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**RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: HOW GLOBALIZATION
INFLUENCES RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

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by

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between rural schools and communities occurs for different reasons. Collaboration implies that the school and members of the community work together toward a common goal. This study examined how a rural school district and the communities in which the district belonged collaborated on a community development initiative. Of course, this collaboration did not occur in a social or political vacuum, there were influences beyond the control of the local players that affected how the school district and the community collaborated. Neoliberalism and globalization have affected the social, economic and educational structures of rural America. The changes created by neoliberalism and globalization on these structures have threatened the sustainability of rural communities. This dissertation examined the opportunities and constraints rural communities are facing and the role that a rural school system could play in increasing social and economic sustainability of rural communities. The questions guiding this research were: 1) what are the challenges and opportunities of rural community-school collaboration in a community development initiative? 2) what are the implications of this case study for rural community and school collaboration in a globalized economy?

To address these questions, a single site case study was conducted. The research focused on a small, rural school district and the community as they collaborated on a community development initiative. The initiative centered on an entrepreneur center that the school district proposed for its students and the community. Interviews with eighteen people, and observations in three public

meetings provided the data for this study. This study also included document analysis from reports presented to the committee formed by the school district to explore the entrepreneur center, as well as historical newspapers to gain a historical context for the study. One important aspect to this study is the role of the researcher in this study. The researcher was a participant observer in the events studied which afforded more insight into the events studied. A review of the literature focusing on rural schools, and rural communities in the United States provided context for the events in this study.

The entrepreneur center never became a reality for the school district or the community. The committee charged with exploring the feasibility of the entrepreneur center held meetings in good faith with the community, but attendance at the meetings decreased over the period of time in which this study was conducted. Although the next paragraph will explore the more subtle explanations for these failures, the most obvious reason for the failure of this initiative was the shift from discussing the possibilities of the entrepreneur center to one of school consolidation. The shift in focus occurred when the school's architectural firm conducted a feasibility study for the project and focused on the efficient use of the school district's physical plant, not on the ideals and hopes for the entrepreneur center.

Based on the interviews, observations of the committee meetings, and document analysis, the following insights were revealed: 1) Rural community members are unsure how to articulate and make sense of their positive individual experiences within the community versus their negative perceptions of the community overall. 2) There must be meaningful participation by the public in the

development and the process of a community collaborative effort in order for it to succeed. This entails more than a token participation and “rubber stamping” of initiatives brought forth by the school district. People want to see the results of their participation as well as how their participation changed the course of the initiative. 3) The school system can act as a bridge to connect rural schools and communities thus alleviating some of the changes in social, economic, and educational changes resulting from neoliberalism and globalization. This involves rural schools adopting a place-based curriculum that encourages a critical pedagogy of place and becoming an incubator for community development initiatives 4) Smaller successes occurred in this study when individual principals implemented parts of the entrepreneur center in their own schools. This indicated the reasonableness of the foundation of the entrepreneur center, as well as the strength of place-based education.

The findings in this study suggest how rural schools and communities might collaborate in a globalized society. In particular, rural educators and the school system, must recognize their new role in the community. They serve an important function of bridging two worlds; one that is vanishing (stable social structures) and one that is threatening to overtake rural schools and communities (liquid, unstable social structures). One way this can be accomplished is by rural school districts encouraging an appreciation of place by adopting curriculum (place-based) that will challenge rural students to take up issues that are important to people in their communities. In fact, rural educators can serve as a “coupler” between those members of society that have very little connection to a “place,” and those community members that are more “place bound.” Further research is needed to explore other methods of collaboration that can serve the

same purpose of bridging the gap between the world of stable social structures and the threats to that stability.

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PROLOGUE

On February 4th, 2002 I received a phone call at work that I knew was coming, yet dreaded just the same. My brother called and told me that my grandfather, Lawrence Miles Egleston age 84 had passed away. Gramp, as my family called my grandfather, died in the same farmhouse, in the same *room*, he was born in 84 years earlier. Of course, I knew Gramp was sick. My grandmother and the rest of my family had been caring for him every day for his last seven years as he progressed through the final stages of Alzheimer's disease. Gramp never spent one day in a nursing home. My grandmother made sure that Gramp got the best care *at home*, not somewhere else. We took care of Gramp through my grandmother's successful bout with breast cancer, and through the tragedy of my mother's unsuccessful fight against ovarian cancer. This is not the story of the care for Gramp, although many lessons can be learned from that experience. Rather, this is a story of a typical, rural, citizen who left an indelible mark on his oldest grandson. The lessons passed from Gramp to me relating what it means to live in rural America have led me on a quest to understand the enormous changes that are taking place in rural America and the rural school systems today. These lessons and the life story of my grandfather lead me to study areas of conflict and contestation in rural America.

Lawrence Egleston (everyone called him Mike) was born six weeks after the United States entered the first war in the 20th Century (World War One), and he died as the United States struggled with the earliest stages of the first war in the 21st Century. In the intervening years, Gramp would spend all of his life working, and raising a family on the same farm on which he was born. Were it not for one trip to South Dakota in the

1970s, Gramp never traveled farther than one day away from his home. The reasons for this lack of travel are simple: early in his life there was no monetary means to travel, and later in life he had responsibilities on the farm that would prevent too much travel, although if the truth were known, Gramp probably just did not want to travel. He was always anxious to get home when he was away from the farm, telling my grandmother that they had to leave to get back home because they were “wearing out their welcome.” The farm was not just a place where Gramp worked and played; being a farmer was how Gramp identified himself. “I am a *farmer*” was how Gramp described himself when people asked him what he did for a living. When he and I would talk about current events, as I was growing up, many times personal indiscretions by people could be explained away because “they are a farmer.” He had an innate trust and respect for people who worked hard and lived in the country.

Gramp also worked at the local tannery for 39 years. He started work before the labor union came in the late 1930s and worked through the booming years of the Tannerytown Sole Leather Company in the 1940s and 1950s. At one time, the tannery marketed itself as the largest sole leather tannery in the world, and who would argue? The main building was over one half mile long; there were two “cement houses” (actually huge buildings connected to the main building by rail lines) for shipping; a chemistry lab for research; and a couple of miles of “liquor juice” ponds where the chemicals used in the tanning process were stored until they leached into the soil or evaporated. Tannerytown evolved into a true company town where people would “sell their soul to the company store” when they did not have enough money to pay for the necessities of life. Gramp always could count on the farm for extra income and food, but

many people working for the tannery were not so fortunate. They were forced to buy on credit from the company store and accept the meager raises that were offered by the Tannerytown Sole Leather Company; of course working two jobs while raising a young family was not easy work on the part of Gramp.

I grew up listening to stories celebrating the land and agriculture as well as stories about labor unions and what it was like to live in the small town of Tannerytown in the mid twentieth century. These stories shaped my worldview, although there were stories and stereotypes that Gramp held that I never could understand. His racial and ethnic intolerance seemed to be out of character, but they were undeniably a part of his life. Minus these negative stereotypes, Gramp passed on to me a passion for rural America, a trust for representative democracy, and an understanding of the importance of talking with people to understand what is happening in the local area. I will explain these further throughout the course of the paper. The stories and lessons learned will be gateways into what I have learned and experienced in this study.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Communities of the School District

Introduction to the Study

I had looked forward all day long to go with Gramp to try to find a cow and calf that did not come down to the barn for milking. It was a warm spring day, and the thought of riding the tractor up the hill with Gramp was exciting. After dinner, we started on our journey to search for the cow and calf. As we started up the hill, the view of the town below came into view. My grandfather's farm overlooked much of the town, and the views offered to us on that particular spring day were stunning. Suddenly I felt the tractor stop and I asked Gramp why he had stopped before reaching the top of the hill. He looked at me and said, "The tannery is finally burning down." We stopped and watched as fire companies from as far away as fifty miles came to town in an attempt to save the nearby neighborhoods from burning down. There was no hope for the old tannery building itself. I can remember Gramp wondering what was going to happen now that the tannery was gone. What did this mean for the town? The plant had been closed for some time, so people that had worked there had found other jobs, but there was always a glimmer of hope that the building could be used for something constructive and that the good times for the town would come back. This dream was now gone. Where would people work? How could the town survive? We sat on the hill and watched for two hours as the fire eventually destroyed the tannery building. Fortunately all the

houses nearby were saved. Even though I was a very young boy, I can remember the adults seemed on edge after the fire.

The tannery had been idle for at least four years by the time Gramp and I stopped on the hill and watched it burn. I asked Gramp why it was burning and he said that he was not surprised that it was burning because the longtime owner of the tannery was not alive anymore. The owners lived in Boston, Massachusetts, but they stayed relatively active in the local community. However, the last few years had seen the owners lose interest in the business and the building and they became true absentee landlords. For the first time in the history of the town, there was no major industrial foundation to build an economic future. The realization of the fact that control of the economic future of the town no longer lay in the local area and the subsequent struggle to replace an economic foundation typifies the challenge that many rural communities faced in the increasingly globalized later half of the twentieth century.

Education and Globalization

The definition of “globalization” has become a contested term during the past twenty years. The layman’s knowledge and familiarity with the term is an important place to start. The common thread in all of the definitions is the concept of an expanding market system and trade to all corners of the globe. Definitions more critical of the philosophy behind globalization mention the perceived economic exploitation of certain areas of the globe which are being negatively affected by globalization. No matter whether a definition is critical or supportive of globalization, developing a precise

definition is difficult. For instance, Kumar (2003) states, “For the most part, globalization theorists appear intimately aware of the plethora of competing globalization definitions and of the difficulties attached to the project of creating a unified and comprehensive definition” (p. 91).

Bottery (2006) discusses six types of globalization and their effect on education. Kumar (2003) discusses how there are so many definitions of globalization among theorists that it is difficult to come to a consensus for a definition on a term that is so contested. Harvey (2000) discusses globalization and the importance of a “shrinking” world due to technological advances, particularly in communications, which results in new frameworks for spatial relations because communication over large distances is now instantaneous. I realize that any attempt to define globalization may be redundant; however, I will provide a definition for a framework for this study.

For the purposes of this dissertation, globalization is defined as the interaction between cross-national economic, cultural and political forces which lessens the political, economic, and cultural importance of small, rural communities (Harvey, 2000; Berry, 1997; Edmondson, 2003). This interaction is fostered by advanced telecommunication technology that diminishes traditional spatial relations between locales. My definition has its foundation in the work of Bauman (1998) who, although labeling globalization a “fad” word, still provides a withering critique of the social changes brought forth by globalization. Chapter Two will provide a more thorough discussion of the theory undergirding my definition of globalization.

Rural schools and communities are facing challenges that originate because of globalization. The educational system in the United States is also being affected by

globalization also. The educational system is saddled with the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), while rural communities are witnessing the effects of globalization on the stability of their neighborhoods. For example, the trend away from the importance of local politics, culture, and economy has had a profound impact on certain areas of rural America (Edmondson, 2003). One aim of this study is to discuss the impact of globalization on rural schools and communities in the United States.

Globalization is affecting the social and economic fabric of rural communities and schools. Rural schools and communities have been directly impacted by economic and social affects associated with the new global economy (Fitchen, 1981, 1991; Davidson, 1990; Berry 1997; Theobald & Rochon, 2006). Rural communities are being fundamentally transformed by forces that are seemingly out of their control. Schools can play an important role in facilitating communities' understandings of their role in a globalized economy.

Introduction to the Community

In 2006 I can look outside the windows of the local high school and view the eastern end of town. The houses that are visible run in a north-south direction along Lincoln Avenue. The houses are small and all look the same from the outside. In fact, they have been called "cookie cutter" houses because of their uniformity. When you look at pictures of the town taken over one hundred years ago from the hill on the northern end of town you can see these houses standing alone in a line along side the "liquor juice ponds" of the tannery. These ponds were staging areas for the chemicals that were used

to tan the cowhides in the tannery. The smell from these ponds was atrocious. In fact, the smell was so strong that even thirty years after the tannery burnt down you could still catch slight hints of the smell on warm summer nights. While the tannery was operating, the smell could be noticed for miles. Imagine living so close to the ponds that you could hear the water move in the wind.

The houses on Lincoln Avenue were for the laborers in the tannery. Their construction was not of high quality, a lot of the building materials were scraps “borrowed” from the tannery itself. This resulted in uneven construction and houses that were not square, drafty, and not pleasant to live in. Meanwhile, the bosses of the tannery lived “uptown” on West Main Street, away from the smell, and in houses that were large and well constructed. People who grew up in Tannerytown during the early and mid part of the twentieth century often referred to Lincoln Avenue as “cabbage row.” As a child growing up, my grandfather always used this nickname for the street. It was not until I graduated from college that I realized that the official name of the street was Lincoln Avenue. I asked Gramp why the street was called cabbage row and he claimed it was because the people that lived there grew cabbages to supplement their diet, therefore they ate a lot of cabbages and the nickname evolved. Gramp also told stories how three houses along Lincoln Avenue would share one outhouse. He explained to me that most houses at the time had to share an outhouse. The lack of a “private” outhouse is just another example of the poverty and poor living conditions that people had to tolerate if they lived in this neighborhood.

This story influenced me because I could not understand how a town as small as this one could have a social and economic structure that was so divided between the

bosses and the laborers. I kept telling myself that we are all the same, but the stories suggested otherwise. I also understood growing up that some people thought that those that lived on cabbage row were somehow not as good as the rest of the people that lived in town. The plight of the workers in the tannery was not good. The living conditions of the people that lived along Lincoln Avenue are a testament to that fact.. The rural residents suffering through poverty today are often overlooked and ignored by well intentioned people. Perhaps the wealthy have bought into the narrative of poor people as lazy, while the wealthier people have worked hard to get where they are in society. This is a strong narrative that has dominated political and economic narratives in recent years (Lakoff, 2004). Not a lot has changed from the time Gramp was alive to modern day rural America.

Community Economic Situation

In an effort to better understand the communities of this district in rural northern Pennsylvania, it is important to understand the economics of the area. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania has listed five municipalities in Mill County that are considered persistently poor (2005). The Center has defined a county in persistent poverty if the poverty rate has been 15% or above from 1979 through 1999 (The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2005). All five of these municipalities are located in the school district, more specifically in the Cameron Valley. In the 2004-2005 school year, the communities in the school district suffered from devastating economic down turns. Because of its close proximity to New York State, many people in Northern School District commute to work

in the industries in nearby New York. At the start of the school year, it was announced that Toshiba Display Devices in Centertown, New York would close a plant that hired over 1,000 people, many of whom lived in Pennsylvania. One month later, the Ford dealership that serviced the Valley closed abruptly. Earlier in the year, the hardware store that was next door to the car dealership closed. At the start of the New Year, the news continued to get worse. Avonex, a photonics plant located in Glasstown, New York, announced that it would be transferring most of its production to Southeast Asia and would lay off all production workers, which amounted to 500 people. Finally, the Westtown Tanning Company, a company that had its origins in the birth of Westtown, announced that it would be closing its doors in 2005. This would lead to the lay-off of over 150 people. In addition, in the county seat, Wellington, a milk processing facility closed, putting 50 more people out of work. This string of bad news created a sense of urgency within the community that something had to be done.

Poverty statistics must be understood in the context of rural versus urban settings. Rural areas are defined as areas of open country and of settlements of less than 2,500 residents (United States Department of Education, 2007). Trends in rural poverty do not necessarily mirror urban poverty trends. In 2003, the poverty rate for rural areas was 14.2% while the urban poverty rate stood at 12.1% (USDA ERS, 2004). The differences among regions within the nation varied from a 4.7% difference in the South to a .8% difference in the Northeast and 2.3% difference in the West while in the Midwest the metro poverty rate was 1.4% higher than in the nonmetro areas (USDA ERS, 2004). However, these facts only tell part of the story. As the preponderance of split families becomes more of an issue, female-headed homes in nonmetro areas have a poverty rate of

36.2%. This leads to a child poverty rate in nonmetro areas of 20.1%. Finally, of all counties in the United States that are considered persistently poor, 340 out of 386 are nonmetro counties (USDA ERS, 2004). Jobs are disappearing from rural areas and affecting those with the least amount of education. Between 1997 and 2003, over 1.5 million rural workers lost their jobs in the United States (Glasmeier & Salant, 2006). Additionally, 42% of these displaced workers had a high school education or less (Glasmeier & Salant, 2006). Addressing these issues is of paramount concern for rural communities if they are to overcome the severe poverty-related challenges that they face.

