND RESEARCH: THE BUCHANS COMMUNITY LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

Under the cloak of fiscal restraint, Canadian universities have sunk daggers into their community-based adult education programs. Most confine their domestic outreach activities to the sale of learning as a packaged commodity. New entrants to the field of adult education are without institutional models that demonstrate appropriate and creative responses for non-instrumental ends. This article documents non-formal educational strategies designed by a university outreach department working with a rural community in response to economic collapse. the innovative learning process animated community dialogue and the recovery of community capacity. the community survives, defying unfavorable economic odds, but the outreach department has been disbanded. Given that other communities confront similar challenges in sustainable development, this paper queries the university's social responsibility in discontinuing effective nonformal educational activities.

Résumé

Sous le couvert de l'austérité fiscale, les universités canadiennes ont sabré dans leurs programmes d'éducation communautaire. La plupart des universités se bornent aujourd'hui à vendre sur le marché des programmes de cours pré-emballés. Les nouveaux venus à l'éducation des adultes sont privés de modèle institutionnel qui reflète une vision créatrice des responsabilités non utilitaristes de l'université. Cet article recense les stratégies mises sur pied par un département d'éducation communautaire en milieu rural, dans le contexte de l'effondrement économique généralisé. Une fois le processus novateur engagé, le dialogue se raviva, et la capacité d'intervention fut rétablie au sein la communauté. Malgré une situation économique précaire, la communauté se maintient, mais le département d'éducation communautaire quant à lui fut démantelé. Compte tenu des difficultés auxquelles se confrontent leurs milieux, il y a lieu de s'inquiéter du désengagement des universités face aux activités éducatives non-formelles.

This paper is a commentary on the contemporary practice of adult education in Canadian universities. The commentary offers a qualitative case study of community learning with form, ideology and execution distinctly unlike an instrumentalist notion of adult education. The study focused on a period in the history of one rural Canadian community that responded to economic annihilation by creating an alternative future. The paper has two purposes: first, to challenge the restricted conception of adult education perpetuated by market-driven formal adult education of late 20th-century institutional practice (Selman, 1985; Mezirow, 1990; Merriam & Cunningham, 1989); and second, to contest the practice of educational agencies who

rhetorically speak of building the learning society but who legitimate only formal education as a model of learning by which to accomplish that (Taylor, Rockhill & Fieldhouse, 1985).

Origins of the Study

Having a longtime association with Memorial University of Newfoundland's Extension Service, including six years as its Director, I have known a number of innovations in community-based adult education or learning *of* the community (Brookfield, 1983; 1986). One was the meshing of small-format media and community learning for purposes of community development and citizenship, an approach which was a staple of the Extension Service for 30 years. My curiosity was provoked because I had observed the catalytic effects that such learning had on energy, growth, and action of communities and individuals. As Director, I had frequent opportunity to note those outcomes. As scholar, I wanted to understand considerably more about the process underlying the outcomes and how that process was experienced by participants.

My quest, then, was for interpretation in context (Cronback, 1982). Wanting to illuminate naturalistic, complex, dynamically rich phenomena, I selected qualitative case study as a methodological umbrella (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: Stake in Madaus, 1983; Yin, 1989; Boglan & Biklin, 1982; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: and Merriam, 1988).) Applying conditions for bounding a case study, I selected a particular collaboration in learning, citizenship and development between the Memorial University of Newfoundland Extension Service and a rural community (Buchans, Newfoundland) in which media had been employed to good effect. My study began five years after the collaboration had concluded.

The resulting research (Harris, 1992) was satisfying on most counts. Residents of Buchans gave graciously of their time for long and sometimes intense interviews. The analysis drew on frameworks in communication (Habermas, 1981; 1989; Williams, 1974; Groombridge, 1972) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970a, 1970b, 1985), two areas of scholarship strikingly analogous in ideology and philosophy but falling short of integration in the disciplinary frames in which I encountered them. The conclusion points to collective and indigenous meaning-making (powerfully accomplished via local media) as vital in locating and releasing the local capacity for community building - and in the case being studied, the creation of a new economic future.

Reframing the Original Case in a New Context

Subsequently, I have come to view the Buchans Community Learning Process of value as an *intrinsic* case study for reasons different from my original *instrumental* interest (Stake, 1994). First, such practice no longer occurs in Canada. Effectively, with the closure of Memorial University's Extension Service in 1991, community-based learning for citizenship and development supported by Canadian universities virtually ceased to exist. Now more than ever, with the current emphasis on market-driven adult education, there is a proclivity among professionals in education to behave as if the task of building a learning society is fully addressed by increasing access to formal education. The parameters of adult education are therefore being

drawn by elitist interests and institutional narrowness rather than by educational vision about creative preparation for the challenges of citizenship and development in the new century.

The second reason for its intrinsic value is that in 1996, Buchans was a community considered to be a model for others in Newfoundland facing analogous circumstances in economic adjustment. Seven years ago when I first selected Buchans as a research site, as a case worthy of investigation in terms of renewal, my choice provoked some skepticism. Latterly, Buchans is commonly accepted as a referent for successful community development for many other communities (Economic Recovery Commission, 1995) and has received unprecedented attention from many quarters as an entire province of communities searches for renewal. Since the passage of time and the nature of events have provided a new context for the original case study, this paper reviews and recontextualizes (Tesch, 1990) the original interpretation.

Case Report of Buchans Community Learning Process

Extension Service, Memorial University of Newfoundland

The educational institution that collaborated to animate the learning process in Buchans was Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), the only university in Canada's most easterly and least developed province. The university was established in 1959 by the flamboyant Premier Smallwood, whose quest was for "a small university with a big extension service" (Gwyn, 1972, p. 182). His words speak more of political shrewdness than educational vision, as Smallwood had a largely rural constituency resident in coves, bays and hamlets around the province's coastline but the new university was to be established in the largely inaccessible capital city on the eastern edge of the province (Johnson, 1990). Nonetheless, in the 1980s, Memorial University was a mid-sized university with a vigorous and diverse outreach function consisting of three divisions/departments. These were: the Extension Service (95 staff); the Division of Part-time Credit Studies (15 staff); and the Department of Educational Television (25 staff).

Memorial University is well known in Canada and internationally for its *pioneering* work in distance delivery of credit courses through the last two divisions. The first of the three, Extension Service, had an allied but distinctly different purpose. Its mandate was community-based learning in the service of citizenship and development, a mandate addressed by designing and experimenting with original approaches to community learning. The work of the Service, with its predominant focus on non-elites, process rather than product, citizenship and community development before personal development, and interdisciplinary approaches to learning, was unlike other university outreach departments. Indeed, Extension hosted a steady stream of enterprising international visitors who wanted to know more about Extension's work and who were less deterred by the province's geographic marginality than were colleagues in Canada.