Dissertation Overview and Organization

The remainder of Chapter One is devoted to the background of the schools and communities that were studied. I will then discuss the school district's history, specifically the consolidation that created the school district. Next, there will be an overview of the student population as well as the curriculum offered in the school district. Wrapping up the section about the school district will be a discussion detailing community meetings the school district held to try to understand a perception of apathy which was permeating the students in the schools. The final section of this chapter poses the research questions which drove this study.

Chapter Two provides a literature review and theoretical framework for the study. The theoretical framework involves how changes in three areas, (the social, economic and educational structures in rural communities) are caused by forces of neoliberalism

and globalization. A more in-depth discussion will delve into the specific changes in each of the three areas. Finally, Chapter Two will conclude with a discussion of supports in each area that can mitigate the negative effects of neoliberalism and globalization. These supports will form the basis for the recommendations in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Three presents the qualitative methods that were used to collect, analyze and interpret the data collected in the study. The data were collected from eighteen interviews, as well as observations of three community meetings and a review of historical newspapers from one of the communities in this study. The discussion will then focus on the type of case study that was conducted as well as the research strategies, data collection techniques and the limitations of the study. Specifically, I will discuss my role as a participant observer in this study and the challenges and opportunities that the participant role offers for the study.

I made every attempt during the course of this study to separate my participant role from my observer role, but I feel I need to state my positions and biases. The entrepreneur center concept was originally an idea I initiated along with a friend who served on the school board. I believe the concept was a positive choice for the community. My study centered more on the outlying factors in the community and the school that affected their understanding of the world. Additionally, this study explored the process in which decisions are made when rural school districts and communities collaborate on an initiative. I was removed from the decision making process concerning the way in which the school and community collaborated. Additionally, the people that I interviewed in the community for this study were not aware of my involvement early in the project. Since I was an insider, I received many “off the record” comments from

community members who trusted that I would not violate their confidentiality. I have not included any of these comments in this study.

In Chapter Four I will discuss how individuals in this study perceived their communities and their role in the community. Both chapters four and five discuss general themes uncovered by the data analysis. I will discuss these themes in the context of globalization and their interconnectedness to each other.

Chapter Five presents the role that human and social capital play in the community and schools according to the analysis of the data collected from the interviews and observations. The role of rural schools in economic development and how the schools' curriculum can assist in economic development will be discussed.

Chapter Six presents an in-depth review of the concept that sparked the initial interest in collaboration between the school and the community. The entrepreneur center unveiled idealism in people to help their schools and community. The process the school district used to explore the options to build an entrepreneur center played a role in the demise of the idea. Despite not realizing the original dream of the entrepreneur center, smaller successes were developed by district schools and personnel.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides a summary of the main findings of the study as well as implications for public policy. In addition, there will be specific recommendations for rural educators about how they can encourage meaningful collaboration between rural schools and communities.

Background Information for the School District

Schooling in Tannerytown during my grandfather's day was significantly different than today. Today, my grandfather would be one of the cohorts of students labeled as "at risk." Gramp quit school when he was a junior in high school to start working. When I look through old records of Tannerytown High School I notice that many of the boys quit school along the way to go to work in the tannery. Gramp remembered his school days in one-room schoolhouses where he would work as a janitor to help raise money for the farm. His job in the winter was to start the coal-burning stove in the house where they went to school. He also entertained me about his stories of misbehavior, which probably would have landed him on probation if they were done today. In 1938 Tannerytown High School was built. The school was constructed with help from the Civilian Conservation Corps. The school building was in use by the school district as a school, or office space until the mid 1990s when it was finally condemned.

The school district is a poor rural district that is located in the extreme north-central section of Pennsylvania in Mill County. There are two other school districts in the county. Two-thirds of the district is located in the Cameron Valley with almost a third belonging outside the Valley. The school district covers over 330 square miles and encompasses three small high schools and three small elementary schools. The overall student population in the district is 2,460. Students that qualify for free and reduced lunches account for 46.5% of the student population. The market value/personal income aid ratio is .77 ranking the district the twelfth poorest district in the state. This number is used by the state to determine the amount of state aid a school district will receive. In the

case of the school district in the 2006-2007 budget year, 67% of the school budget is funded by state and federal funds. The annual school budget in that budget year was 28 million dollars.

The school district was formed by a consolidation of three smaller school districts in 1967. Further consolidation within the district occurred in 1995 when two elementary schools were closed and consolidated into existing schools. The affected communities wanted to keep the schools open in their communities because they felt that the school was the last institution that provided a common experience for the community members. The closing of the schools was a very divisive issue in all of the communities involved and resulted in the school board president not being re-elected to the board.

The district is divided into three distinct communities that reflect the original, pre-consolidation format of the Valley. On the western end of the district are Cameron Valley High School and Westown Elementary School; both are located in the town of Westown. In the center of the district and the Valley is the town of Tannerytown, where Tannerytown High School and Thomas Jefferson Elementary School are located. Outside the Valley, on the far eastern end of the district are Williams High School and George Washington Elementary School. These last two schools can be classified as “cornfield schools” since they are a result of a consolidation of three small districts in the late 1950s with the school being built in an open field. The purpose of this school consolidation was an attempt to control costs, thus the new school was built in the center of the three communities that were losing schools. The student population of these three attendance areas ranges from 639 in the Tannerytown area, to 1,037 in the Williams area with Cameron Valley falling between. The curriculum for the district is classified as a

“general” curriculum with the exception of agriculture education at Cameron Valley and culinary arts at Williams High School. “General” curriculum means there are no “tracks” which place students in college preparatory, business, or vocational placements. The limited curriculum options have been a concern for the district educators and the community for some time.

In January of 2004, the three high schools held community meetings to discuss student and community apathy. These meetings were a response by the faculty and community over the perceived lack of effort by the students in school and lack of participation in the school by community members. The faculty had noticed a dwindling support for school related activities from the communities in recent years. For example, at Tannerytown High School a lot of effort was expended attempting to raise attendance at parent teacher night. The goal was not to get all the parents; rather, the faculty wanted to meet with the same number as they had in the recent past. One theme emerged through discussions with teachers and parents at the parent teacher night: community members were concerned that membership and participation in community organizations was dwindling, and the parents that attended these nights were discouraged that more people did not attend. In addition, teachers were concerned about a perceived “I don’t care” attitude by the community members when asked to participate in parent teacher night. As an example, I was told of a teacher from a neighboring school who did not expect to attend any parent teacher night as a parent after her daughter reached seventh grade.

The community meetings were initiated by the conversations about parent teacher nights. Educators and more active community members were concerned enough about

the school community relationship to organize more conversations. One idea became very clear from these meetings: people felt strongly that high school graduates wanted to stay within the district to live after graduation but could not find suitable jobs. They also believed that the curriculum should reflect the skills and knowledge students would need if they wanted to stay in the area to work after graduation. Furthermore, at the meeting held at Tannerytown High School, community members felt that the apathy of the students was a direct result of the curriculum being out of sync with the experiences the students would have in the community once they graduated. The overwhelming consensus from this meeting was that the school should adjust the curriculum to reflect these concerns. There was a strong sense at the meetings that the community could not wait for something good to happen; community members felt that they had been waiting for a non-existent windfall for some time to no avail. They wanted to do something themselves to make the situation better.

These meetings were the first attempt since consolidation in 1995 to have meaningful community-school collaboration. I spearheaded the movement to organize these meetings. At the time, I was a guidance counselor at Tannerytown High School and I was very involved with parents, teachers and students. I was a trusted member of each group and served as a confidant for these stakeholders. In trying to recruit people for these meetings, I discovered many of the people that participated in the earlier “task forces” in 1995 would not participate because they felt their participation would be strictly a token gesture. The memories of school consolidation arguments are difficult to forget. The feeling throughout the school district is that the only time the school district asks for input is when they want something “rubber stamped” by the community. A

community member stated that, "...so many people are suspect that, 'Well, whether we get involved or not, you know, it's going to be shoved down our throats.'" Despite these obstacles, the meetings took place. While these meetings were being held, severe economic news befell the school district and the communities.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

In this study, rural community members identified a problem that they felt needed to be solved; namely the lack of economic opportunities for graduates and a sense of apathy among the students and the community. The local school district took a leadership role in working collaboratively with the community to formulate possible solutions to these identified problems. The proposed solution was to develop a place-based entrepreneurship curriculum in the schools, along with an entrepreneur center and business incubator. The need for a curriculum that gives students the skills needed to live in the district after graduation was paramount on everyone's mind. The curriculum would focus on embedding entrepreneurial skills into non-traditional vocational offerings. The non-traditional offerings centered on agriculture, business, and culinary arts. Instead of a traditional vocational offering such as automotive technology or construction trades, the vision for the project stressed the skills and resources of the school district. For example, in agriculture organic farming, aquaculture, herb and plant propagation were going to be included. In addition, the vision incorporated a business incubator that students and community members could have used for their personal business development. This study details the local efforts of a community and the school district as they collaborated

to develop the curriculum for an entrepreneur center and business incubator. The object of the study is to understand and theorize the effects of these grassroots efforts on rural community development. Related to this understanding, this study also seeks to theorize and understand the effects of globalization and neoliberalism on rural school and community interaction. Specifically, this study seeks to identify:

- The challenges and opportunities of rural community-school collaboration in a community development initiative.
- The implications of this case study for rural community and school collaboration in a globalized economy.

The focus of this case study took place from April 2006 through December 2006. In that time, the major decisions affecting the viability of the entrepreneur center were made by a committee (also referred to as a task force) arranged by the school district to explore the entrepreneur center concept. This period of time allowed the investigator to interview and re-interview participants on an as-needed basis, as well as collect and review necessary documents.

Significance

This research is important because it seeks to explain the context of rural communities and schools in a globalized world. The present era of educational reform centers on how to improve standardized test scores of students in individual schools. These reform initiatives often deemphasize local meaning and control over educational issues. When solutions do not come from the community from which the problems

originate, the local community has no chance to institute their own ideas and concepts into the solutions. In addition, many educational reform initiatives are not tailored for rural schools and communities. The effects of these subtle changes in deemphasizing the importance of community are often not considered when school reform issues are addressed. In addition, there are fewer public spaces where people can meet and discuss issues that are important to them (Bauman, 1998, 2007). This research benefits policy makers at all levels of government, educators, and community organizers by assisting them in understanding the impact of globalization on rural schools and communities. Finally, Tompkins (2008) speaks of the lack of schools and communities working together in a place-based education to try to improve the economic standing of the community. This study chronicles such an attempt, and the lessons from the study will inform the field of education and rural economic development.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature/Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the forces of globalization and neoliberalism, which I argue are critical for understanding the current context of rural schools and rural community development. The changes brought about by globalization and neoliberalism on social, economic, and educational structures in rural communities have had substantially negative effects on rural community sustainability across many rural areas. Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between these forces of change.

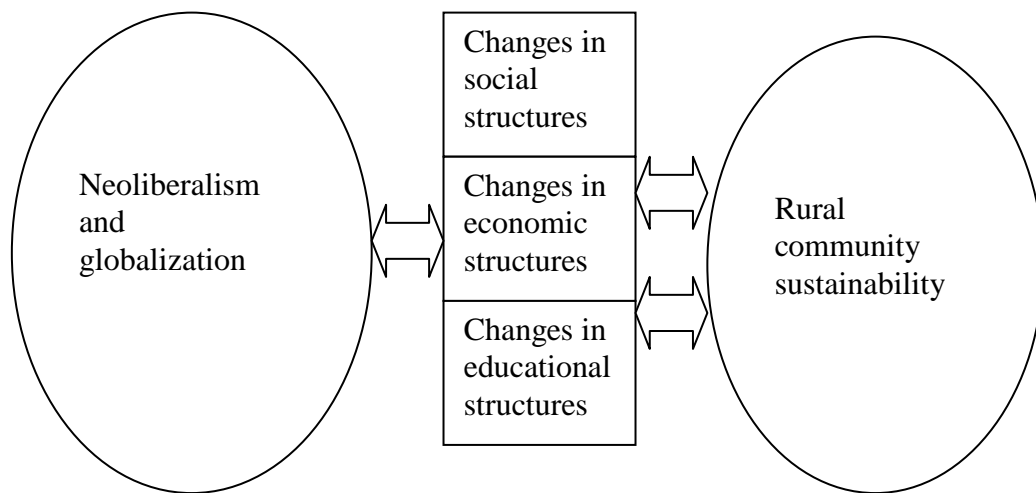


Figure 2.1: How neoliberalism and globalization affect rural sustainability

As illustrated in the figure above, neoliberalism and globalization are creating changes in the foundational structures of rural America. The changes include informal social structures and norms of interaction, local economic structures, and the pedagogical orientation of education as it increasingly focuses around standards-based assessments and business models of administration and accountability. At the same time, rural schools and communities are “pushing back” by attempting to counteract the effects of globalization and neoliberalism on their schools and communities.

First, neoliberalism and globalization have affected local social structures by altering the government’s role of offering a safety net to its citizens. Increasingly the police powers of the state have become more important, and have overpowered, the social functions of protection of the citizens from economic downturns (Giroux, 2003). The increases in spending for homeland security at the expense of programs that serve as a social safety net are examples of this phenomenon. Additionally, public spaces have been taken out of the public sphere and increasingly privatized which deprives citizens of a meeting place to discuss issues important to the community (Bauman, 1998; Giroux, 2003; Harvey, 2000).

Second, rural workers have also experienced a shift in local economic structures because of globalization. Globalization—and the free trade policies on which it rests—encourage multi-national corporations to move to parts of the world where labor is the least expensive. Manufacturers are no longer limited to locating close to their targeted consumers. Free trade allows for the cheap importing and exporting of goods across national boundaries. This trend has affected rural employment. The employment figures mentioned in Chapter One reflect the fact that jobs are leaving rural areas the United

States and moving to other areas of the world. As an example, rural economies have been affected by the loss of high paying manufacturing jobs to other parts of the country and the world (Glasmeier & Salant, 2006). In the past, rural economic development consisted of recruiting manufacturing to locate in rural areas. This was accomplished using tax breaks and other tax incentives (Whitener & Parker, 2005). The current trend in economic development reflects the shift from the traditional model, to one where individual skills are the strengths to be developed (Whitener & Parker, 2005; K. Dabson & Soni-Meyers, 2005; B. Dabson, 2005).

Third, neoliberalism and globalization have created significant changes in the way educational policy is crafted and in the way educational outcomes are judged. Specific results compiled from standardized tests are now the judge of whether or not a student is learning in a classroom. The standardized testing system is a reflection of the neoliberal philosophy of accountability. Increasingly, states are implementing graduate competency exams that add a further credential to help “prove” that the student is ready to perform in the economy. Educational policy is now being driven by the ethos of the market system by stressing competition and accountability (Hursh, 2007). In Pennsylvania, this leads to less local control over educational issues as the state is increasingly encouraging a standard curriculum to be taught state wide to meet the standards of achievement proposed by the department of education.

Any one of these structural changes *acting alone* in rural communities would not create a threat to the sustainability of the community. However, the three structural changes work synergistically to create a “critical mass” of problems that threatens the sustainability of rural communities. For example, if the educational changes of less local

control occurred within a context of a community where public spaces were still valued as a place to discuss issues important to the community, then the curricular homogenization may be less of a threat. Unfortunately, there has been a change in the use and form of public spaces that does not allow for the debate about curricular standardization to take place. If left unchecked, these changes will eventually lead to the disintegration of rural communities. This dissertation argues that rural schools can mitigate the effects of the changes in social, economic and educational structures. The findings suggest this can be accomplished by the school system playing an active role in altering the negative effects of the changes in social, economic, and political structures.