Marginality had its advantages and Extension's history was marked by creativity and innovation. That Extension Service recruited individuals with a proclivity to such

activity might be one explanation, although another is that where there are no inviolate traditions and in the absence of prescriptive models, innovation and creativity can flourish. Certainly, the organization fashioned by a medley of artists, community developers, program designers, film makers, and academics was not a replica of any other. The mission of Extension Service was to create educational support for a rural people among whom were high rates of illiteracy (44% according to Calami, 1987) and many of whom would never be formal students of the University.

I came to characterize the Extension Service as being marked by three strategies and one belief. The strategies were: (1) to engage with rural people where they lived and worked, that is, in their small coastal settlements; (2) to avoid the language and conventions of schooling, associated with past failure or inadequacy for many; and (3) to make the practical, lived experience and problems facing rural communities serve as the "curriculum" for the department's collaboration with rural residents. The belief was that the socially constructed illiteracy of rural residents did not preclude Gramscian good sense (1971), intelligence or capacity to learn. The Service favored engagement with problems holding potential to give the problem solvers/learners greater confidence in their ability to act collectively and autonomously, to value their own knowing, and to be framed as public issues legitimately deserving attention from elected government representatives.

The activities of Extension Service were varied. Non-credit courses in St. John's were taught by the University's faculty and urban professionals; when necessary, those courses met national standards. Across the island of Newfoundland and in Labrador, Extension maintained a network of field offices charged with the task of encouraging local development. In-house, the activities in this mode were known generically as *community development*, even when the use of *popular education* (Vio Grossi, 1981; Cadena, 1984; Osorio, 1988), *critical pedagogy* (Freire, 1985), *empowerment*, *education for social change* and *participatory action research* (Fals Borda, 1985; 1987) might have provided more finely tuned specification.

Extension also had considerable engagement with visual and performing arts, operating the province's major art gallery, sponsoring a program of courses and workshops by practicing artists (maintaining at different times studios for photography, dance, print making, drawing and pottery), offering space, administrative support, and a hospitable meeting place for fledgling artists. The comedy group CODCO, for example, often acknowledged Extension's support. Organization for the internationally renowned Sound Symposium, which brings international sound artists to Newfoundland, began modestly in an Extension office. Additionally, Extension maintained a media unit with facilities for 16 mm film, animation, video, television narrowcasting and photography; this unit occasionally won national awards for its productions but did not frame its purpose exclusively in terms of media products. Extension's other component was a publishing arm, chiefly occupied with producing a magazine (*Decks Awash*) that reflected rural Newfoundland to its residents. The incorporation of media and the arts with nonformal learning was central to Extension's view of education as fundamentally cultural work (Freire, 1970b). At its best, the Extension Service was a laboratory in

which these separate elements mixed to create potent, unique forms of critical practice for nonformal learning.

Extension suffered opposing views on the value of its activities. One camp (loosely) the academic/educational one, took the stance that Extension did not produce enough results - things that could be counted - registrations, instructors, courses taught and tuition collected. The other camp, usually elected government members, argued the opposite - Extension produced too many results - citizens who had opinions and expected their political representatives to attend to them. The latter group was more likely to label Extension field activities as rabble-rousing than creative tension between participatory democracy and representative democracy. To be sure, Extension Service also enjoyed unwavering support from many senior and junior academics as well as a goodly number of senior civil servants, and the dissenters were in the minority.

For many years the international development community knew MUN Extension Service for its 1960s work with the National Film Board (NFB), a collaboration which was an integral part of the NFB's Challenge for Change program, particularly on Fogo Island, Newfoundland. There, the partners pioneered the use of film as a tool to foster dialogue and action among residents of 11 tiny communities of an island region that faced a government program of resettlement into larger "growth centers" in the late 1960s. The 22 films about life on Fogo Island, screened repeatedly in small, local community gatherings over some months, awakened a sense of commonality and capacity for self-reliance among residents and culminated in an effort that drew on local resources to re-establish the economic viability and social vitality of their island location. An Extension Service field worker was key in the novel approach to community-wide learning and problem-solving developed there (Harris, 1972; Williamson, 1991; Quarry, 1994).

In the development literature, the Fogo Process in Communication, as the strategy was known, became a veritable icon and was subsequently adapted in India, Thailand, Nepal, Zanzibar in Tanzania, Pakistan, Alaska and Mississippi in the United States, and the Northwest Territories and Arctic of Canada, (Lewis, 1977; Bordenave, 1977; Kennedy, 1984; Belbase, 1987; Moore, 1987; Williamson, 1991; Quarry, 1994). However, the Canadian adult education literature gave the Fogo Process and allied activities in that vein scant attention. Nonetheless, Extension Service had continued to explore media-supported learning of communities, with attention to new communication technologies as they emerged, particularly low-format video, meshing them with useful perspectives from popular education, participatory action research, and critical pedagogy. This department was the organizational home for the field worker who took the first steps in activating the Buchans Community Learning Process.

Buchans, Newfoundland: 45 Miles From Nowhere

Until recently, Newfoundland was primarily known for its small-boat fish-based economy pursued from hundreds of hamlets around its 5,000-mile coast. Buchans, however, is an mining community set on the high plains of Newfoundland's interior.

Rather than the sea, wind so strong at times that one could lean on it was the climatic element most relevant to this community of 2,000 people. The town-site was carved out of wilderness by the American Smelting and Refining Company (Newfoundland Division) in the 1920s as an operational base from which to extract the minerals in two large high-grade ore bodies in the area.

American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) had a venerable history. As early as 1918, its head office in New York reported a gross annual income of $390-million (Neary, 1981). From 1927 on, ASARCO maintained its company-owned and company-operated town - Buchans - as one of the expenses necessary for its lucrative mining enterprises in Newfoundland. Remote, Buchans might be; but for more than 50 years, it produced satisfactory returns for ASARCO.

The social history of Buchans, then, encompasses three generations of people. Its original labor force came to the Buchans work-camp from coastal settings, attracted by year-round and waged employment, virtually unknown in Newfoundland fishing communities. All were "outport" men. Many learned new skills relevant to mining and smelting activities, were provided with low-rent housing as long as their work record and general conduct were acceptable to ASARCO management and introduced to amenities unknown in most rural Newfoundland communities. Private housing was not permitted and private enterprise discouraged. For many years Buchans was literally a closed, company-run town, accessible only by the company's private railway. Even after a public road was built, the town still was isolated by geography, and socially stratified internally by type of employment (the status of staff, labor or management easily read by the form and location of housing built and assigned by the Company).

In 1984, in the aftermath of falling metal prices on the global market, ASARCO ceased its operations in Buchans. All of the general labor force were without jobs; significantly, because of age, limited skills or skills only useful in highly specialized mining and smelting operations of Buchans, many were without job prospects. The Company so pervaded and dominated every aspect of life in Buchans that there had not been any independent economic diversification over the years of its tenure. As a result, a large portion of Buchans residents faced abandoning the only community they had ever known to relocate, most likely outside the province, in order to pursue other employment.

Many residents prized sufficiently the camaraderie and quality of life that had been created in Buchans to linger and consider whether as former miners, mill workers and general laborers they could create or stimulate economic and employment alternatives that would keep the community alive. For some people that pause has lengthened into 12 years of determined action to beat the odds against community-initiated economic renewal in a remote location in an already economically depressed province.

Laying the Foundation for Collaboration

An Extension Service field worker had responsibility for providing services of his department to the communities of central Newfoundland. To know if and how

Extension might be helpful, Dennis (pseudonym has been used here and for others mentioned in this manuscript) was required to have considerable familiarity with the communities themselves, a daunting task as there were more than 50 in the region. However, in October of 1984, he decided that the two-and-a-half hour drive to Buchans from his office base was overdue. His decision was prompted by local media reports that the town of 2,000 was suffering the calamitous aftermath of losing its single employer, ASARCO. As a result, unemployment was rife and the community's future dismal.

Without appointments, Dennis spent two days in Buchans talking, meeting, listening, questioning, observing, learning, and absorbing impressions. He made brief stops at points around town - the post office, the town council offices, ASARCO offices, the local development office, the hospital, the high schools, the library, federal employment office, and the local craft store, introducing himself to those who had time for a brief conversation. Then, he reversed his tracks and drove the two-and-a-half hours to his regional base, with plenty of time for thought.

The next time Dennis visited Buchans, he did so with more intent. He went back to speak with those people who had seemed receptive to action with respect to the town's circumstances and/or how his department might help. He had more specific conversations and continued to make contacts. He had a lengthy conversation with the local coordinator of the Red Indian Lake Development Association but, not surprisingly, no long-range plans were made at that time.

Leaving Buchans after the second visit, Dennis consoled himself that if nothing more substantial developed, he had at least set up a couple of computer and life skills courses. Additionally, he thought something might come of the preliminary discussions about an intra-community dialogue focused on the mine's demise by adoption of a community learning process that used the Service's portable television transmitter to create *ad hoc*, local television. Dennis had no direct experience with this form of technology (narrowcasting) and the learning process of which it was a part, but he had listened carefully to Extension Service colleagues speak of their experiences using narrowcasting in other communities. Teachers in Buchans had mentioned a school-based youth group saddened by the disintegration of their community who were exploring productive ways to communicate this. Possibly their keenness could withstand the amount of work demanded by a community transmitter project. Dennis expected to call on his more experienced colleagues for help.

These early trips laid the groundwork for an intensive collaboration between the Extension Service and the community of Buchans in creating media-assisted community learning and development. Although neither Dennis nor community members had any prior experience with such an endeavor, the Buchans Town Council undertook to convene a Buchans Community Television Planning and Coordinating Committee. Tentatively at first, then more vigorously, this "coordinating" committee was the means by which the local residents began an ongoing dialogue about the community's past, present and potential future which eventually encompassed most of the residents of the town. Nominally, the

discussions occurred in the context of planning an intensive 24 hours of local television about the community's future, which would be transmitted to home television sets in that community as a local initiative in *ad hoc* local television referred to Buchans Community Television (BCTV).

The collaboration was not always smooth. At one point, the manager of Extension Service's field services, based in the campus office, became concerned that the effort in Buchans focused too narrowly on the three-day transmitter event at the expense of ongoing dialogue in the community. He and a colleague made a special trip to Buchans to settle the matter. Memories of that meeting are not sweet. In the words of one of the community members:

> It upset us that these two fellows could come in here from St. John's and make a decision just based on bits of information. In their mind, you could see "This place is dead. Why are we [Extension] wasting our time and money here?" So we debated (Rex and myself) whether to take the time to waste on these fellows or just tell them to butt out. But we said "what the hell," locked the door [to talk to them], figured it would only take a half hour and it'd be all over. (Clayton)

Three important things happened in the subsequent encounter. First, Buchans representatives began to hone their skills in briefing outsiders about the economic quagmire Buchans faced and in enumerating the various initiatives of concerned groups and individuals in the community. Second, more members of Extension's staff witnessed the attachment residents felt for this community "forty-five miles from nowhere" and the tenacity of its residents in working with limited resources, few models and little encouragement. Third, ideas began to form about productive ways to address the town's economic crisis through focused and inwardly directed dialogue that the community transmitter could facilitate.

From there, planning between Extension Service and the Buchans Community Television Planning and Coordinating Committee intensified, with some subtle but significant shifts. No one had any reason to doubt that emphasis was on community learning process facilitated by a particular media application, and not on a media event.

Community Learning as Cultural Circles

Putting boundaries around nonformal learning has always been problematic, inclining many educators and many institutions to eschew it altogether. Case study—a methodology for studying a phenomenon not distinct from its context—also requires the establishment of boundaries. The distinct geographical borders of Buchans allowed a straightforward delineation of the population of this case. The duration was more problematic as Extension Service staff worked with the community of Buchans from 1985 to 1991; however, to "bind" the time frame for the case, I focused on events leading up to and including the three-day Buchans Community Television stage, a seven-month period beginning with the previously mentioned first visit of Dennis as the Extension Service field worker.

As indicated, the first phase of this period was largely a process whereby educators and citizen-learners collaborated in unveiling local reality and in exploring, probing, clarifying and articulating needs. Once there was consensus on attempting a community learning process in which community narrowcast television was to be featured, three groups were central to the resultant dynamics. Nothing frames those activities quite so as well as Freire's concept of the cultural circle (Freire, 1970a, p. 113).