The remainder of this chapter will further review the literature on neoliberalism and globalization while focusing on the three outcomes that help define the theoretical framework. Globalization and neoliberalism act as a lens in which we view the changes in structures that are affecting rural communities. This lens allows us to try to offer explanations about why these changes are occurring, while at the same time suggesting possible solutions to correct these changes. The changes structures are creating a situation in which the sustainability of rural communities is being threatened. These threats will be discussed in relation to the specific change in structure from which they originate.

Globalization and Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism and globalization have acted in concert to destabilize large sections of rural America. Neoliberalism refers to policies "...that maximize the role of the

markets and profit-making and minimize the role of nonmarket institutions...”

(McChesney as cited in Giroux, 2, 2003). Neoliberalism is the political philosophy that serves to drive the forces of globalization. Globalization is also a word which has many definitions to many different people (Bauman, 1998). As mentioned in Chapter One, for this study I define globalization as the interaction between economic, cultural and political forces across national boundaries which lessens the political, economic, and cultural importance of small, rural communities (Harvey, 2000; Bauman, 1997, Edmondson, 2003). Some definitions stress the benefits to society that open markets and competition are supposed to bring to everyone in the world (M. Friedman, 2002; T. Friedman, 2007).

As an example, a stroll through the aisles of one of the most globalized companies, Wal-Mart, shows the results of neoliberal free trade policies and the global market place. I can purchase items cheaper in Wal-Mart than in locally owned “mom and pop” stores because of their purchasing and marketing power. The food options are plentiful because of the power of global transportation. International transportation has made “seasonal food” almost obsolete. For example, I can buy fresh apples during our spring months because they are harvested in South America where the seasons are reversed. I also have a familiar shopping experience no matter what Wal-Mart store that I may walk into. The standardization of the products being sold allows me to know where to look for an item in the store, as well as being confident ahead of time that the product is in the store in the first place. Keeping all of this in mind, globalization does have uneven effects and these uneven effects can easily be seen in many places in rural America.

Critics of globalization discuss the ruined communities and wasted lives that result from globalized competition (Bauman, 1998, 2007; Edmondson, 2003; Giroux, 2003; Harvey, 2000; Leach, 1999). Low prices for consumers also mean low wages for the service workers in the stores and the manufacturing jobs (often overseas) that manufacture the items being sold. The convenience of unlimited yearly selection of food stuffs masks the effects of globalization on the workers who pick the fruit, cut the meat, milk the cows, or harvest the vegetables (Davidson, 1990; Pollan, 2006; Schlosser, 2001). Unfortunately, many of the negative aspects of globalization directly affect rural areas in our country.

In rural America, neoliberalism and globalization have combined to define an economic way of life that stresses economic efficiency at the expense of local labor, environment, and communities. Coal companies and other natural resource companies view rural areas as little more than a commodity extraction sight (Berry, 1997); the destruction that mountain top removal mining techniques wreak are another example of how the “efficient” (inexpensive) methods of a global economy can devastate a local environment. Rural areas have traditionally relied on agriculture, natural resource extraction and manufacturing for employment (Drabenscott & Henderson, 2006). Globalization has forced many of these industries to relocate as they attempt to maximize their invested capital by finding the cheapest labor and tax environment possible.

Just understanding the definitions of neoliberalism and globalization does not assist us in understanding how they act as forces of change in rural communities. Neoliberalism and globalization are forces that have caused changes in the social, economic and educational structures of rural America. These changes in turn influence

rural sustainability. The following section of this chapter will explore the changes in rural community structures, starting with the economic changes. The economic changes will lead into further discussions on the changes in social and educational structures and policies.

Changes in Rural Community Structures

Changes in Economic Structures

Human Capital

Neoliberal economic theorists believe that the more market forces are involved in society, the less government will be compelled to act on issues; thus, less government interference will lead to a freer society (Friedman, 2002). According to this view, capitalism is the force that can lead to freedom of individuals across national boundaries. A government that interferes with the procedures of capitalism (by instituting rent controls, for example) limits the freedom of people to enter into mutually beneficial contracts. This philosophy of limited government interference is also reflected in free-trade agreements signed between nations. Free-trade agreements between countries allow corporations to move their resources to whatever country offers the cheapest labor and the least restrictive tax structure. Corporations will locate production where they can find the cheapest labor. This has resulted in manufacturing jobs being lost in advanced industrial economies and being relocated in less advanced, third world

economies. In effect, the displaced workers in the United States have found they are competing against third world labor markets.

As noted above, neoliberalism has changed the definition of freedom to mean limited government controls and a protection of individuals to enter into contracts with each other. This has led to a policy shift toward increasing human capital as a way to help rural economies thrive (Nadel & Sagawa, 2002). Human capital refers to the skills and abilities that a person possesses that assist them in their life such as education and professional qualifications/skills. More specifically, human capital, "...includes those attributes of individuals that contribute to their ability to earn a living, strengthen the community, and otherwise contribute to community organizations, to their families, and to self improvement" (Flora, Flora & Fey, 2004, p. 80). Becker also offers a useful definition of human capital as "...the knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals" (Becker, 2006). The more human capital one possesses, the more opportunities the person will have to create economic opportunities for themselves.

A method rural citizens can use to gain more economic opportunities for themselves is to increase their human capital and to move to where opportunity arises, usually in non-rural areas. The cheerleaders for free trade are not concerned about the loss of these jobs because they believe that the advanced economies will become "magnet" economies for high tech jobs in the future, although the efficacy of this argument has been questioned (Brown & Lauder, 2006). The concept of a magnet economy is rooted in the belief that the loss of blue-collar jobs will be replaced by the increase of knowledge based or technical jobs. Thus, not only the workers who lost their jobs, but also students in school today, must gain human capital. The best guarantee for

people to get “human capital” is through the educational system. In an attempt to ensure that the skills needed to improve human capital are transmitted to students, educational policy elites have fundamentally changed the educational system to reflect the neoliberal emphasis on competition, efficiency, and free markets.

Changes in Social Structures

While globalization has had an obvious impact on the economic lives of rural Americans through lay-offs and job insecurity, the social impact in rural America is also profound. One of the overlooked results of the United States pursuing a policy of free trade is the relationship between the government and its citizens. Security has always been an explanation for why people have come together to live in cities and form societies. At first, this security was for personal safety from forces outside of the group. Later, laws and regulations were enforced to protect individuals from one another within the societies. As personal safety became relatively assured, other areas of safety and protection were implemented. Individuals became concerned about their economic well-being and the government responded with various policies to protect the workers and the industries for which they worked.

Globalization has taken away even those tenuous protections of economic security. Individuals are left to their own means when confronted with the effects of the globalized economy because the government has shifted resources away from solving social problems (Giroux, 2003). Additionally, people feel less secure because the political process has become “decoupled” from the process of globalization (Bauman,

2007). In other words, the United States government cannot mitigate the changes happening because of globalization because the actual decision makers for the global economy are global forces outside the control of the government. Nations choose to join the global economy by adopting free-trade policies. However, once a nation has made this decision, their national economy becomes entwined in the global economy. Once this occurs, many decisions that will affect the national economy are beyond the control of the national government. The current sub-prime mortgage situation in the United States has negatively affected economies all over the world. Furthermore, “Society is no longer protected by the state, or at least it is unlikely to trust the protection on offer; it is now exposed to the rapacity of forces it does not control and no longer hopes or intends to recapture or subdue” (Bauman, 2007, p. 25). This is what Bauman (2007) refers to as “negative globalization,” and its affect on rural schools and communities is profound.

Rural communities have suffered because of the state not being willing (or able) to provide a sense of protection to its citizens from the changes resulting from neoliberalism and globalization. The economic insecurities also contribute to a corresponding change in social structures. Since citizens and the government have little control over the economic vagaries brought forth by globalization, both strive to control what they can. Insecurity becomes fear, which in turn leads to actions to alleviate that fear. Ironically, in a global world where money and commodities can move freely across national boundaries, the most important part of the economic equation, labor, can not move freely. Part of the reason that immigration is a topic contested within governments is because it is one thing they can control with some certainty. Individuals today are encouraged to be “flexible” in the way in which they decide how to act in this world.

Bauman (2007) defines flexibility in this context as, "...a readiness to change tactics and style at short notice, to abandon commitments and loyalties without regret—and to pursue opportunities according to their current availability, rather than follow one's own established preferences" (p. 4). The result is a change in the meaning of progress from "shared improvement" to "individual survival" (Bauman, 2007). Individual survival implies that a citizen in a rural community will become more concerned about how they will gain the human capital necessary to gain an advantage at their job. It also implies that education is so important to build human capital reserves that the most prestigious education is necessary.. Finally, individual survival in rural communities means rural citizens are less willing to assist others in the community because they are focused on and worried about their own personal well-being.

Today people are experiencing a change in the fundamental social structure of their lives (Bauman, 2007). According to Bauman (2007), these changes are occurring for five reasons. First, the change is a result of the "opening" of societies caused by economic free trade and the shrinking of space and time because of technological advances. Second, the social structures that were once controlled in a local or national space are now in a global space that is beyond the control of the local and national citizenry (Bauman, 2007). This results in a decoupling of power and politics as the nation state loses its sovereignty. Third, community, in modern times, has become a "hollow" concept because the state has relinquished many of its devices to protect its citizens from the vagaries of the modern economic system, thus "...sap[ping] the social foundations of social solidarity" (Bauman, 2007, p 2). Where once people would invest a lot of their time in creating bonds between each other for the purpose of communal

security, we are now in a phase where the community is viewed more as a space where people make temporary pacts to help themselves survive. As Bauman states:

Individual exposure to the vagaries of commodity and labour markets inspires and promotes division, not unity; it puts a premium on competitive attitudes, while degrading collaboration and team work to the rank of temporary stratagems that need to be suspended or terminated the moment their benefits have been used up. (p. 4)

Fourth, there is a lack of long term thinking and planning because in the liquid society, past successes and strategies are not useful for future success, “Each next step needs to be a response to a different set of opportunities and a different distribution of odds, and so it calls for a different set of skills...” (p. 5). In this scenario, forgetting what was successful in the past will actually assist a person because they will not be hampered by previous learning. Fifth, people are expected to adopt a trait of flexibility because they operate in a society where they must design their own solutions to problems that used to be the responsibility of the political system. An obvious example in education is the school choice system because the student (and parent) can choose another school if they are unhappy with the one they are attending. For rural students and families this option is often nonexistent because of the distance one would have to travel to attend a “competing” school. Thus, the government has moved the responsibility for improving education to individual families as they search for the best education for their children.

Changes in Educational Structures

School choice is an example of a shift away from government responsibility for education to one where individuals are responsible for their own education. School choice does not make sense in rural areas for reasons stated in the previous paragraph. Standardized test scores are not the only way to judge whether a school is teaching students. However, it is currently the way in which schools are being judged in this age of neoliberal educational policies. On matters of test scores and other measures, rural schools are doing well compared with urban and suburban schools. Rural schools are a place where educational innovation can occur. The size of schools is generally smaller which allows for a better opportunity for teachers and students to collaborate closely. Rural schools, the students who attend them, and the teachers who teach in them are different from their urban and suburban counterparts. Starting in the mid 1990s, rural students started to improve at a higher rate than their urban counterparts based on information from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Lee, 2001). For example, rural students score above average on state tests, enjoy broad support from parents and communities, and rural students are generous in their praise for their teachers (Brookings Institute, 2003). Beck and Shoffall (2005) found that rural students outperformed non rural students on the Illinois state test. Finally, in 2007, a report from the federal Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) cited three areas where rural students outshine their urban and suburban counterparts. First, rural students at all grade levels did better on national science tests than children in urban schools, and about the same as students from suburban schools. The second finding was

that rural students performed better than urban students at every grade level. Finally, fourth and eighth grade rural students read better than urban students and almost as well as suburban students. This report also found that rural teachers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs.

As noted above, rural schools are competitive in their performance vis-a-vis urban and suburban schools in the United States. This success has not kept rural schools from being drastically affected by neoliberalism and globalization. In the United States the change in educational philosophy was hastened with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Educational Act in 2002. In a brilliant display of Orwellian wordsmanship, the act was officially named No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB inserts the philosophical ideals of neoliberalism into the educational setting by demanding accountability through the testing of standards through testing (Marshall & Tucker, 1992), although evidence suggests that neoliberal philosophies in public education are not being effective (Hursh, 2007).

Rural Community Sustainability

Threats to Rural Sustainability

A review of where we have been in our discussions of changes in structures in rural communities will assist in understanding our next concept, community apathy. The human capital model of economic policy begins the process of drawing citizens away from a sense of belonging to a community. After all, you want to gain an advantage in

your own personal skills over your neighbor. While this is happening, the same philosophy of individualism is permeating rural social structures. This is reflected in fewer public spaces available to discuss community issues, even if citizens had a predilection to do so. Finally, in education, the neoliberal enthrallment with testing individual kids on a generic set of standards pulls an individual further away from the community, eventually leading to disengagement from community activity. Questions of why apathy sets in begin to arise.

Community apathy

Once people start to question why there is a sense of apathy, constructive discourse can take place on how to correct the problem. This is especially true if the communities are going to challenge the changes created by neoliberalism and globalization. Apathy refers to a lack of enthusiasm or emotion. Mills (1959) argues that one of the major issues of our time is to articulate what our cherished values are and attempt to discover if they are being threatened by forces in society. Mills (1959) further states:

But suppose people are neither aware of any cherished values nor experience any threat? That is the experience of indifference, which, if it seems to involve all of their values, becomes apathy. Suppose, finally, they are unaware of any cherished values, but still are very much aware of a threat? That is the experience of uneasiness, of anxiety, which, if it is total enough, becomes deadly unspecified malaise. (p. 11)

The process of attempting to locate one's personal problems within a larger society is difficult. At a time when these discussions are most relevant, communities in rural America are being bombarded with the philosophy that all of the answers to their problems are located outside the community (Berry, 1990).

Public schools also have lost their place as a space for the public, and the students, to discuss the dominant political culture and this loss is especially difficult in rural communities. School consolidation is an example of how a valuable public space is destroyed for a community when a school is closed in a community. However, rural schools can foster a pedagogy of hope that encourages people to be critical of the effects of neoliberalism and globalization (Giroux, 2003). In Giroux's view hope "...makes the leap for us between critical education, which tells us what must be changed; political agency, which gives us the means to make change; and the concrete struggles through which change happens" (Giroux, 2004, p. 63). Giroux (2003) also traces the rise of apathy and cynicism to the "...emergence of a view of education in which schools are defined as a private rather than a public good" (p. 84). Education also has a role in fostering the development of democratic ideals. Schools are a democratic public sphere where the ideals and practice of democracy are taught (Giroux, 2005).

The opportunity trap

I discussed earlier the change in economic structures that encourage human capital accumulation in which individuals must amass increasing levels of skills in order to increase their reasonable chances of employment. However, the human capital model is problematic in rural communities. The argument put forth by neoliberal philosophy is simple: once a person has gained the requisite human capital, they can re-enter (or enter

for the first time) the global labor market and compete for a well paying job. The concept of competition once again is a foundational concept for people to find a job. Much like competition is supposed to propel the United States into a magnet economy; and competition will force schools to meet predetermined benchmarks of accountability, competition will also be the way in which our citizens will find work. An interesting question arises: what happens if everyone who is competing for these skills improves at the same rate relative to each other? In a relative sense, individuals will gain nothing on those they will be competing against for jobs because all experience a human capital gain. This is what Phillip Brown (2006) refers to as the “opportunity trap.” Phillip Brown and Hugh Lauder (2006) explain further:

For individuals and families the fundamental problem posed is that while students attempt to raise their game, resulting in higher credentialing achievement, this does little to improve their relative chances of entering tough-entry colleges, universities, or jobs. (p. 333)

People must strive for a “positional” advantage over other people who are competing for the same job (Brown, 2006). In simple terms, although everyone is exposed to education that will increase their human capital, parents and students are determined to go for the most prestigious education because education at the most prestigious schools will separate them (or their children) from the others attempting employment in the same job.