First Cultural Circle: Youth Group

Dennis had learned of the Buchans Action Youth Group in his initial visit. With their teachers, this group had hoped to find resources for a modest project in which they learned basic video production skills. One of their teachers knew of another community where Extension Service had experimented with a 10-watt mobile transmitter capable of sending a television signal a mile or two. In that community, the short-term "program" sent by the transmitter had been made by community residents with simple low-format video equipment and was about ordinary community life. He was vague on the details of the process, but "showing Buchans to Buchans" was a phrase used frequently in subsequent discussions.

The visits Dennis made to Buchans were timely for the Youth Group. He passed on information about the Service's community transmitter experiments elsewhere gleaned from his colleagues. He also knew Extension Service had a longtime practice, dating back to Fogo Island in the 1960s, of using media in learning for development and that Extension's media staff could and did train community groups in basic media skills for that purpose. Whether he could access this resource for the Buchans Action Youth Group was not assured, but his discussions at the school helped shape their interest in video production training.

The Action Youth Group was to become the nucleus for a more ambitious community-wide effort as the original idea gathered attention from other sectors of the community and brought Extension Service on board as a facilitator. Youth began by learning technical skills about video production in several intensive workshops with Extension staff over a period of months. Extension staff would spend some days in Buchans, provide equipment, set goals to be reached before their next visit and review progress when they returned. Extension staff used their experiences from other communities to help the Action Youth Group explore ways to use their new technical skills in the context of helping Buchans see and learn about itself. Still, emergent design was the operational principle as the learning effort in Buchans grew, and was shaped by, circumstances specific to Buchans. Culminating in 24 hours of live and prepackaged television narrowcast by a community transmitter to all home televisions sets in Buchans, the activities of the Youth Group touched the entire community.

The energy and availability of the Youth Group was vital as they became the local technical team who undertook the hundreds of hours in preparation necessary for the three-day BCTV. They produced more than 60 hours of edited videotaped material about Buchans. To do so, they went throughout the community in work

teams of three and four people for some months, gathering footage, generating interest as they proceeded, and stirring discussions about Buchans among themselves, in their classes, with their parents and with those groups and members of the community who were featured in their programs. Nominally preparing for a media event later, in the process, they were already engaging themselves and others in discussions of substance. In the words of one of them:

> BCTV brought about a maturity [for youth] because it opened our eyes to what was going on. Before it was just go out and have a good time....you're just a student. BCTV brought about a maturity in the students because we were getting involved.... Probably the adults didn't even notice that we had any concerns or that we were involved in what was going on. They probably thought we just turned a blind eye to everything. They soon found out that we were involved, that we were concerned and that we wanted to try and do something about it. (Emma)

Second Cultural Circle: BCTV Planning & Coordinating Committee

An umbrella group for the project, the Buchans Community Television (BCTV) Planning and Coordinating Committee, was the second key group. The founding members were youth representatives involved in the video training and media project and adult members of the community prepared to help them, but before long, this committee's composition reflected most of the town's organizations and sectors. Committee members saw their mandate in practical, albeit somewhat open-ended, terms: to organize community resources to put BCTV on the air. In the course of thinking about the practical tasks this would entail, they met frequently, sometimes with Extension staff, many times on their own.

Soon their discussions were more about what balance and kind of material would give an authentic and useful portrayal of Buchans with respect to the current situation than operational specifics such as possible sites for setting up the transmitter. Individual Committee members found themselves responsible for major programming streams such as entertainment, news, history and panels to provide an overview of economic exploration to date, as these were identified as likely to contribute to the overall purpose of BCTV. Others could identify people in their community who held unique perspectives on Buchans. Sometimes the only sure way to persuade these people to appear before a video camera was for a Committee member to go with a crew and act as the interviewer.

Since no one had experience with this kind of project, the Committee struggled together to be creative in using this opportunity to help their community. To do so, they had to explore present circumstances, above all, the uncertainty of the community's economic future; take stock of resources; recover their history; explore their commonality; gauge nostalgia against readiness to act; and assess their own commitment. Operational aspects of the media project (BCTV) had to wait, be interrupted or be interwoven with discussions about Buchans as a community.

When I interviewed Committee members five years later, they had sharp memories of the intensity and frequency of these meetings.

First we had meetings weekly, then it was meetings daily. If it wasn't the whole group, it was sub-groups.... I can't say we knew exactly what we were doing at the beginning...but as we went on and got more into it...we thought, "Gee we can really use this thing, probably more seriously than when we set out". (Ruby)

We would just be trying to get things organized, sorted out and then we'd break off because we got into discussions of what Buchans is, and what we're trying to do here. We'd talk about what's happening to the community, what the community is like, how it can be improved, those kind of things. (Janet)

The whole thing had to be re-developed through these...sessions with Leslie [Extension field worker] ...he was trying to get us to put into words why we just didn't pack up and leave, why it was important to us to keep this town going, why we were sacrificing for this. He taught us to analyze our decisions and put reasons behind what we were doing, gave us an ability to argue better with ourselves, convince ourselves a little better what we were doing and to tell other people what we were trying to do. (Clayton)

In Leslie's [Extension field worker] meetings with the committee over the next three months, every piece of that agenda and every piece of the programs we had planned to have on were questioned. It wasn't because he didn't believe it was important but because he felt that we had to know why we were doing these types of programs. (Gerald)

The members of the BCTV Planning and Coordinating Committee were learning together in the process of planning and designing another learning event, 24 hours of programming about the future of Buchans scheduled for three consecutive days in May and intended for the community at large.

Third Cultural Circle: Community at Large

The third and largest group central to the learning in Buchans was the community as a whole, to whom BCTV was directed. The learning sites were the living rooms which held television sets in the 350 or so homes of Buchans. I queried what portion of the community watched. Answers were unanimous and swift.

We watched it all, to tell the truth. (Dora)

I can remember doing a poll "What channel do you have on your TV?" It was a hundred percent. (Ruby)

When that thing was on for three days, you could go around this town and not see anyone. There wasn't a soul that wasn't watching it. (Aubrey)

There was one guy I remember in particular. He used to make sure he had his supper eaten, and he'd shave and put on a clean shirt and tie. He'd sit down in his easy chair with his pack of cigarettes and his lighter and he'd stay there until the thing was over that night. (Janet)

On the first day of the transmission, no one knew what to expect and motives for watching locally produced television were mixed. Inevitably, idle curiosity and the

novelty of having locally produced television drew some people to "tune in." But by the time the temporary channel flickered into life late one afternoon in May 1985, most households in Buchans had some family member already involved. Some viewers were parents eager to see their children. Others were pre-recorded on videotape either as individuals with particular perspectives on Buchans and its history or as leaders of various community organizations. People who had taken on the responsibility of inquiring into one or another economic venture appeared on key panels which would report progress (or lack thereof). Some individuals were invited to entertain and perform live during the television transmission.