The opportunity trap and rural schools

While NCLB was supposed to “level the playing field” by basing educational and vocational opportunity on a meritocracy, inequalities exist for people of race, different ethnic backgrounds, and low socio-economic background because the elite schools still favor those with the resources to take advantage of the system. Before globalization, “...the basis of opportunity was to give people an equal chance to gain top vocational prizes. This led to much discussion about class, gender, and racial inequalities in educational outcomes” (Brown, 2006, p. 385). Globalization has shifted the focus of the discussions within the educational community so that issues of social justice and fairness are viewed as “secondary” (Brown, 2006). The role the government plays in these discussions has changed. “It is also *believed* [italics added] the role of government is limited to providing all with the opportunity to enhance their employability, as national governments can no longer guarantee employment in a competitive global environment” (Brown, 2006, p. 385).

The result is a fundamental shift in the relationship between the federal and state government and the school system. Since the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, educators have struggled with the question of how to make educational opportunities fair for all students. Today, education policy has changed the meaning of what is “fair” (Brown & Lauder, 2006). The authors state that “a ‘fair’ educational system is no longer one that attempts to create a level playing field, but one dedicated to raising the standards of all, and facilitating greater access to higher education in order to arm the workforce with credentials...” (p. 319). Where fair used to be equated with

equal access to education for all groups, fair is now the opportunity to gain credentials so an individual can “store” it in their “human capital bank.” The meaningful credentialing agency in the past was the university. A university degree was the credential necessary to improve one’s economic or social condition.

This important credentialing function has now moved to public education as schools strive to give their students the most meaningful “credentials” so they can get a good job, or continue their education at an elite university. As competition for placement into these schools (at the secondary and post secondary level) increases, the same inequalities faced by disadvantaged groups in the past still exist; except now the government has shifted the responsibility for guaranteeing fairness. In the past the government played an active role in trying to assure that disadvantaged groups had a fair chance for quality education. NCLB has encouraged a change in that framework to one where it is an individual’s responsibility to “shop around” to find the best education in the secondary setting if their school is deemed as failing. This is a case where the government is blaming the victim because the government does not wish to assist in solving the problem, only to offer school choice to students and parents. As mentioned earlier, this school choice option is a hallow concept for most rural students and parents because of distance issues. The purpose of education becomes based on performance on a test, or other state mandated assessment instrument pitting schools against each other. Under this system, individuals must use their own resources to make determinations about what school they can attend to gather the best human capital. The government’s role is to only discipline schools that do not meet the benchmarks set forth in NCLB, even as competition has made it increasingly more difficult to determine what “good”

means. As Ball (2006) states, “Indeed, the particular discipline of competition encourages schools and universities to fabricate themselves—to manage and manipulate their performances in particular ways” (p. 697). The idea that individuals should rely on their own wherewithal ignores the fact that disadvantaged groups still can not garner the resources necessary to “take advantage” of a competitive educational market place (Brown, 2006). For example, rural students would have a difficult time taking advantage of school choice when long distance and travel prevent them from choosing different schools. Rural students also suffer when a curriculum devised for an urban setting is thrust into rural schools. Benchmarks of performance are based on test results of standards (read curriculum) that are mandated by the state or national government. The curriculum that is encouraged does not serve rural students well because it does not speak to rural sensibilities (Donehower, Hogg, & Schell, 2007). The role the government has played in assuring equality in schools has been replaced by the concept of competition and credentialing in public education.

Public education and occupational attainment

Public education’s placement in the discussion of occupational attainment has changed with the increasing importance of globalization and the educational changes that accompany that change. Public education has become a gatekeeper that separates opportunities that students can realistically attain in the job market. Although social reproduction of class structure and inequalities has been a criticism of public education for some time (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), the effects of globalization have placed the responsibility for changing social inequalities on the students and parents who are suffering from the inequalities. In the past the federal and state governments tried to

mediate the effects of the disadvantaged. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the responsibility for change now rests on the student and their family to find the better educational institution that will help them gain a competitive edge in the economy.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the shift in responsibility:

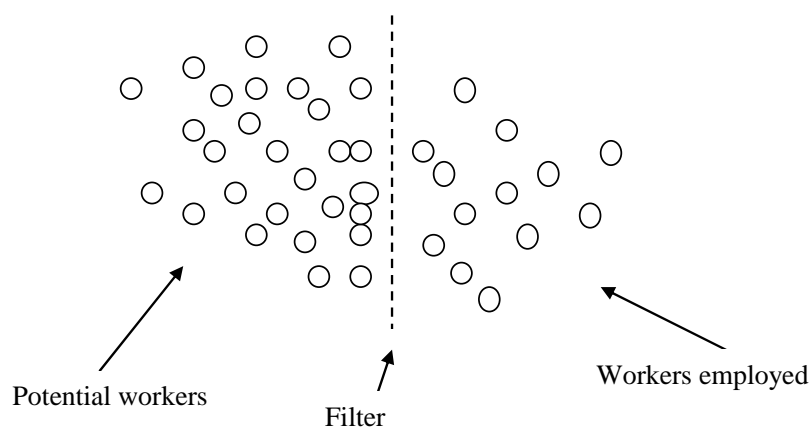


Figure 2.2: Barriers to job attainment

The circles on the left represent all potential members of the work force. On the right side, the circles represent the workers who are employed. The difference in the number of workers versus the number of potential workers is the filter that separates the two groups. In the past, the filter for the best jobs was university training or benefits based on social and economic class. This credentialing filter would prevent some of the potential workers from pursuing certain occupations. Credentialing is an exclusionary tactic that provides a way to limit the amount of people entering a given profession. Today, credentialing for the best jobs in the economy have moved to the secondary schools. Figure 2.3 represents what is happening today:

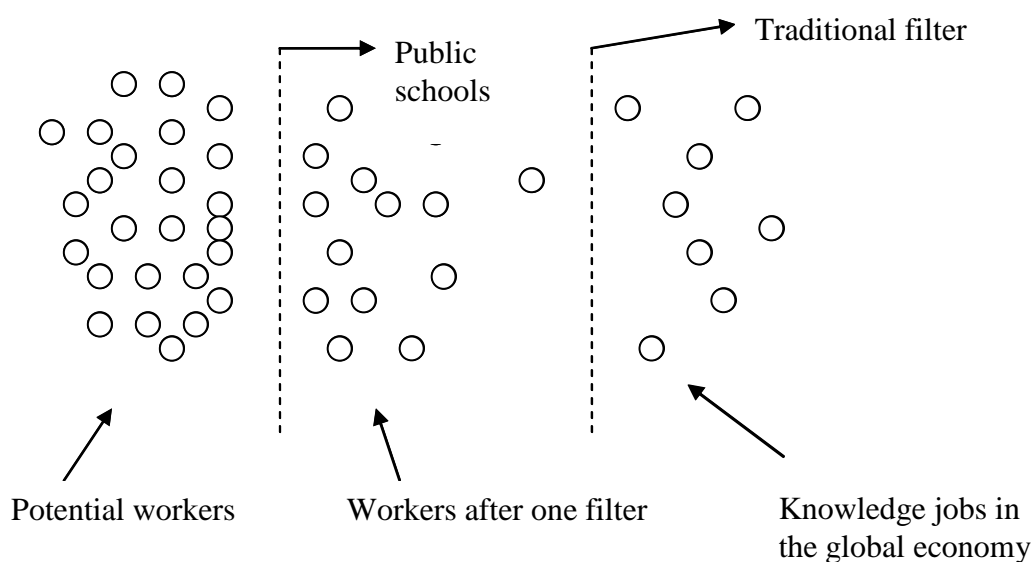


Figure 2.3: Public school and barriers to educational attainment

The figure shows the role public education has been forced to play because of globalization. Secondary education is now forced to play the role of a filter that prevents some people from entering the workforce at higher levels of attainment. Elementary and secondary education has become an important filter that prevents greater economic and social mobility of students. The reason is embedded in the economic changes brought on by globalization, as well as the ensuing changes in education. Before the advent of free trade policies, American workers were more protected from the vagaries of global competition. The government instituted policies which protected, to a certain degree, workers from other labor markets. This meant that good, high paying jobs could be found with the education earned at secondary level. The federal and state government, after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) played an important role in attempting to assure equality for all students. Although these attempts may not have produced the

results everyone would have liked to see, the fact is that the federal and state governments were trying to mediate in matters of social justice. Today, that social justice piece is missing. Secondary schooling has become an important gatekeeper that prevents many people from striving for the very jobs that free market advocates are claiming will replace traditional industrial jobs in the magnet economy of the United States.

Supports for rural sustainability

I have discussed some of the threats to rural community sustainability as they relate to the three concepts of change affected by globalization and neoliberalism. I have further discussed specific threats to rural community sustainability. I will now discuss specific supports that originate from social, economic, or educational change that I have discussed previously. These supports will form the basis for the role that I believe schools can play in helping sustain rural communities. The first support will revolve around economic development and specifically entrepreneurship as an economic development initiative. Next will be a discussion about public spaces and their impact on changes in social structures. A discussion about place-based education will end this section with the discussion centering on how a place-based curriculum can counteract some of the curriculum standardization and lack of relevance currently affecting rural schools. In an effort to make a curriculum relevant, place-based curriculums work best when they are centered on the community in which the school resides. The same framework holds true for economic development. Entrepreneur related economic

development is one example of the change away from traditional economic development models.

Community development and entrepreneurship

Traditional economic development for rural areas, which consists of a “three-legged stool” of recruitment strategies, retention strategies, and entrepreneurship, is becoming wobbly, especially in rural communities (K. Dabson & Soni-Meyers, 2005). The process of persuading companies to locate to a particular area has, “...evolved from simple presentations of an area’s business-friendly assets to frenetic bidding wars using tax breaks, financial incentives, and infrastructure investments” (B. Dabson, 2005, p. 12). This strategy can be particularly harmful if the businesses that are brought into an area are a result of “outbidding” another region. The locality that wins this bidding war has often given so much corporate welfare to the company that the economic returns for the locality are minimized. In addition, retention strategies “can not compete with the massive restructurings, layoffs, and closings forced by shifts in global trade, technology advances, and changing consumer preferences” (B. Dabson, 2005, p. 13). A better approach would be to look at these three strategies as a pyramid with entrepreneurship as the base, retention strategies in the middle, and recruitment on the top to be used sparingly (B. Dabson, 2005). By encouraging the growth of talent within an area, entrepreneurship strategies go beyond a strict economic development to one based more on community economic development.

Community economic development is defined as “...more than the concrete goals of creating jobs and generating income. . . it is local improvement, but the specific focus is on the economic sector” (Korsching & Allen, 2004, p. 386). As a community economic development strategy, entrepreneurship has advantages over the traditional economic strategies, especially when applied to a rural setting. Currently, there is not a unified vision for community economic development for rural communities (B. Dabson, 2005). If this situation continues, rural areas will be hampered by a series of “unpalatable defaults” which are homogenization, commoditization, urbanization, and colonization (B. Dabson, 2005). To combat these defaults, a community must look within itself for the problems and the solutions to these problems. Entrepreneurship offers just such a framework.

The definition of entrepreneurship is varied. Entrepreneurship offers the chance for people to start small businesses to maximize the economic potential of a given locale. Entrepreneurs are creative problem solvers who can develop creative ideas where none were present. Entrepreneurial communities are centered on the following principles: first, they are community driven; second they are regionally oriented; and third, they are entrepreneur focused (B. Dabson, 2005). By stressing these principles, a local economy can begin to extract itself from the grip of responding to the global economy to a more active role in developing itself to benefit from the global economy. Furthermore, research indicates that one of the key differences between the success and failure of regional economies is the presence or absence of what he terms “growth” entrepreneurs (Macke, 2002).

Public Spaces and the Role of Rural Schools

Public spaces provide an invaluable opportunity for rural people to debate among themselves the type of life they wish for themselves and their community, either economically, socially, or educationally (Bauman, 1998). A public space can be any space where people gather together in a community setting. These spaces provide an opportunity for local opinion leaders to engage in a conversation about the community's role in a globalized world (Bauman, 1998). Without these conversations there "...is no room left for 'local opinion leaders'; no room is left for local opinion as such" (Bauman, 1998, p. 26). Without these public spaces, what it means to be a member of a rural community will be defined by the popular culture outside the local community.

Place-based education

As a rural community strives to start conversations in public spaces, schools can encourage the same types of conversation in their students by adopting place-based curricular options. The history of rural schools indicates a close relationship with the community; the attendance at any Friday night football game in a small rural town will attest to this fact. These football games also highlight that schools have a history of playing two roles in our society. Driscoll (2001) argues that one role of the school is to link students with community, family, and home, which is accomplished in one way by the extra-curricular activities that involve the community. The second role is that of preparing students for their role of adulthood. This second role is reflected in the curriculum of the schools and the importance placed on the curriculum by the school and

the community. When a school system brings these two roles together, “place-based” education occurs.

Driscoll (2001) offers a useful definition of place-based education where schools are “...sustainable institutions that are intimately connected with the communities in which they find themselves as a means of preparing students to take on the broader world” (p. 23). However the challenge for rural educators is to assure that their students see relevance in their education (Corbett, 2007). The students must see that their time in school will relate in some positive way to what will happen to them when they want to move into the community as adults.

Place-based education has its roots in the teachings of John Dewey who encouraged “experiential education” to educators at the turn of the twentieth century (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). Place-based education has been called different things through the years. Haas & Nachtigal (1998) called it place-based education, Knowles (1992) referred to it as environmental education, Woodhouse & Knapp (2000) have also referred to it as outdoor education. Place-based education is also called community-based curriculum. This is any curriculum where the school system encourages teachers to “go beyond the walls” of the school and physically take the students to the community. Place-based education also provides the school system a chance to critique the dominant culture influencing the local community.

Public Spaces and Critical Pedagogy of Place

The following discussion revolves around how a place-based curriculum can make the curriculum more relevant to the students and lead to a critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2008). Place-based education occurs when the school's curriculum incorporates concerns, issues, or the physical environment of the community in which the school resides. Students in turn can learn from a curriculum that is more culturally tied to the experiences in their lives. A curriculum that incorporates these ideals can also provide an opportunity for students and teachers to discuss how to improve their communities and critique the effects of neoliberalism and globalization (Theobald, 1997).

Rural schools and communities can confront the challenges that globalization imposes on their community while encouraging the growth of public spaces and democracy. A school curriculum that stresses the importance and value of the *locality* is an example of just such an effort. Place-based education encourages the school system to "move" the curriculum beyond the school walls and into the community. Place-based education stresses the concept of school as, "...important *places* in which people construct a social reality..." (DeYoung & Howley, 1992, p. 65). DeYoung and Howley (1992) further argue that schools are more than a place where students learn a predetermined body of knowledge; rather schools, "...are places in which meaning is made by those present" (p. 66). A curriculum that reaches into the community helps reeducate the students into the meaning of their locales. A community based curriculum will encourage students to care more for their communities as well as help them make sense of the curriculum because they will be active in community learning (Orr, 1992).

Place-based education also offers a chance for students to examine their role in their communities and larger society because the curriculum becomes relevant to the students' lives. Rural place based education also expands the definition of rural education to encapsulate more than just "schooling" (Gruenewald, 2008). It encourages a "new localism" where education values the school and its relationship to the community. The curriculum becomes more than a static set of standards the state has instructed the school to "cover." Rather, the curriculum offers a space where students can critically examine the underlying rationale of the world they experience. Place-based education offers the space for a "critical pedagogy of place" (Gruenewald, 2003). Critical pedagogy of place, "...aims to contribute to the production of educational discourses and practices that explicitly examine the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10).

Place-Based Education and Student Performance

Place based education has been found to improve the academic performance of students because teachers can tailor their instruction to the interests of the students (). In a study by Athman & Monroe (2004), critical thinking skills also showed a marked improvement even after controlling for grade point average, ethnicity, and gender. In a 1998 study of fourteen schools implementing place-based education, the authors found that students participating in the curriculum did better in all core subject areas; the students had less discipline referrals and felt greater pride in their accomplishments (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). In this age of educational accountability

and testing, Theobald and Curtiss (2000) claim that standards can mesh with a community-based curriculum: “If excellent teachers resist the pressure to teach to the tests, a community-based curriculum should provide experiences in problem solving and critical thinking and should foster positive attitudes toward the people whom they share the community” (Theobald & Curtiss, p. 109, 2000).

Place-based education can also serve as a tool to encourage civic participation, strengthen democracy, and encourage resistance to dominant rural discourses in rural communities (Theobald, 1997; Corbett, 2007). In an era where the dominant political and economic discourse centers on globalization, a curriculum that encourages students to participate in their immediate community can mitigate many of the negative effects of globalization. The students will learn for themselves different economic and educational discourses based on their intimate experiences with their locality. Students learn different discourses in “public spaces” that have diminished over time. Harvey (2000) argues one reason public spaces have diminished is that public space has increasingly become privatized. Spaces where people used to be able to gather in public, for example in courtyards in front of buildings are now monitored for security reasons. Harvey (2000) goes on to discuss how these privatized spaces are actually discouraging people from gathering.

Summary

In sum, in this chapter I have argued that neoliberalism and globalization have created profound changes in the social, economic and educational structures of rural

communities. The changes have in turn threatened the social and economic sustainability of rural communities. Globalization and neoliberalism have created changes by shifting the focus of every one of these areas to an individualistic framework as a measure of success. Through a single case study, this dissertation will examine the opportunities and constraints facing rural communities in a time of change and the role that schools can play in increasing the chances of longer term social and economic sustainability. The methods used to examine the opportunities and constraints will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Design and Method of the Study

Introduction to Chapter Three

As discussed in Chapter One, this chapter will review and discuss the qualitative methods used for this study. It is important that I am upfront about my role as a participant observer in this study. This issue was discussed in Chapter One and will also be discussed further in Chapter Three. I will also discuss the interview, observation, and data analysis protocols that assisted me in developing themes for this study. Finally, I will discuss external validity as it pertains to case studies in general and this study specifically.

During this research project, I was a participant observer. A participant observer has multiple roles in the case study, and, "...may actually participate in the events being studied" (Yin, 1994, p. 87). Additionally, participant observation, "...demands firsthand involvement in the social world chosen for study" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 106). According to Yin (1994) there are two distinct advantages associated with this framework for observation. First, the participant-observer "can gain access to events or groups that are otherwise inaccessible to scientific investigation", and secondly, "...is the ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it" (p. 88).

Participant-observation does carry with it concerns (Yin, 1994). Merriam (1988) noted that participant observers must be sensitive to their role in altering the situations they are observing. Becker (in Yin, 1994) cautions against three potential forms of bias when the researcher is a participant-observer:

First, the investigator has less ability to work as an external observer and may, at times, have to assume positions or advocacy roles contrary to the interests of good scientific practices. Second, the participant observer may...become a supporter of the group... Third, the participant role may simply require too much attention relative to the observer role. (p. 89)

In an effort to minimize these potential problems, I followed the protocol offered by Miles and Huberman (1994) and I wrote memos to myself when insights into the study crystallized in my mind. The memos were written after every session where I spent more than one hour analyzing the data. This allowed me to focus on my observer role when analyzing data.

The role of the researcher has traditionally been one of an impartial observer of events, an outsider who enters a situation, gathers data, leaves, and then

reports the findings. Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 31) offer an alternative framework of observation; they offer a continuum of positionality of the researcher in regards to the unit of analysis. I was placed between numbers two and three on the continuum (Figure 3.1).

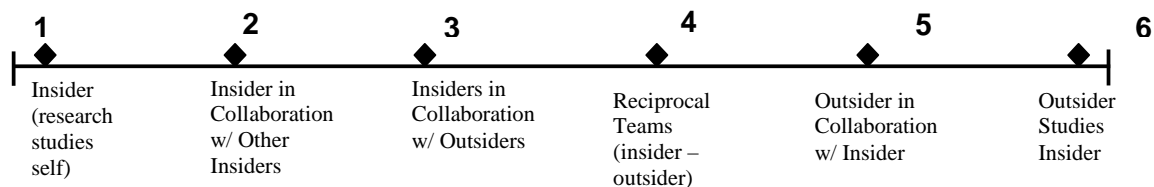


Figure 3.1 Researchers positionality in the study.

I have worked in the school district being studied for thirteen years. In addition, I grew up in the district and graduated from one of the high schools in the district. I was instrumental in the initial “idea phase” of the initiative being studied. I also served on the steering committee that comprises the study.

There are benefits for the study when one considers the researcher’s insider status. The level in which I as a researcher was able to delve into the subject was extensive. With this greater access also come cautions. Yin (1994) lists four cautions that the researcher should acknowledge: 1) The researcher may assume advocacy roles. In this study, I had an advocacy role in the early planning of the project. However, because of a change in school district leadership, that advocacy role was diminished. 2) The researcher may become a supporter of the group. 3) The participant’s role may require too much time in relation to the observer role. I was an early advocate for the

entrepreneur center concept. However, almost immediately after the trip to visit the Appalachian Regional Commission, the school district's new superintendent took over the advocacy role of the project. From the time the group came back from the meeting with the Appalachian Regional Commission, people familiar with the project recognized the new superintendent as the leader of the project.

However, the fact remains that I did have an advocacy role at the start of this project. To counteract any concerns dealing with my role in this study, this study used "critical friends" in the form of the dissertation committee and other persons that are familiar with the district to act as impartial third party observers. The data I gathered and my interpretation was checked by "critical friends". Costa and Kallick (as cited in Swaffield, 2002) have described a 'critical friend' as :

... a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work. (p. 50)

I was fortunate to have Dr. Arnold Hillman who is a retired educator and one of the founders of the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools as my critical friend. I became acquainted with him through work he did in Northern School District with the McKelvey Scholarship program. He was instrumental in many of the trips that were undertaken early in the exploration process of the entrepreneur center.

The new superintendent has organized two meetings of community members to introduce them to the idea of the entrepreneur center and the business incubator. The original committee consisted of over twenty five community members as well as the secondary principals, the secondary guidance counselors and the district's

business manager. These members were chosen by educators from each community within the district in an attempt to get an equal representation from all three communities within the district. The first meeting consisted of a general overview of the history of the project. The second meeting included architects from the firm that was doing the project feasibility study for the district. This meeting was more contentious since the architects talked about the options they were studying which included school consolidation. This topic quickly pitted community members against each other as they vied for a say in which school they felt should, or should not, be closed.

This research study sought to understand and give meaning to the participant's understandings of the world around them. Rist (n.d.) states that "...qualitative methodologies assume there is a value to an analysis of both the inner and outer perspective of human behavior...This inner perspective or 'understanding' assumes that a complete and ultimately truthful analysis can only be achieved by actively participating in the life of the observed and gaining insights by means of introspection" (p. 42). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a qualitative research design helps the researcher understand, "...people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions" (p. 395). As the school attempted to work with the community to develop a community development plan, the beliefs and perceptions of the major players were vital for an understanding of the success or failure of the initiative. The "major players" were members of the task force assembled by the school district as well as school board members and educators in the school district. I am classifying the school system and the community separately because the school district was introducing a new concept to the community.

Understanding the holistic picture in the community for this case study was paramount; the community members who were on the task force must have their worldview articulated and examined. The researcher must integrate him or herself into this system to best understand the reasons behind the decisions that were made. The underlying philosophy of qualitative research is one in which reality must be understood through the eyes of those that experience the phenomenon. As Merriam (1998) states, “Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning. . . how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, and how they interpret those experiences” (p.17). A qualitative design allowed me a chance to understand all of the variables that lead to decisions.

Research Strategies

Additionally, the case study was the most appropriate method to understand the issues that are involved when specific action steps were taken because the investigator entered the world of the participants. As Yin (1994) states, a case study, “...investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (p. 13), the underlying philosophies of the major players, as well as how well they represent the community at large, is important. As Yin (1994) and Owens (1982) state, case studies must rely on more than just one source of information; therefore, the valuable data that may be missed with other data gathering techniques will be uncovered. To obtain the most sources of data, this study employed interviewing, direct observation, and document analysis.

A well-developed case study design should have a protocol that provides guidance to assist the researcher in planning their research (Yin, 1994). As part of the protocol for this research design, there was a very specific strategy of access to the site. The first contact was made with the person that can grant permission to be on site (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). In this case, that person was the superintendent of schools. The superintendent also serves as the lead contact person for this initiative, so he had knowledge and insight into the initiative. Since the school district is small and people tend to know each other, it was easier to converse with the people necessary to gain access. In addition, since the school board was already familiar with the researcher, there were few questions about why I was attending the meetings.

Data Collection Techniques

The primary data collection technique was the interview (see Appendix A for interview questions). The former school superintendent, principals, guidance counselors, members of the committees, school board members and participants at community meetings were interviewed to assist in answering the research questions. Everyone that attended the second community meeting to discuss the entrepreneur center was invited to participate. Eighteen people agreed to be interviewed, while ten people simply did not respond to the request to participate. No one refused to be interviewed explicitly, rather they just did not respond to the request to participate. The weakness of this sampling strategy is that no one outside the committee and the school system was interviewed. However, this weakness was minimized because the committee members

were chosen to represent the communities in which they live. All names in this dissertation are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the people who participated. Additionally, town names and other identifying geographical landmarks have been changed. I was interested in learning the differing perspectives held by members of the committee and the school district. Specifically, was there a meaningful difference in perspectives between the school district, the committee, and the public regarding the purpose and viability of school/community collaboration in a community development initiative? Furthermore, how would the different perspectives lead to challenges and opportunities for rural school and community collaboration? According to Stake (1995), the interview is the best data gathering technique for this purpose. A thorough description of the data analysis of the interviews occurs at the end of this chapter. Participants who were interviewed were the school board members, committee members, and participants at community meetings (see Appendix F for a complete listing). A structured, open-ended question and answer interview was used with these participants. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each and resulted in seventeen to twenty four pages of transcripts per interview. Interviews also allowed the researcher to focus on the specific research question and gain information that may lead to other interviews (Yin, 1994).

This research also incorporated document analysis (see Appendix B for timeline). Perhaps the best use of documents is to verify and validate what the researcher has learned in other data collection techniques (Yin, 1994). In this research, historical documents such as meeting minutes and correspondence were used (Appendix G). This aided in "...getting in the shoes" of the committee and attempting to understand their views of the world based on past and present circumstances. Specifically, meeting

minutes from November 16th were used as a guide to verify the coding and analysis of the meeting data. Document analysis can be used, as Yin (1994) states, to help the researcher verify any information that has been gathered in the other two data gathering techniques. Any documents that were produced by the committee were also reviewed to try to understand the internal perspective of the committee (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Other than meeting minutes, the most important document that I analyzed was the report published by the architectural firm paid to study the project for the school district. I analyzed this document by comparing the early ideals of the project with the results of the study. This analysis was invaluable to me in later interviews with community members who served on the task force. I discovered this document did not reflect what the community members felt should have been done for the school district. Finally, these documents assisted the researcher in trying to answer the research questions because documents often provide important insights into both public and private perceptions (Rist, 1982). The total number of documents consisted of twenty historical newspapers taken from a thirty year period (1940-1970), minutes from three community meetings, and the feasibility study produced for the school district.

This research design also used observation (Appendix C). Observations consisted of the committee meetings held to discuss the project. By observing meetings, the researcher had another source of data to verify the interviews and documents, as well as observing the decision making process within the group. As Weiss (1995) points out, “[a]ctors in the ‘receiving’ arena may have interests and beliefs different than those of the reformers” (p. 589). By observing the deliberations of the steering committee, the researcher was able to evaluate whether or not the message from the committee was

being heard in the community. Conversely, this study explored whether or not the stream of communication flowed back to the task force. The task force may be viewed in the framework of a power relationship where the meetings with the community were just a hurdle that had to be overcome on the way to implementing a decision that had already been made. The interactions of the committee and the community were important in determining whether this was actually the case.

Observations were important for this research study because differences in opinion and differing reactions to information presented at the meeting became evident from verbal and nonverbal reactions of task force members. Observations were of the three task force meetings convened to discuss the Entrepreneur Center. During the most contentious (and important meeting) held on November 16th, 2006, I tracked the amount of times peoplespoke, as well as what they discussed. This provided valuable insight into the shift in direction of the discussion of the entrepreneur center. As another example, at the last meeting, economic development and school consolidation dominated the discussion with little talk of the entrepreneur center actually occurring. These ancillary topics may not be evident in interviews, but were obviously important to the committee. Observations have also shown that individual behaviors differ from claims. A person may claim to be a person who speaks one's mind when in reality they acquiesce to a more domineering person within the group; as Merriam (1988) states about observations, "...the researcher might observe dissention or strife among certain staff members that an interview would not reveal" (p. 89). When observations of the members' actions were coupled with the interviews, a good sense of how a decision is being made formed.

Limitations of the Research Design

The nature of a qualitative design brings with it certain inherent weaknesses. The researcher is the primary source of data collection; thus, the skill and biases that the researcher brings to the study will affect the overall results (Merriam, 1988). I have mentioned earlier my role in this project, especially during the early stages of development of the project. I served as a guidance counselor for four years and have a Master's degree in counseling psychology. As such, one of my strengths is interviewing. I was trained as a counselor to be comfortable with silence during interviews that allows those being interviewed time to formulate an answer. In addition, my counseling skills allowed me to use follow up questions more effectively as I interviewed task force members. Stake (1995) points out that qualitative design may propagate misunderstanding about the data because the "...researcher-interpretor is unaware of their own intellectual shortcomings" (p. 45).

Additionally, I had to be aware of my role as a principal in the district during this study. As mentioned earlier, I attempted to minimize any limitations in this area in two ways. First, the use of a critical friend who was not hesitant about offering constructive criticism of the situation as it pertained to my position in the study. Secondly, the change in district leadership can not be understated as far as how my role in the project changed. I became just another person serving on the task force with no particular power over anyone else. In addition, especially during the meeting on November 16th, I spent most of the meeting taking notes and coding the interaction between task force members.

Case studies must also address how to confront external validity, or how someone can generalize results from one case study situation to similar situation. (Yin, 1994). Thus, generalizeability to other schools may be seen as low. However, Ruddin (2006), building on the work of Robert Stake and Deborah Trumball, discusses how generalizability of the study should be left to the reader. A well-constructed case study will allow the reader to engage in naturalistic generalization. Naturalistic generalizations, "...are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (Stake, 1995). Additionally, external validity traditionally is concerned with statistical generalization, while a case study is concerned with analytical generalization (Yin, 1994). Analytical generalization implies the investigator is generalizing a set of results to a broader theory (Yin, 1994). However, concerns for external validity in a case study can be answered in two ways. First, the reason a case study is chosen as a study method is to learn in depth about a particular, specific phenomenon, not "...what is generally true of the many" (Merriam, 1988, p. 173). Second, when a case study offers rich descriptions of the situation, or explains the category of the case well enough so others can make comparisons to their own situations concerns of external validity are lessened (Merriam, 1988).