From the first hours of BCTV, residents were encouraged to call by telephone to the live narrowcast simply to establish satisfactory signal reception. Later, residents were invited to telephone with questions and comments after each of three major panels reporting on various economic development ventures. Being residents of the community which had taken charge of the technical aspects of pre-production and live transmission, who planned all the content, and who were the subject of all the program transformed the role of those who watched at home during transmission from passive viewing to that of engaged participation. The audience and the program's subject were one and the same, and the program was both interactive and cumulative.

The community's engagement in learning was not limited to private viewing or to the transmission period itself. There was a web of dialogues within the community, some private and smaller (the family unit, for example), others public and bigger (the televised discussions, for example). Residents told me of inter-generational family discussions, casual chats over the fence, brief discussions in the grocery store, getting together with neighbors to watch the second and third nights' transmission, staying up after "sign-off" for beer and talk, and telephone conversations among friends during the day about issues aired on BCTV the night before. Some individuals slipped into the make-shift "studio" which had been established in an abandoned store. They were quiet and alert during live transmissions and usually in conversational knots when silence was not required.

Status Report: Buchans in 1996

Tracking learning in Buchans after this public event becomes difficult although some indicators are available. More residents participated in community organizations and community activities than had before. Discussions were more informed. A core group of residents renewed their efforts to act on behalf of the community in researching economic options and the means to support the initial phases of these. They established the Buchans Community Development Corporation, selling shares to community members and gaining seed financing from the federal government. They were indefatigable, absorbing setbacks and failures until three modest new enterprises were established, generating enough employment to provide a livelihood for most of the town's families. For several years, this core group continued to meet regularly with Extension Service staff to take stock of what had been done, plan lobbying efforts, write funding proposals, to brainstorm ideas, to compare impressions, to plan approaches to government officials, to locate

information and ready themselves for the next set of tasks. In 1990, when I conducted the original case study, they were cautiously optimistic; economies everywhere were in flux but their community was holding its own.

Community Learning: View From Inside Buchans

When I selected Buchans as a setting for my case study of community learning, I selected a community where I judged that important and significant learning had happened five years earlier. Between that time and the date of my case study, the community had been able to re-create its own economic feasibility and was still reasonably intact. A portion of former residents had moved on but people who remained, people who had no previous sense of themselves as a self-reliant community, had built something - first a dream, then a plan, and finally a economic infrastructure - sufficient to keep the town of Buchans alive. They took great pride in the last and had intriguing perspectives on links between the learning accomplished through BCTV and the current viability of Buchans in my interviews.

In analysis of data from these interviews, I found the degree of unanimity among community respondents in identifying and naming central dynamics was striking. A summary of their reflection clustered under six headings arising from the emic meanings held by respondents follows. I illustrate the strength and similarity of their reflections by liberal use of direct quotations.

Revitalization of Community Spirit

Residents were unequivocal on one point. The process, call it BCTV or the Buchans Community Learning Process, left them revitalized and re-energized.

> It boosted up the spirit of this community. (Emma)

> It was definitely positive...and it gave me some heart that we could go on. (Gordon)

> The community most definitely felt better about itself after. We got that through phone calls that came in through the whole project itself. All of the community livened up. People who would not normally have a conversation with me would stop their grocery cart in the store and talk to me about the community. (Mildred)

> It made people feel good about themselves again. The television thing, they saw themselves....it boosted morale. (Ralph)

Community Pride and Cohesion

Interwoven with revitalization was a sense of pride and cohesion in the community.

> I don't know any other way we could have joined the community together as a total community. (Janet)

> I wouldn't have believed that such unity could have been achieved and that there would be so much support. (Rosalind)

> It gave us a tie to the community, a feeling of involvement, pride in our community and pride in ourselves that we had even attempted to do something, so it helped to bring the community together. (Ruby)

> The mine had closed in '84, there wasn't that much happening. People were hurtin' really bad. I think some of the pride that they had in their community was starting to ebb. I think this project brought it right up again. (Clayton)

Community and Individual Confidence

Residents also had a clear-eyed view of the community's capacity, of their individual selves, of other individuals and of themselves collectively.

> You must understand that when we operated the mine, the only thing that most people thought they could do was mine ore. So the fact that somebody came and...showed us that we could do something other than shovel ore was quite astonishing. (Bruce)

> It was critically important that it was people from the place that were creating the pictures of the place on community television. It was local people, out of work local people. (Ralph)

> I came away from it with a sense that...we do as a community have a certain control....What is now doesn't have to be, that you can change things. (Rosalind)

Creating a Local, Horizontal and Common Data Base

Many residents highlighted the importance of shared information, valued because it was locally generated, created through a multi-point exchange, relevant and accessible to everyone.

> The people were communicating among themselves. They talked about the discussions that were going on with government and everything else. A nice bit of the program was the people themselves. (Margaret)

> [After the project] the community knew what was going on. When you talk to people in the store or in the club, they'd ask you informed questions about what was going on. Before that people were confused in what was going on or didn't know just what these committees or this particular one was trying to do. (Clayton)

> I learned something new about my community. I could look at it from a different perspective. Some of the things I had been exposed to before but I had never thought of them in anything more but a passing fleeting way until they were presented in the way they were presented [by the television program]. (Ruby)

Renewal of Social Contract Between Leaders and Residents

Community leaders recalled how they were affected.

> We suspected that there was support there for what we were doing but we never really knew....the television project confirmed that suspicion. (Rex)

> I think the more the community knew what was going on, the more they supported the (Action) committee and that was very important. [We knew that] just from conversation, talking, feeling but no scientific way....We got support from the community that probably lasted a couple of years. (Clayton)

These same leaders spoke with insight about how the renewal of the social contract between them as leaders and those who they were to represent translated into credibility and leverage *outside* the community.

> After this project [BCTV] was done, we knew, with certainty, that we were speaking for the community. It made us more sure of what we were doing. It gave us more energy to do what we were doing. The important thing was the ability to be able to speak with confidence and knowing that we had the support of the community. (Clayton)

> We would not have won the confidence of the politicians we were dealing with had they not known we were a unified, solidified community. I've made a lot of presentations to politicians. After the presentation they would say "When you start talking about Buchans your facial expression changes, you just begin to glow. (Rex)

They also mentioned the obligations which accompanied that sense of connection.

> They [community residents] conveyed a tremendous faith in us that we were doing the right thing. They [older workers] had their lives on hold and indeed their lives on the line, believing a bunch of youngsters like us....Knowing how much they depended on it, how much they believed in us made us push all that much harder....They stayed the course and waited and believed in us. They did that partially as a result of the community television project. We're all for one. I decided to stick it out then and I'm going to stick it out now....I felt more weight on my shoulders after it was over. (Rex)

Calling the Shots

This presentation of community learning has been recounted largely in terms of what community members, rather than Extension staff, did. This ordering is consistent with Extension's practice and with Freire's views of learning as authentic dialogue between leaders and people as equally knowing subjects (1970a). It stands to reason then that in Buchans, Extension Service staff were not regarded as teachers by the community but as contributors, collaborators and catalysts. Yet in Buchans, residents were active participants in a process unlike any they had experienced before, made extensive use of previously unexplored communication technologies and worked with a group of professionals from a university. I asked them who was really in control.

> The community owned this project. It was theirs.... They were the ones who were on this. It wasn't the University's. (Margaret)
>
> Extension Service provided a great service to reach out. They showed the people of the community how to go about it, but they can't go into the community and say, "You've got to do this." They gave us some kind of reference or outline or showed the people what they want to do, but the main thoughts of the community had to come out into the program, not the Extension Service. (Emma)
>
> The content was what we wanted it to be. The amount of information I had at the very beginning was very basic. As time went on, we [committee] got into it and we would say, we can really use this thing. We can use it in more ways then it was set out to use, more ways than ever MUN Extension thinks. We can go over and above the objectives. (Ruby)

A Case of Critical Education Practice

The central purpose of the case study has been to provide a grounded, context-specific example of university-supported community learning for citizenship and development. In this instance the learning design made creative use of small-format video and a low-powered television transmitter.

The origins of the use of media in community development clearly lie in the work on Fogo Island in the late 1960s, although the Buchans Community Learning Process had the advantage of Extension Service's 25 years of experimentation and practice with media and development that followed those novice days on Fogo Island. Video had been incorporated into Extension's media repertoire since the early 1970s. The increasingly simplified technology of video (portable light-weight video) had enabled staff to have first-hand knowledge of the circumstances when teaching community members to use the technology for their own ends is more effective than keeping the technology under the control of professionals. In the 1980s, as cable television continued its inexorable reach into remote Newfoundland, Extension explored the development possibilities in community-produced video programs transmitted to entire communities (and clusters of communities) either through a low-powered mobile television transmitter or the head end of the cable system of a specific community.

Buchans was one of a dozen or more such communities where Extension Service had fitted these technologies to a community development purpose (Callanan & Hann, 1992; Gilbert, 1993). Learners/community residents assumed the role of creative subjects in working with educators to unveil their own reality and to locate, release, validate and apply their own knowledge. Using the same media tools which had contributed to their marginalization and domination to reverse that process was the *sine quo non* of the Buchans learning process. The experiences and events of the Buchans Community Learning Process can easily be re-cast as critical pedagogy, participatory action research, popular education or participatory communication. While Freire (1970a, 1970b, 1985) and Habermas (1981) provide the mesh of critical theory and pedagogical grounding which illuminate the process (Harris, 1992), these last words are from a Buchans resident:

> All of a sudden, we didn't watch the six o'clock [network] news any more because we were the six o'clock news. It may seem a bit crazy now but that's what happened. People began to focus more on the inner workings of the town and they saw their neighbors being important. (Matthew)

Implications of Buchans Community Learning Process

This case has several implications for adult education. At the level of understanding adult learning in a mass communication society, the case is a clarion call for adding television and cultural studies to the social analysis of learning. The relationship between media and marginality is fleetingly acknowledged but virtually unexplored in adult education. At the level of practice, the case reminds us that we fail to maximize the resources for learning present in most Canadian communities, specifically, community television reconfigured as citizen television (Harris, 1993, 1997). However, in light of events affecting Buchans since 1990, the Buchans Community Learning Process provides other fundamental challenges for adult education and it is these which are addressed in the remainder of this paper.

Status Report: Buchans in 1996

In 1996, development progress in Buchans had reached another plateau; residents were still cautious, although their local economy was both stronger and expanding. The tone of press coverage about Buchans had become laudatory and respectful. When *Maclean's* ran a cover story on the province-wide economic crisis of Newfoundland, Buchans was cited as a model community for renewal and self-reliance (Demont & Allen, 1993). In 1995, Buchans was nominated for inclusion in "We the Peoples: 50 Communities", a citizen's initiative for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Now that the ground fish-based economy of Canada's east coast fishery has collapsed, more and more communities are facing disbandment or radical change. Even if more funds were available, the task of development cannot be externally driven. Consequently, senior development officials in both federal and provincial departments have urged other communities to look to Buchans as a example of the new economy in action, an economy that is knowledge based, self-sustaining, highly productive, focused on global markets and designing complex products for sophisticated consumers (Economic Recovery Commission, 1994). A few years ago, Buchans made an imaginative (although unsuccessful) bid to become a regional campus of the expanding university by presenting itself as a learning community; occasionally, Memorial University looks to leaders in Buchans as guest lecturers in courses in business administration and social development. Buchans residents are noting with a mix of incredulity and glee that business opportunity is bringing outsiders into Buchans.

The community of Buchans has come far from being (in the inhabitants' own words) "a forgotten tribe, a forgotten race, 45 miles from nowhere." Serving as a model for other economically devastated communities is not an honorific to be worn lightly. Inherent in being a model are three plaguing questions: What is success? What led to the success? What is a conscionable tension between providing

reasonable hope and illusionary optimism? The first two of these find partial answers by being grounded in the perspective of any inquirer, but an answer to the third is more elusive.

As acutely aware as they are of the volatility of local economies tied to global markets, from their perspective Buchans residents have one apodictic indictor of success: they still exist as a community. They prized staying together and fashioning a new economy over disbanding; even if individuals and families might have achieved a higher level of material affluence elsewhere. This definition of success is shared and unequivocal, its attainment one which the community celebrates. But in this definition lies the seeds of unease about being a model for other communities. Buchans is a success on its own terms. It is one thing to be a source of inspiration and a resource for other communities whose struggles have analogous elements but another to be advanced as a blueprint for communities that may not have had sufficient opportunity to undertake the intensive internal audit Buchans carried out (with assistance from Extension) or that may be naive about the extent of the effort required.