Data Analysis

For this study, I followed the framework offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). After every interview, I completed a "contact summary form" where I would organize my

thoughts and first impressions of the interviews. I also used this opportunity to critique my interviewing performance. I noticed in my first interview that I would talk too much and almost “led” the interviewee into answers. I thus became aware of my own style of interviewing and started to approach interviewing as a counselor. In my counselor training, we were instructed to talk very little and let the person talk to us; I used this tactic during the rest of my interviews. During the course of data collection, I also wrote memos to myself when an inspiration regarding the study occurred to me. These were particularly helpful as I analyzed the interview tapes because they helped me organize my thoughts about the direction of the study. I also used a coding system that was based on the conceptual and theoretical framework. I incorporated suggestions from Miles and Huberman (1994) and based the early coding system on field notes. The conceptual framework also provided a good start to bound my codes, but I soon added additional codes. My coding system allowed me to collapse similar codes into themes. Finally, I organized the themes on a large piece of paper and they became categories for me as I added quotes from the interview transcripts underneath the themes (Appendix D). I then drew arrows to and from quotes from different categories that were connected by similar sub-themes. This helped me make meaning of the information that I had gathered.

Chapter 4

Globalization and Rural Communities

“There are few places to banter ideas about”

-Joe, district principal

“Public spaces-agoras and forums in their various manifestations, place where agendas are set, private affairs are made public, opinions are formed, tested and confirmed, judgments are put together and verdicts are passed...” (Bauman, 1998, p. 24).

Introduction to Chapter Four

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, Chapter Four will provide a background of the communities of Northern School District. Chapter Four will focus on the community, and Chapter Five will continue the discussion in the context of the school system. Additionally, this chapter will discuss some of the major themes that were uncovered from the data analysis. These include positive community values, the need for imaginative thinking in the school and community, lack of hope in the community, and the need for public spaces to foster imaginative thinking.

The Communities of Northern School District

As visitors drive along State Route 60 that acts as the major east-west artery for two-thirds of the school district, they will have the opportunity to experience the communities as they pass through them. They may have the opportunity to participate in putting a cow back in the pasture after it has gotten loose; they may also experience the local dialect when stopping at one of the roadside vegetable stands. The towns seen during the drive are separated by miles of flat farmland, which helps one to understand why each community has its own “personality.” The two-lane highway passes through small towns and miles of farmland. As the road winds through the Cameron Valley, it criss-crosses the Cameron River as the river rebounds from one side of the valley to the other. If visitors pay attention, they will notice the road signs that have a silhouette of a cow to warn of “cow crossings”; they will also see signs with tractors on them to warn that farmers use this road also. If they look carefully, they will notice the forests are relatively new; this is a result of the logging that first attracted settlers over two hundred years ago. Trees also attracted the first tanneries to the area as they used the tannins from the bark of trees to assist them in making leather. The rich farmland that was created by the flooding of the river supported many small farmers in the valley, and many of their farmsteads can still be seen. Two of the towns on the route were developed as company towns to support tanneries. Visitors still notice how the towns are an outgrowth of the factories that they once supported; row houses that are closer to the original factory site where the laborers lived, while larger “bosses” houses are further away from the factory

in an “uptown” area. Although the drive is pleasant and pleasing, there are problems in these communities that reflect the problems and challenges of all of rural America.

There are four small towns that visitors would encounter on the drive through the valley, and all have seen their prime years ago. Population loss, limited manufacturing, and loss of family farms are factors that contribute to a sense of malaise in the community. People are friendly and one will leave with a feeling that the area reflects the stereotypical view of small town America—friendly people, beautiful scenery. In this way, these rural communities resembled the community that Vidich and Bensman (2000) studied almost sixty years ago. However, look closer; look for the things that are not present. There are few service clubs announcing their presence as you enter town. Many of the buildings on main streets are empty and in disrepair. Many of the old farmsteads no longer are working farms. Visitors are also likely to notice the empty tannery building in Westown; the lack of a vibrant downtown in Bloxville; the empty lumber store in Tannerytown; and finally the preponderance of gas stations and sub shops that dominate where routes 13 and 60 meet in Crossroads. These business establishments reflect the service economy that has come to dominate this end of the valley.

The route from east to west in the early morning after 5:30AM has a significant amount of traffic heading east as people leave their communities to drive to other communities to go to work. In Mill County, seventy five percent of those who commute to work drive alone for an average of twenty-three minutes (Census, 2006). Additionally, only .4 percent of the working citizens of Mill County use public transportation (Census, 2006). This reflects both the lack of public infrastructure in the

county and the difficulty faced by those who work away from their hometowns have in getting to work. In many ways, the Valley has become a bedroom community for manufacturing sites in New York and sections of Pennsylvania south of the school district. The two largest manufacturing plants that still employ significant amounts of workers are located in Tannerytown and Tioga. For other people who stay in the towns to work there are various small businesses that offer opportunities for employment. The second largest employer in the district is the school district, which is also the fourth largest employer in the county, so the school district is considered a place to get a good job (Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission [NTRPDC], 2004). Community members are proud of what they do and where they live, but they also express some frustration that things could be better in their community. The school district has a population of thirteen thousand and fifty three people, or thirty-one percent of the total population of Mill County (NTRPDC, 2004).

The school district and the communities that support it have seen their way of life threatened by forces seemingly out of their control. Factory closings, out-of-business farmers, and local businesses that cannot be supported are all symptoms of a wider societal shift away from local, smaller economies. People sense that there are fundamental changes that are occurring in their community, but they cannot articulate an explanation for these changes. I discovered that community members felt secure in their personal lives, but were uneasy about the community suffering from a lack of hope.

During interviews for this study, people offered hopeful appraisals of their life on an individual basis; however, they consequently felt apprehension when the discussion turned to the larger community. The tension this revealed between how they

felt as individuals and their lack of hope for the community is one of the main themes that will be discussed in this chapter. The vast majority of people commented positively on quality of life issues, which were the main reasons they had chosen to live in this rural area. Another common comment was that there was a positive set of values, ethics and morals within the community. Superficially, people seemed to be pleased with life in this rural community and reported few problems. While these comments do provide a constructive basis for a more hopeful framework for community, the interviews reveal something more about how people feel about their community. Specifically, when people were questioned further about their communities, several concerns were raised that indicate a troubling undercurrent. Community members had retreated to their own personal space of individuality while holding out little hope for the shared space of the community. For example, many of the participants discussed how the community was safe for their kids and that they could leave their door unlocked in their cars and houses and not worry about intruders. While these statements may reflect shared norms and community attachment, which gives community members a sense of security in the *present*, their ideation for the future of the community was grim. These statements reflect a positive aspect for the individual but not necessarily for the future community. Dale, a school board member, commented, "It's a 'me' society."

The Individual and Community

Growing up, I found myself spending Sundays on the farm helping Gramp do whatever needed to be done on the farm. The lessons that I learned on two of the

Sundays reveal the family values that have guided me throughout my adult life. These lessons are not unique to my experience; I am sure that other young boys and girls growing up in similar circumstances learned similar lessons. However, I do believe what these lessons offer a window into the values and ethic of rural America.

One particular fall Sunday morning, Gramp and I were in the barn, cleaning it and feeding the cows. As we worked, we kept an eye toward the driveway in hopes of spying my grandmother coming home from church. When we saw her drive the car into the driveway, we would start cleaning up and go to the house for lunch. My grandmother always served lunch at noon and she was always ready for the unexpected, whether it be extra people who may show up to eat, or honoring requests for the menu. On this particular day, as we were walking toward the house, I asked my grandfather why he and I did not go to church like my grandmother. I told him I was concerned that we would not be able to go to Heaven if we did not go to church. Gramp told me that he lived his life by a simple creed: treat your family good, help others, and every thing will work out for you. I do not relate this story to try to make a statement for or against religion. Rather, I use this story as an example of the value of decency and moral upbringing (family values) that has typified the region in this study for over a century.

A few years after that Sunday morning, I had become old enough to drive a riding lawn mower. I can remember that I felt that I was contributing to the work on the farm because I was now an “equipment operator.” This time, as my grandfather and uncle filed into the kitchen for lunch after my grandmother got home from church, we could see that she was not too happy with us. Gramp finally got the nerve to ask my grandmother what was wrong. My uncle and I knew that we were in for a tongue-lashing

by the look on her face. She said, "This is Sunday Mike. You are supposed to be taking it "easy" today. But when I come home from church I see you on the tractor mowing the diversion ditches, Michael (my uncle) cutting hay, and you even have Tom on the lawn mower working!" She then explained to my grandfather "But what really aggravates me is that you all are happy and enjoying yourself!" She then smiled and told us that we could be doing a lot worse things, so she did not stay mad too long. During this study, people used the words "good work ethic" to describe the community, and this story of my grandfather, uncle and me exemplifies the work ethic that pervades this region.

Family values

"Well raising a family, I think the farm life is one of the best places to raise a family as far as all the opportunities for 'em to see different types of work and being aware and having 'em do things. And yet be around---you're around them all of the time. You can take time out of your schedule....and that's always been important with me is if they'd come home from school and they're excited about their school work I'd hang up a couple milkers and we'd talk"

-Ben, school board member

Even as the effects of globalization have gutted the local labor market, people in this study still expressed a positive feeling toward the place they live when viewed through the discourse of individual preference and family values. Specifically, those with school aged children all commented during the study that it was a safe area to raise children. Robert (all names are pseudonyms), who serves on the school board commented, "My kids can go outside and just run. I can pull into town and everyone

knows me. I don't have the desire to be a big fish in a little pond." Similarly, Mark commented, "My kids can go outside and play." Finally, Dale, a school board member commented that the area was, "...a good place to raise kids." Quality of life issues are a strong reason why people choose to live in rural areas. These reasons often override other conveniences that may not be present. Mark further commented that, "The resources in the area are limited, but at least you know what they are."

Positive Community Values

Positive community values can be attributed to different characteristics of a community. The participants in this study expressed admiration for the ethic of "hard work" exhibited by members of the community as well as an admiration of the good values that they held. In an attempt to try to earn more money for the household, people are working more hours, and there is an increase in two income households. Those interviewed for this study viewed this trend both positively and negatively. For example, Joe commented, "Well I think the strengths are probably the value of the people...It's like if you had to rally the troops to go fight a cause, they would be there"; or negatively, "I'm just saying they're so busy working and trying to keep their heads above water..." When asked about the strengths of the community, seven people commented on the good morals, values, or work ethics of the community members. Cliff, who recently moved into the community observed, "The people, the work ethic that exists in most of 'em. The fact that there is close family ties, close friendship ties that go back generations in many cases." An educator who had worked to bring the business community and the

school system closer together specifically said that there was a, "...good work ethic in the community." Joe foreshadowed a strong theme that will be discussed later, and that is people do not have the time to actively search out "causes to fight for." Rather, he felt that people had to be presented with causes and they in turn would either support them or not support them based on the merits of the cause.

These positive comments from the participants mask concerns about civic participation. People who were interviewed expressed frustration about the lack of participation of community members, parents, and students in civic life. As the philosophy of individuality becomes dominant, community involvement in government and other civic events becomes less pronounced unless someone perceives a direct benefit or harm. Sally commented that "people think of things in an individual sense, not as part of a community...[this] leads to a lack of involvement." There was also concern for the lack of a public space for people to gather for discussions concerning their community. Dale's quote earlier in this section discussed how society had become a "me" society. Later in the same interview, Dale struggled to explain why the community had become so disengaged. He finally resorted to blaming the "newer generation" for being lazy and not working as hard as their parents (or him). This struggle to explain the community illustrates the lack of a language of critique among those interviewed for the study. The following sections will continue to describe how the community members and board members in this study struggled to explain what they perceived was occurring in their communities.

The Need for Imaginative Thinking

The quest to ignite creative thinking in the students and the community was a theme that I was not expect to find when I started this study. The quote from Joe that introduced this chapter summed up a strong theme throughout the interviews; namely, that there needed to be more creative or intellectual thinking in the community. Ben stated: "...I want to do creative stuff [to help the community]," which is a profound statement for a school board member. Speaking specifically of the role the school could play in encouraging creative thought, Robert stated that "Bright ideas come when you turn the lights on in kids." The opening quote for this chapter also hinted at another important concern for the people interviewed, they felt there needed to be a physical "space" for civic discussion to occur. Joe expanded on his earlier statement when he said that, "I think we [the school] stifle creativity. Our mental structure of how things have been done and the fact that they aren't changing is not working anymore."

Lack of Hope

On Memorial Day in 1981, the tractor my grandfather was riding blew up. The resulting fire gave Gramp third degree burns over sixty percent of his body. Because of the severity of the burns, the ambulance technicians did not want to touch Gramp, so he walked into the ambulance with these horrific burns where they started to treat him. My parents, uncle, and grandmother followed the ambulance to the hospital where they were met by a nun that worked as a counselor. She told my family to start preparing for the worst because the burns were so severe and the risk of infection so great, that Gramp

would probably succumb to the injuries. My grandmother looked at the nun and said, "You don't know Mike, he will make it." After three months in the hospital and numerous skin graft surgeries, Gramp did come home and lived another twenty one years. My grandmother exhibited faith that Gramp was going to live through this ordeal. This attitude that things will be better, and that situations can be overcome is essential for a rebirth in community spirit. Unfortunately, these qualities are diminishing in the community studied.

Well, I think it is hard for some people to get out of the rut they're in year after year, even generation after generation. It's how do you break the trend your family's been following and how do you get out of that?

-Ben, school board member

A disturbing theme that emerged during the course of the study was the perceived lack of hope that was permeating the community. One interviewee went so far as to say that he did not know if hope could be reestablished in the community. People who lack hope that their (or their children's lives) can be better will often resort to alcohol or drug use as a form of escape. Joan, a retired school administrator, commented:

When you don't have hope, or you believe that what you're being pressed into isn't what you want, you struggle to try to make a difference. But if you find that you either don't understand the system or your individual efforts are too feeble, then ultimately you find an escape.

Hope as a social construct is positive, it represents a healthy characteristic for a community. A lack of hope must be understood and deconstructed in an attempt to revive hope for the community. For example, what are the effects of lack of hope on

parents' expectations for their children? Jerome, a school official, thought there was a significant effect:

I think some of that hopefulness has changed and some of the goal, expectation stuff of parents has changed. I often wonder if it's not also socioeconomics because that has changed at about the same time. And we are now at the point where we need to get back to that time like 1975 where the parents say 'I need to get on our kid because if we don't they're not going to have a fair shot at the future'...But, there's a lot of people that have remained [in the Valley] and [they] are less viable economically. They're so busy trying to scratch out a living they don't have time to force that expectation. I think that hope gave them the strength to demand, expect and receive more from their kids...hope was the power, the strength that pushed those parents to say 'This is what I expect of you and I'm expecting nothing less'

This educator has touched on the impact of globalization on rural communities regarding the amount of time people must spend to maintain basic standards of living for their families.

Lack of Time/Globalization

"Our society is moving so fast that when I was a kid, a Sunday afternoon ride was a big treat. If we got to go far—and it was probably on dirt roads or whatever. That was a big treat. Now, that's not a luxury...people are being absorbed environment" –Dale, school board member

In the past, spaces for sense making in rural America centered on stable community institutions. Churches, grange halls, and community service organizations like the Lions club provided community members a place to go and discuss community issues and how those issues affected their personal lives. As mentioned before, these

stable institutions are becoming less common in the communities in this study.

Community members simply feel as if they do not have enough time to participate in these organizations. One community member who was interviewed commented that it was hard to find volunteers willing to donate their time for events. Charles, a local businessman, stated, "...someone has to work six days a week and comes home Saturday afternoon from work. They can either go help the Lions club collect eyeglasses or go mow their lawn and spend time with their kids. The same man asks, what should they choose?" This same theme was echoed by a school district administrator (Joe) who stated that, "The families have to make a lot of sacrifices. Both parents are forced to work." Finally, Robert stated:

It's like there's only so much time to volunteer and to do it. The competition's stiffer and stiffer. And there isn't the time to be in the rotary and the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce. I don't have the time for that.

Although this board member was instrumental in developing the dream for the entrepreneur center, he recognized, based on personal experience, that "the times" make it very hard to have meaningful participation in the community.