Rolling the Credits

The current social and economic viability of Buchans is predominantly an outcome of the synergistic efforts of the community as a whole and key individuals within the community. Drawing on that synergy, individuals representing the community were able to secure external resources which proved seminal at key points in the development process. These resources - federal and government programs, the university, investors, media, politicians, bureaucrats - are technically available to all communities, but for Buchans, each time, the hardest, longest and most frustrating part of securing those resources was the effort to persuade the various parties that Buchans was worthy of a chance. In other words, the task was not just framing and locating potential resources but campaigning to convince the inherently skeptical that Buchans had a quality of community that could compensate for what other advantages it might seem to lack. Two factors were key: one, the commitment, tenacity, sacrifice and integrity of the individuals who argued Buchans' case outside the community; and two, the unity and cohesion of Buchans as a community. My case study illuminates the second rather than the first, although the two factors not only intersected but were deeply symbiotic.

This account of development in Buchans is inevitably partial. In the manner of a learning anthropologist, I have inquired into and recounted a piece of the development story of Buchans through the perspective of community capacity building and learning. Other kinds of external resources were also crucial at particular stages: a federal government labor adjustment program for older workers, the influence of politicians, and the financial flexibility of Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador (a provincial economic development agency), to name just three. Some of the social history relevant to Buchans' development as a community can be found in the solidarity born of labor struggles with ASARCO when the mine was operational (Narvarez, 1986). A business analysis of the town's most successful economic venture, Steelcor, a manufacturing firm that supplies the aerospace

industry, is also available (Greenwood, 1993). Since all stories have a point of view, there cannot be one story of Buchans. There can only be stories, perspectives and inquiries filtered through conscious and unconscious frames.

Speaking Against the Grain

When Extension Service worked with the community of Buchans in 1985, just after the mine finally closed, my colleagues and I witnessed an arresting renewal of spirit. Two comments from residents at that time epitomize that spirit: "I never dreamed it could do what it done" and "It was successful beyond my wildest dreams, my wildest expectation." Still, aware that learning is ephemeral and the connection between learning and development elusive (Pyrch, 1983; Roberts, 1979; Lang, 1988), I waited five years before returning to Buchans to ask residents to help me understand what had transpired there during the learning process that included BCTV. My frame was narrow although complex: to ask residents to help me get inside that process from their perspective. As a researcher and the former Director of Extension Service, I was too circumspect to look for causality between that period and their success as a viable community. However, the data convinced me that Extension's work with the community of Buchans (centered on the BCTV project) was significant in the bigger story of the development success of Buchans. Corroboration comes from Sandy Ivany, Executive Director of the Buchans Development Corporation, who said: "Without the help of Extension [Service], we don't know how long we would have gone on" (Keep MUN Extension, 1991).

Now, seven years after my original study and 12 years after Extension Service did its most intense work there, Buchans has reached another plateau in its development. On this platform, the number of people and agencies who take an interest in the development process of Buchans and those who want to share in the credit for it have widened. However, of the government agencies eager to cite Buchans as a model, none has made passing reference to Extension Service or the process it advanced in Buchans as relevant, much less significant. This omission is of no consequence in terms of Buchans as the town has an admirable sense of itself, a good understanding of its own growth, and knowledge that its future is in its own hands. Nor is the omission of consequence to the Extension Service, now disbanded. Yet examination of events indicate that the role of responsive and responsible educational institutions to communities facing social and economic challenge can be more than offering individuals opportunity for labor force preparation in economy milieus outside their own community. People need jobs but people and society also need communities. The role of community learning and support to communities developing a sense of their own capacity for change is highly relevant in a province where the scale and direction of economic renewal is so vast as to be not just economic, but deeply cultural. Community learning is a collective enterprise of meaning making about community, identity and capacity. Without it, social vitality, economic viability and political efficacy of communities are hobbled.

Development has many requirements, such as a vision, a direction, an entrepreneurial outlook, capital, local organization, information, an ability to accept some failures and a responsive bureaucracy. The Government of Newfoundland and

Labrador has focused considerable resources on the task of economic renewal, until recently, through the Economic Recovery Commission and its operational base, Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1992 the Province released its blueprint for economic planning (Newfoundland, 1992) and in 1995 a report on its implementation (Newfoundland, 1995). Newfoundland's economic policy and resulting strategy has been enthusiastically endorsed by Nuala Beck, author of *Shifting gears: Thriving in the new economy* (1992) and *Excelerate* (1995). Legislation was introduced to offer incentives to potential investors from outside the province (Economic Recovery Commission, 1995). Although none of the economic development planners dispute the principle that development must also come from within communities (indeed they all stress community self-reliance), few appear to appreciate the degree of shock and disillusionment in Newfoundland communities asked to repudiate 500 years of history. Battered by ecological disasters and roundly rebuked for making use of federal transfer payment schemes such as Unemployment Insurance, this is a difficult time in Newfoundland to be a self-respecting, self-reliant, cohesive, confident community with enthusiasm for the uncertain path to a murky future. Hope, founded on a sense of *collective community capacity*, was clearly a vital dimension of development in Buchans and was a dimension to which Extension Service made a contribution through the community learning process it advanced. Self-reliant communities can be nurtured by support from external agencies such as universities, and nonformal learning is an affirming and legitimizing process by which small communities can rediscover, realize and re-create self-reliance.

Memorial University disbanded Extension Service in 1991. However, Extension's example of how an educational institution can be a force in supporting innovative community learning, the kind of learning that many communities will require in response to the changes of the 21st century, is more pertinent than ever. The Buchans case study illuminates a nontraditional, nonformal model, one that is little known, not well understood and indeed often dismissed because its intent is ineffable and largely unquantifiable: hope, capacity, citizenship, empowerment. This model deviates from the instrumental model in that learning is not an end in itself but both an end and a means to an end. This distinction is far from trivial in the context of citizenship and development.

Extension Service was an arm of the university whose mandate permitted this kind of educational activity. The university context allowed Extension Service staff to enter communities with legitimacy, but they could only earn respect by reading the pulse of the community accurately and responding with relevant learning activities. Needs assessment was not a superficial activity preceding a discrete program and time but was an open-ended and ongoing activity of uncovering local and community reality and a integral part of addressing that need. *A priori* assumptions were not made about the educational format (and collection of activities) that would be most appropriate and the resulting design or format did not need a name. It might be a mixing and matching of learning facilitated through formal programs, nonformal learning, meetings, consultation, conversations, print material, the arts, film or video. The learning was not product driven. Staff of the department had an

understanding of learning for development and for citizenship and for where nonformal learning for individuals and communities could support those goals.