The effect of globalization on the economic standing of workers pays no attention to rural or urban boundaries. In many ways, rural areas are experiencing the same problem that urban workers faced in the past when companies moved from the urban areas to the rural areas in search for cheaper labor. Companies are now finding cheaper labor in other parts of the world. In a way, many of the issues facing urban and rural areas become more similar and more interconnected (Theobald, 2005). Jerome, who has taught in the district for over thirty years, commented, "I think that even though we're out

in the country, economically, and it may be getting culturally, we're not much different than an inner city place.”

The sense that time pressures affected people more today than they did in the past were reflected in the interviews. When the tanneries, logging industries, and agriculture dominated the economy in the early to mid twentieth century, people were forced to work hard. The jobs in these industries were physically hard and tiring. For example, in the Tannerytown community library there is a “tannery” room with memorabilia from the Tannerytown Sole Leather Tannery. In fact, the library is situated in the old chemistry lab for the tannery. In the tannery room, there are pictures of workers who labored in “the beam house.” This is where the cowhides were hung from a beam and lowered into large vats of “liquor juice” (a tannin solution) to cure the leather. The job for the workers in the beam house was to walk along the beam, pick up these heavy pieces of cowhide, and lower (or raise) them into the vat. Many times people would fall into the vat and they would have to be rescued. This was a typical day for many people in these industries; hard work which was dangerous.

The refuge for these workers was often the many service clubs that advertised their meetings in the local paper of the time. There were also the bars that were close to the factories where workers went to relieve stress in a negative fashion. People seemed to recall these times as a “slower” pace of life. In fact, one community member stated that this “slower” pace of life is one reason that he did not leave the area. Today, there are more demands placed on one's time. While there may be as much leisure time available to a person now, the distractions available are more prevalent. In

addition, our consumerist society places more wants and wishes into our psyche and we are striving to reach an ideal that does not exist.

Lack of time also limits the possibilities that people have for their hopes and dreams. Limited by the lack of time and energy to become involved in the community, people have just enough energy to survive the day. Sally commented:

My feeling is that so many people...get up in the morning, they go to work and, unfortunately in this area, most people work at one or two or three industries.

They work there, they come home at night, they do whatever they do at night and they don't, in my opinion, really don't think about the changes they might be able to affect if they got involved.

Public Space

My grandfather was a "world class" talker. He could go anywhere in town or the surrounding areas and start a conversation with anyone. Although Gramp claimed to live by the motto of never bring up religion or politics when talking to people, I remember listening to long conversations between my grandfather and others that revolved around politics. Conversations might have included talk about local, state, or national figures, but most usually evolved into political discussions. Discussions took place at common meeting places for farmers at that time: the feed mill and the local tractor dealership. If there was not a good reason to go to one of these places, Gramp would always come up with an excuse. Many of my memories of these trips involved rainy days when Gramp may have not had a lot to do on the farm, so he made an excuse

to go into town and “get the gossip.” Gramp was talking to some of the most powerful men in town. Their discussions of politics (which would get very heated at times) always pitted the people that were staunch Democrats against those that were equally passionate about the Republicans. There were times when these discussions happened in my grandfather’s barn that he would literally chase people out of the barn if they dared to say anything against labor unions or Franklin Roosevelt specifically. Nonetheless, no one would stay mad at each other too long and they would be back arguing politics within the next week. Gramp and the men that participated in the discussions viewed these spaces as a “safe” place to go to debate local, state, national, and global events.

Public spaces are places where people can physically “be” to discuss public and private matters with each other and attempt to make sense of them. Mills (1959) discusses sociological imagination, which acts at the intersection between the “personal troubles of milieu and the public issues of social structure” (p. 8). Mills argues that one must understand both the personal troubles and how these personal troubles relate, or are embedded, in social structures. A public space offers a place where people can try to work these issues out and attempt to make sense of them. Public spaces also provide a place where people can imagine a better life for themselves and the community (Giroux, 2003). Public spaces are more than a place where people meet and discuss facts and figures. They meet to discuss their interpretation of what is happening to them individually and collectively. Bauman (2004) states that public spaces are a place “...where private interests [are] translated into public issues and public needs recast as individual rights and duties...” (p. 65). Public spaces also offer a place where

...the occupants of different residential areas meet face-to-face, engage in casual encounters, accost and challenge one another, talk, quarrel, argue or agree, lifting their private problems to the level of public issues and make public issues into matters of private concern. (Bauman, 1998, p. 21)

Community members in Northern School District have fewer of these places (i.e. service and social clubs) to go to assist them in making a connection between private and public issues. Without a place to go to discuss these issues, people in this community are retreating further into the philosophy of individuality. Sally felt that this led to a philosophy among people of “that’s just the way it is,” and they do not structure their thought processes for the long term. Community members interviewed for this study recognized the effects of the lack of public space and discourse, but struggled with an explanation of *why* there was a lack of places for people to meet and discuss community life.

Public spaces also serve as a forum for parents to hope for a better future for their children. The school is an important public space for this role because, Tanya noted, “Probably within their own circle of friends is where they will get this information [on colleges, occupations] and if it’s bad information they get, that’s the only information they are going to get.” The school system has a role to play in opening its buildings for use as a public space and allowing discussions to take place among students and parents. Joan also stressed that school administrators must go outside the space of the school buildings and find public spaces in the community. While discussing where community members could go if they had a concern about the school, she worried about the people that would not come into the school on their own: “...many people will not be that assertive, and there is not any organized forum *per se* for it. I think that is why rural

administrators and savvy teachers need to be involved in community organizations of different types.”

Apathy

I was at the barbershop five years ago talking with the town barber. He has been in business since the early 1960s so he knows a lot of the local history and gossip. While we were talking, I mentioned the town newspaper that used to circulate, The Tannerytown Journal. We swapped stories for a while until he finally asked me if I would like to read some old Tannerytown Journals? I literally jumped at the opportunity to read these old newspapers, so he went across the street to his house and brought back a bound volume of Tannerytown Journals from 1946-1947. One of the first articles I read was about an American Legion meeting where Enoch Blackwell spoke. I noticed his name because I grew up in a house across the street from Mr. Blackwell. He used to “fix” my toy tractor when I would “break” it doing farm work in the middle of our street that we lived on. Mr. Blackwell was a prominent man in town. He was the bank manager for many years. My grandfather used to say that Enoch was fair and “as honest as the day is long;” high praise for a banker in a small town. The article reported that at this American Legion meeting, Mr. Blackwell was directing his comments toward the parents of the children in town. He felt that the parents did not care about their student’s schoolwork; he told them they were letting the kids get into too much mischief and that the students were missing out on lessons of hard work. These comments are interesting in that members of a community task force that meant to discuss student and community

apathy echoed them over fifty years later. Either Mr. Blackwell either was a visionary who predicted what would happen if parents did not make their kids work hard, or leaders in small towns have had the same concerns about the youth in town for generations. I believe that both arguments are correct.

The community also grapples with the idea of apathy. Apathy refers to a lack of enthusiasm or emotion. Specifically in this study, lack of enthusiasm is reflected in a lack of participation in community and school affairs. Comments that people are in a “rut,” and that community members will not get involved unless it directly affects them are common. Finally, as Dale stated, “This generation accepts what their parents have— [they] don’t strive for more.” They do not want to place personal blame on anyone for being “apathetic;” however, they struggle in explaining why there seems to be so much apathy in their community. As discussed in Chapter Two, apathy can occur when people are unaware of the threats to their cherished values (Mills, 1959). Conversations among community members in which they discuss their values and the threats that may affect them are necessary.

Overwhelmingly, there was an expression of longing for a physical place where these types of conversations could take place. A school board member longed for more opportunities to sit down with students, teachers, and administrators to talk informally. Another school board member talked about the discussions he would like to hear during school board meetings: “I mean we’ve been doing just the nuts and bolts and I wish there was more creativity on the board and a little deeper thought and discussion on stuff and we are missing it.” In addition, there are fewer service clubs in the community where people can “banter ideas about” with each other. Public spaces could

provide opportunities for community members to discuss and talk with each other informally.

Joan felt that her church provided such a “space” for people to approach her in a more neutral setting. She felt that these discussions were an invaluable way for the community to interact with community leaders. Although these spaces may not be ideal for receiving all types of messages from the community, the point that there are so few public spaces available that a church is the best option, is telling. According to interviewees, positive interaction between local leaders and the community needs to be more frequent. Unfortunately, there are not many opportunities for this interaction in this community anymore.

Lack of a Local Newspaper

“We don’t have –you have to go twenty miles before you find a community with a daily newspaper. We’ve got the weekly newspaper that covers probably eight or nine communities”

-Kenny, school board member when asked about the #1 weakness of the community.

Communication between the school system and the community is important for all stakeholders in public education. In a rural community, someone may make the argument that it is not as important since there are closer ties between the schools and the community based on the size of the schools and the community. However, as someone who has worked in two small rural communities, one with a daily

newspaper and one without one, I can state there is a benefit to a rural school system to having a daily newspaper in the community. Many of the problems that I dealt with as an administrator in the community without the newspaper was the misinformation about what is happening at the school. It was difficult to transmit the correct information to the community. Therefore, a significant amount of time was spent with community members asking them questions to try to get a feel for what they are hearing about the school. Of course, after listening, there was the task of correcting the misinformation that was circulating. At times not all of the information was incorrect; however, just a little misinformation can damage the relationship between the school and the community. In my current school district where there is a daily newspaper in circulation, and I have a good working relationship with the editor and the correspondents. This assists me in assuring the information that is in the paper is correct. I am not always successful in making sure all of information is correct, but I can be sure that most of the time the community is getting accurate information even if it is not positive for the school district.

A local newspaper can provide a space for the community to rally around causes. For example, in one of the communities in this study, Tannerytown, a newspaper ran as a weekly for almost one hundred and twenty years. However, during the Second World War, a community group called the Civic Benefit Club started their own weekly newspaper. In the first edition of the paper (12/05/1942) the mission of the club was explained as follows: “Their [The Civic Benefit Club] job is to do good deeds which will benefit all mankind regardless of color or creed” (Cameron Valley News, 1942).

Furthermore, they laid out the two main goals of the club, which was to start a newspaper for all of the service men and women across the world that were fighting in the war, and

to build a monument to all of those serving in the war. To that end, the paper was small; four to five pages an edition, but carried news about local happenings. For example, the first edition included an article from the Beam House (a part of the tannery), and the Loft House (another part of the tannery). These articles addressed the missing men directly by telling them the gossip of the “house” (such as the boss getting a new office and thinking he was “spiffy”), and informing them of who else had left to join the military. In short time, they were receiving letters from service men all over the world writing to say hello and telling everyone what they were doing. It is truly a fascinating experience to read these old newspapers.

What I found refreshing in these papers is the idealism and community mindedness of the citizens. The newspaper described above eventually merged with the older *Tannerytown Journal* after the war, but the idealism still was evident in these papers at least through the late 1950’s. In the February 20th, 1947 edition of the *Tannerytown Journal*, the American Legion implored parents to make sure they were doing all they could to make sure their children’s medical and dental needs were met. The ad stated, “Why not make a better *citizen* [authors italics] of your child by helping him today [get good medical care]” (*Tannerytown Journal*, 1947, p. 2). The American Legion stated their concern for the children in terms of making them better citizens. As I read the bound volumes of the *Tannerytown Journal*, I noticed that these types of discussions became less frequent as the years wore on. In fact, the newspaper expanded to almost twenty pages from 1947 until a year before it stopped publishing, but the content never regained the idealism that was present in the decade and a half immediately after the Second World War.

Quite frequently, there were articles in the paper advertising a community group offering some sort of entertainment opportunity *at the school*. For example, on February 27th, 1947 the local tractor dealer was having a “family farm party” at the high school gymnasium. On September 11, 1947 the Lions club was sponsoring a barbershop quartet at the high school, and on February 6th, 1947 the Harlem Globetrotters were entertaining in the high school gym. These activities reflect the strength of the bond between the school and the community. The school played an important role in offering a space for the community to gather. I do not think it is naïve to believe that rural schools can, and should, play a similar role in the life of the community today.

A shift in the focus the newspaper can be detected in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Although local events were still an important part of the paper, and the editor still called people and organizations on the carpet, there was less concern expressed in print about the community. The high-water mark came in 1947 when the American Legion sponsored a community revitalization project that resulted in the community rallying around the idea of building a swimming pool for the children of the community. In the “Pennsylvania Room” at the Tannerytown library, a leather bound scrapbook details the efforts of the community to build this pool. The scrapbook is fascinating to read because it reflects the idealism of the people involved in trying to help the children and youth of the community.

Summary

This chapter discussed four major themes that emerged in this study: positive community values, the need for imaginative thinking in the school and community, lack of hope in the community, and the need for public spaces to foster imaginative thinking. How rural schools can incorporate these themes into their mission to help sustain rural communities will be discussed in Chapter Seven. People felt the best way to help students was to give them skills to compete economically in the global market place. The irony of this line of thought is that the community may be educating the students to leave the community (Corbett, 2007). This signifies a shift from the way the American Legion wanted to help students, namely by focusing on a community need (a swimming pool).

Chapter 5

Human and Social Capital in Rural Schools

Introduction to Chapter Five

As previously noted, Chapter Five will develop the themes from Chapter Four and apply them to the concepts of human and social capital and the school's role in transmitting these concepts to students. The chapter will set the stage for this discussion by describing the curriculum of the Northern School District. Human and social capital will also be contextualized for rural schools and communities by discussing the role rural schools can play in the economic development of the community.

“We need to make the community attractive...so that the community can survive as more than just a bedroom community for some place else. And a weakness is also that we don't transmit to our children the energy and the push and the confidence to them that says, ‘We know even though we live in this nice quiet community, you are bright, you are capable, you can do things. Now we expect you to look around at emerging occupations and so on, and what you may want to do and start planning. What kind of training or education do you need after high school?’ That's the real weakness because these bright, capable young people end up not having great employable skills, maybe not having the ambition or belief they can go on and be successful...”

- Joan, retired school administrator

A Description of the School District

The school district is comprised of three elementary and three high schools. The district has three distinct “attendance areas” which send children to one of the six schools. The attendance areas are determined by township boundaries. The school board struggles to find a solution to the problem of unequal distribution of the students among the schools. When the school board starts a discussion about shifting students to different schools to attempt to even the population throughout the district, the public becomes very concerned. Tradition overrides any attempt to spread the population evenly. Community members want their children to attend the schools that they and their parents attended.

In the western end of the district students attend Westtown Elementary and Cameron Valley High School. Westtown Elementary School has a K-6 population of three hundred seventy six, while Cameron Valley has a student population of three hundred seventy four. The western end of the district is the most geographically isolated of the different attendance areas. While the central and the eastern end of the district are a short drive to the more urban areas of Glasstown and Centertown, New York, the western end does not have the opportunity for short drives to a small city. The western end of the district is also where the majority of the agricultural students are located. Westtown is the largest town in the western section of the district, with Bloxville, Sabertown, Big Marsh, Porters Creek, Normville, and Cameron also serving as smaller centers of population. Despite the fact that the western end is home to the district’s only golf course (River Valley country club—public welcome) and also holds two of the more

stable factories, this section is known for its agricultural base. This area was described by Tanya, a school board member, as a, "...paradise that people don't really know what they have here. The landscape, the small town. It's comfortable. It's just beautiful around here. I don't worry."