Defining Learning, Teaching and Research

These activities ended when President Arthur May closed the Extension Service, saying that such activities were "not essential to teaching and research." He explained, "We are faced with a severe funding shortfall that must be addressed immediately....Extension Service will be eliminated as the activities in this area are not essential to the university's primary responsibilities of teaching and research" (May, 1991). Leaving aside the parochial politics of the day, it behooves adult educators with a stake in the learning society to examine the implications of his statement.

Whose definition of teaching and research is being promulgated? What kinds of knowledge are being legitimized? My earlier case report (Harris, 1992) and the truncated version of it provided in this paper indicated that a great deal of learning took place in one community where Extension was active. Of course, President May's statement on the closure of the Extension Service refers to teaching and research. But it takes no great effort to reframe activities in Buchans as teaching and research. Teachers were variously members of the community (peers) and Extension staff, and participatory action research was conducted. Residents undertook historical research about their community, reflected on what constitutes knowledge, researched options for economic development and assessed the viability of these for Buchans. Since this is obvious, it is reasonable to infer that Dr. May placed more value on other forms of teaching and learning, i.e., the formal model most frequently used in the rest of the University.

The formal learning model at MUN and at most other universities has several special features. Its most defining characteristic is that members of the university designated as faculty or professors direct the use of the model. Learning is organized around bodies of knowledge dissected by discipline and offered in the form of courses. Those who can access the model are those with enough material resources to pay tuition fees, thereby buying themselves the designation of registered student. Registered students are individuals who enter the educational domain for personal or professional development. For reasons of cost effectiveness, the institution places such individuals into groupings (usually on-campus) called classes. The activities of the class are largely decided by a content specialist who has developed the course goals before the class has its first meeting. Each student is individually responsible for achieving a satisfactory evaluation from the professor. These and other conventions of formal education are so commonplace that effort is required to make the familiar strange. However, they are clearly different from the nonformal model of community education designed and adopted by the Extension Service. We can deduct from Dr. May's statement that the portion of the population whose needs for learning are best served by that community model are not the responsibility of Memorial University. That the academy privileges the teaching and research of those who are its professors and those students whose learning can be met through the

activities of professors is not a revelation, although rarely are university presidents so frank and public in saying so as was Dr. May.

President May's statement implies that the difficult financial circumstances of the university were sufficient cause to withdraw support for nonformal community learning. Funding shortfalls may be handy occasions for making changes, but fiscal restraint does not constitute a justification or explanation for all changes regardless of what they might be. Part of the hegemony of the day is the implication that the decisions arising from deficits, budget cutbacks and the sluggish economy are inevitable and incontrovertible, when decline, fiscal restraint and the like are more properly viewed as the conditions that give rise to a clarification of values and of priorities. The self-constructed incapacity of institutions and organizations should not be accepted as indemnity for choices that are socially irresponsible (McQuaig, 1995). Social justice is no less appropriate in times of scarce resources than in times of ample resources.

In the guise of privileging a form of learning, Memorial University clearly privileged those who benefit from the institutional model over those whose circumstances and interests make that model inappropriate. Extension's priority had been people whose learning needs were fundamentally tied to the viability of their geographic location and necessitated the engagement of the community as an entity. That marginalized people know their marginalization and how it is constructed was evident in the protest that followed the University's decision to close Extension. For three months, artists, fishermen, local development workers, labor, Aboriginal people, women and literacy workers tried to shame the University for its elitism, without success. When they took their outrage to the provincial government, the issue became the first publicly driven issue for the newly elected Wells government. Politician after politician on the Government's side rose in the House of Assembly and before the media to staunchly proclaim that the decision to close Extension Service had been made by the University, a body which was properly independent from government and whose autonomy the Government did not wish to violate (Newfoundland, 1991). The irony was not lost on former Directors of Extension. The Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance (both senior members in the Faculty of Education at MUN just six months before) maintained this stance in spite of petitions asking for rescindment signed by thousands of Newfoundlanders presented when the Visitor's Gallery of the House of Assembly could not contain all the rural and city residents who had come to witness the public debate they had instigated.

Challenges to Progressive Adult Educators

Dr. May maintained that the activities of the Extension Service, largely nonformal adult learning, were not the university's responsibility. This assertion places the issue in the domain of public policy. From where should support for community learning for citizenship emanate? Surely, the learning society calls not just for more of the kind and form of learning that has been undertaken in the past but for an assessment of whether the old models suffice to meet the challenges of the future. Perhaps all educational institutions receiving public monies should be required to

devote some portion of their resources to developing learning models appropriate for groups and communities, not just individuals in the community. (The call for new models for community learning is not answered by the current emphasis on distance learning as the latter is also designed for the individual learner.) Sustaining healthy communities and other forms of publicly founded collectivities in the face of mobility, fragmentation and alienation that accompany the new century is an enormous challenge. Universities are abdicating a role built into their fundamental *raison d'etre*, that of knowledge creation, if they cede the task to the haphazard efforts of either the private sector or non-governmental organizations.

Universities and community colleges are the educational institutions that seem best suited for this task because their focus includes adult learners. Colleges have the advantage of being more widely distributed and more numerous than universities and therefore potentially more attuned to the issues of concern in their region or in communities in their region. However, the university charter has features that may bring the balance of consideration vis-a-vis appropriateness back to the academy. The most salient of these features is that the academy is the site where educators are prepared for leadership in the learning society and where scholarship about the process of learning has its natural home. Innovation and exploration of learning strategies that transcend the narrow range of individual learning and the prevailing institutional model of learning are imminently congruent with an educational institution intelligently examining its contribution to the new century and reforming itself in light of those challenges.

The prevailing climate of the last years of this century does not support great optimism about the number of educators who will begin this task. Those who do are likely to share five characteristics: (1) they will be educators whose professional purpose is deeply vocational rather than careerist (Collins, 1991); (2) they will be educators who do not have to strain to decode the regulatory intent of administrators' calls for pragmatism and realism, and who recognize conservative ideology under the transparent mask of orthodox economics; (3) they will not equate the responsibilities of educational institutions exclusively with labor force preparation; (4) they will not assume that their own responsibility as educators is discharged by delivering more clients to the institutional appetite or confuse open learning, distance education and access with educational reform; and (5) they will bring a critical social analysis to their formulation of responsible adult education. The task might begin in the graduate programs of adult education where learning and knowledge are explored and validated (Thomas, 1991). This article is for those classes and for wherever there is consideration of conditions which encourage learning for development and for citizenship.

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