In the center of the district, students attend either Thomas Jefferson Elementary School or Tannerytown High School. Thomas Jefferson has a student population of three hundred eighteen, while Tannerytown High School has three hundred and seven students. Tannerytown was once known as a "factory" town based on its history of having a large tannery. Today, the only industry makes plastic components for the construction industry. Since Tannerytown is close to New York (a short twenty-five minute drive), many people work in the larger cities located in New York. While Tannerytown is the largest town in the central region, there are two other settlements (Cherokee, Laketown) that send students to the schools. The remaining municipalities are townships that have a population spread over a large geographical area. The central region is the smallest of the three regions. While there are active dairy farms in the western and eastern end of the district, the central region had no students who lived on an active dairy farm in the 2006-2007 school year. When asked to describe what it is like to live in Tannerytown, Kenny, a school board member, stated, "I think about my neighborhood...[it is] a friendly population. [I] get along with a good group of people"

The eastern end of the district has the largest student population. George Washington Elementary School teaches four hundred seventy four students and Williams High School has a student population of five hundred forty four. This region also has the most industrial base, and is the closest to the cities of Centertown and Glasstown. The

eastern region will also benefit from the completion of Interstate 44 through northern Pennsylvania within the coming year, as this will enable quicker travel for people and goods. The eastern region has four towns that send students to the schools. Crossroads, Mill, Mountaintop, and Factorytown are all within a ten-mile radius of each other. The eastern end is considered the most “urban” of the regions because of its proximity to the larger cities in New York, as well as being only ten miles away from the college town of Collegetown, Pennsylvania. The eastern region also is home to the recreational opportunities presented by three Army Corps of Engineers flood control dams. The dams were constructed in the mid 1970s to protect the city’s down river (Glasstown, Centertown, Canalville) from flooding. The dams draw campers and water skiers during the summer months and fishermen all year long. The dams also provide a background as described by Blaine, a community member, “In our particular neighborhood where we live now, we have an uncluttered view of nature from morning ‘till evening. Watch the sun rise, watch the sun set and really have an open area down to the lake and it is very peaceful...”

The Curriculum of the School District

The curriculum of the school district is an integral component to the understanding of this study. There are two reasons: 1) On a micro scale, many of the discussions that have resulted since the first public meeting in January of 2003 evolve around curricular issues. The frustration that people feel when they claim that the curriculum does not match the skills their children need to compete in the global

economy was partially addressed during the course of this study. 2) On a macro level, the concept of curriculum speaks to the relationship between the school and the community in which it resides. On one hand, some proponents of curriculum and instructional standardization believe curriculum needs to be uniform across the state or nation to assure that every student is getting the same instruction. Our present educational leaders on the state and national level tend to lean in this direction as they institute state and national benchmarks for curriculum and high stakes testing for accountability. Conversely, proponents of place-based education believe that the curriculum should go beyond the schoolhouse walls and reflect the concerns and ideals of the community where the school is located. If this were the case, collaboration between the school and community would be easier because there would be an established relationship between the two entities. The interest in curriculum for this study is to explore how curricular questions influenced the overall discussion between the school and community.

The curriculum the students receive at the school district is a “general” curriculum. What this means is that there are no official “tracks” such as college preparatory, vocational, business, etc. The school district does not have a vocational school the students can attend to learn more technical “hands on” careers. The high schools in the district have implemented a limited amount of college classes through an agreement with a local community college. It is telling that this community college is located in New York State because the nearest community college in Pennsylvania is over sixty miles away. The high school faculty teaches these college classes. The college classes are limited by two factors: one, the available staff who have time in their teacher

schedule to offer the classes; and secondly, the expertise necessary for the high school teacher to become accredited by the local community college. The district also offers honors classes in English in ninth through twelfth grades. The college classes and the honors classes are the two means in which a student in the school district can earn credits in advanced classes. The rest of the curriculum follows the curriculum guidelines set forth by the state of Pennsylvania and the local school district.

To graduate from high school, a student in the school district must earn twenty-six credits. When a student completes a class successfully, a credit is earned toward graduation. One of the credits is a state mandated graduation project. Students must complete forty hours of community service to earn the graduation project credit. The remaining credits are completed by earning credits in specific subject areas. Each student must pass ninth through twelfth grade English; they must pass three credits of Science, Math and History; a Fine Art credit must be earned; a computer class must be passed; two and half credits of Physical Education and Health; and finally nine credits in electives are expected to be completed. A typical graduating class will send between fifty and sixty percent of their graduates to either a four or two-year institution of higher education. The rest of the graduates will work in industry or join the armed services.

The school district employs two hundred and seventeen teachers. The district started an initiative in the mid 1990s to keep class sizes in the elementary school under twenty students per class. The superintendent felt that keeping class sizes small at this level would help students achieve better in reading in math. This explains why the average class size in the elementary schools based on May 2007 enrollment is eighteen. In the high school, there is a student/teacher ratio of 1/10. Class sizes vary in the high

school because the electives offered to the college bound students will often have class sizes below ten students, while the general education classes may have close to thirty.

Students in the school district enjoy the opportunity to participate in many extra curricular activities. All three high schools have a band and a choral director. Students participating in music have the opportunity to perform at least twice a year in school-sponsored concerts. The band and choral directors also take their students to parades and other concert opportunities throughout the year. All schools have an active student council, junior and senior high National Honor Society. Tannerytown High School and Williams High School also have an “Outdoors Club” in which students participate in outdoors activities. Cameron Valley High School is the district’s center for the Future Farmers of America, and 4H.

Athletics play an important role in the district. As in most small communities, high school sports provide an opportunity for community members to come together for a common purpose of cheering the local team. Specifically during the winter months, watching the boys and girls basketball teams play is a popular weeknight activity for community members. All three schools offer a variety of athletic options for the students. The school district has also formed “district teams” where students from all three high schools can participate on one team. Tannerytown High School offers nine sports throughout the year, Cameron Valley High School offers thirteen, and Williams High School offers ten sports. The school district budgets just over four hundred thousand dollars for all of its extra-curricular offerings including athletics.

The importance of the schools to the communities is not easy to articulate by just discussing the number of teachers, the budget, curricular options and extra

curricular activities. The schools in the school district serve a symbolic role for the community. Especially in the western and central attendance areas, the school gives the community an identity. Cameron High School and the communities it serves (Bloxtown, Westtown) are more isolated from the metropolitan areas of Glasstown, NY and Centertown, NY. A drive to the nearest mall (in Centertown) would be over an hour, while the nearest movie theater is thirty minutes from town. This results in these communities relying more on school activities as social events where people get together. These schools are located within walking distance of the biggest towns that serve their attendance area. This allows the schools to be more community oriented and gives community members a stronger sense of closeness to the school system. The eastern schools are not identified with one particular community since they serve the largest geographical area in the district. The towns and municipalities that fall within the attendance area are not large enough to support one school on their own. When this attendance area was formed, many smaller, outlying communities were combined to form a larger school. The diversification of the population and the distance required to travel to get to the school make Williams High School and George Washington Elementary Schools the least community oriented schools in the district. The description of the school district and the curriculum offered to the students places in context the circumstances surrounding the entrepreneur center as well as the initial community meeting that initiated the entrepreneur project.

Description of the First Community Meeting

As any school administrator in the school district would tell you, meetings should be planned to take place between January and April if a lot of public participation is desired. This is the “dead” time of year when there is not a lot happening in the community. Starting in April people become more interested in enjoying the weather as winter fades and Little League and Cinderella softball start to occupy evening hours. If you can give people an excuse to get out of the house in these early months of the year, they will probably take advantage of it. In Tannerytown, attendance at high school basketball games has always been outstanding for this reason. In January 2003, a public meeting was held to invite opinions and suggestions from the public concerning the perceived apathy of students, parents, and community members in the school community.

There was much diversity in the attendees in Tannerytown Area High School cafeteria that January night,. A total of fifty-five attended this meeting. Sitting at the front table was an elderly businessperson whose family had run businesses in Tannerytown for generations. He was well known and respected by almost everyone in town. At the back table sat a small group of students invited to give their input also. One would probably question whether these students would have sat together if it were not for the fact that they were the only students in the crowd. One student was an honor roll student who participated in many school activities, while another was one that had a reputation for not working up to his ability, and in fact had been suspended from school for more than ten days in the previous school year. They sat together at the table tolerating each other while watching all of the adults filter into the room. Off to the side

of the room, talking to people as they approached was one of the county commissioners. He was excited to be participating, and his genuine enthusiasm was contagious throughout the room. Interspersed throughout the cafeteria were teachers, other notable businesspersons and local politicians, and even a local farmer. Attendees seemed to be congregating with others their own age. This would make sense since most of the people present had roots in Tannerytown and went through the school system together. Finally, the school superintendent arrived and the meeting started. The cafeteria reflected an eclectic mix of community members that represented the Tannerytown area well.

The first order of business for the committee was to break into different groups. As the people arrived, they received a folder with a colored dot on the front cover. The people were asked to group themselves according to the color dot on their folders. This was done to get different groups talking to each other. After a “getting to know you” activity, the hard work of the group began. Each person was given a note card and asked to place on the note card their number one concern for the community. They then were to share the note card with their group, and the group was to make a list on a large sheet of paper that they were given. After sharing within the group, the facilitator asked for a representative of each group to come forward and list their top five concerns. The same process was held for the question “what are your solutions to this problem.”

The discussions during this two-hour meeting were very productive. As a matter of fact, the student with a checkered past instigated the most discussion by telling the group that the school often did not hold any meaning for him or his friends. He articulated the point so well that in the weeks after the meeting adults would ask me how the student was doing and if they could help him in any way. One of the main topics of

conversations at these meetings was how to keep the students who graduate from the local schools to stay in the community after they graduate. This idea was the catalyst for the idea of the entrepreneur center.

The entrepreneur center project started with a simple idea: to offer students and community members who live in a rural community an opportunity to learn skills that would allow them to live in the community. The people who participated in these meetings understood their community was not the same one in which they were raised. Stable manufacturing jobs that allowed for an opportunity to raise a family, were no longer available. Furthermore, a perceived lack of community involvement also contributed to a sense of unease.

The community meetings were held in the one stable institution left in the community: the school system. For this reason, the school became the focus for implementing a solution. The number one concern for the group was that people were being forced to leave the area because they could not create a living in the community. The community group felt that the school was the logical vehicle to transfer the knowledge and skills necessary to help people make a living in the community. Another concern articulated was the high school curriculum did not reflect a “real world” connection for the students. A major discussion during this meeting revolved around what the school should teach that would benefit the students. This community gathering believed in the power of transmitting increased human capital to the students, thus giving them the skills to prosper in the local community. However, they did not request more of the “traditional” vocational offerings such as automotive technology or HVAC. They felt there were too many people now to fulfill the need. Rather, they wanted less traditional

vocational offerings that would allow a student to make a living in the community. Some examples given at the first meeting were nontraditional farming such as fish and mushroom farming. People felt this would assist students who wanted to try to live in the community after they graduated from high school. From these requests and challenges presented to the school system that night, the idea of the entrepreneur center was born.

Rural schools and communities have a symbiotic relationship. Rural communities rely on the school system to provide more than just schooling for their children. Schools provide a center for entertainment, adult education, and a space for people to meet and discuss matters important to the community. Therefore, the importance of rural schools to the community they serve must be viewed beyond the present day infatuation with test scores. The question that each rural community must answer is how deeply the school system should become involved in “non-educational” issues in the community. For example, as the economic power of rural areas diminishes, how active should the school system be in combating this economic downturn? The community members and school officials interviewed overwhelmingly felt that the school system has a role to play when the community discusses how to become more economically viable. Specifically, two themes emerged: 1) they believe the school system should help students gain human capital, 2) they believe the school system has a role to play in increasing the social capital of the students and the community at large. Economic development is one way that communities attempt to increase the human and social capital of its citizens.

Economic Development

“A weakness in this community is economic growth...and I see that as a stumbling block for our youth, to keep them in our community, keep our community the way it is...Eventually, there’s nothing for anybody to do to make a living to support themselves and possibly a family down the road, then they’re not going to stay. They’re not going to be able to stay. Eventually they are going to have to move away”

-Joel, school board member

The spark that initiated the entrepreneur center was a discussion among community members on how to stop the brain drain, which draws young people away from their home communities. Community members that attended the public meetings in the schools in 2003 to discuss community and student apathy believed that a lack of economic opportunity served as a significant reason for the brain drain. When participants in the study discussed economic development, their construct of economic development was the traditional view of the “old economy.” For them, economic development was the community working together through a third party (usually an economic development board) to “bring in” industry to the community. Some felt that the school should tread lightly in this area because they did not want to compete against local businesses. However, they also felt that the school was the best place to start the discussion. Sally, a community member, stated, “My opinion is, if there is going to be involvement on the part of the school district, it should be in the area of being a facilitator to provide some facilities...”

As members of the community and educators discussed their view of the school and community, a discussion of what role the school should play in economic

development emerged. The theme that emerged was that the school should be involved, but not too involved. A school board leader stated the position well when he said the school board must be conservative, but should partner with outside agencies that don't have to be. If this partnership occurred, he felt the school could encourage economic development, but not have to be the sole entity supporting the development. Another community member who has spent a large portion of her life in civic activities thought that the school should consider the economic impact of decisions the school makes, but it should not try to control economic development.

Schools and Economic Development

“The school is absolutely the basic point at which economic improvements have to start and without an adequate school system...your community will stagnate rapidly. If your school system has a vision that incorporates looking after one, the students, but two, the community, it can have a major impact and will have a major impact if that occurs”

-Cliff, community member

In the past, rural communities had many places where people could go and talk about civic life. As mentioned in chapter four, these public places are increasingly disappearing. The community members of the school district are concerned about the economic downturn in the community and its effect on the community. The problem that arises for these communities is where to go to for help in alleviating these problems. There are the county and state agencies that can facilitate economic growth, but there is distrust in the community when these organizations are discussed. Jerome commented,

“I’ve lost faith in that Mill County Development (Tioga County Development Corporation). Forget it, they only care about Wellington [the County seat]. I really believe that. I think we have to, as a group of communities, go out and search for something to bring here.” Although he believes in the assumption that economic development means attempting to bring industry into the area, he has enough faith in the members of the community to trust them with the task of helping themselves. Charles, a local businessperson, commented that our community does not benefit from well-intentioned government economic development initiatives and corporations because of the distance away from the centers of power:

You’ve got the cooperative extensions and all of those guys and small business development centers coming out of Scranton and Wilkes Barre...this [area] isn’t rural enough or this is too rural for them. If it’s not in Wellsboro or Mansfield, screw it; they don’t want to deal with it.

-Robert, school board member

People who work with state and federal bureaucracy cynically state that Pennsylvania does not exist north of Interstate 80. This view reflects the general impression that people in the community have toward the helpfulness of outside agencies when discussing economic development initiatives. The alternative solution is not to wait for an outside agency to assist the community, but to do the work oneself and develop strategies that will benefit the economy of the region.

According to Gibbs (2005) rural schools can contribute to the economic development of the community. As one school board member stated, “I think the schools are just a fantastic facilitator for it. Where do the kids spend most of their time? And their [the school system] job is education anyway”. Some people were more cautious

about the role they felt the school should play in assisting the community in economic development; all of them believed that school system has a role to play in the discussion in rural areas. For example:

I think there's a real reluctance...cause if you do that [schools taking the lead in economic development] you become the purveyor of the education and then are responsible for fixing all the woes...I don't think we can do that. You know, offering our services...and putting out ideas is one thing, but for us [the school system] to take on a responsibility like that, I don't think that's the right focus for us.

-Jerome

No matter how involved the school should be in the discussions of economic development, the close ties that rural schools have with the communities offers an opportunity for some sort of collaboration involving economic development and gaining human capital.

Human Capital

Human capital refers to the skills and abilities that a person possesses that assist them in their life. These skills usually refer to anything that allows a person to gain an advantage in the job market. In the economic realm, human capital refers to specific technical skills that will lead to employment in a vocation. Skills, training, and education are the best ways in which a person can increase their human capital for competition in the world economy. The more human capital one has access to, the more opportunities the person will have to create economic opportunities for themselves. Traditionally, schools have been a place where students go to increase their store of human capital. Communities want their children to gather all of the knowledge necessary to lead a

productive life after graduation from high school. “I think we need not lose sight of the fact that we do need to train. Give students the basics to maybe get into a field, if not go to work in a field; but at least give them some foundation” stated Ben, a board member. In the communities of Northern School District, an economic view of the school system that stresses the importance of competing in the global economy prevails.

These communities want to fight the youth brain drain from the area by increasing human capital, although they do not recognize the contradiction this means for their community. As students and community members gain human capital, they may be forced to leave the community to use the skills they have gained. For example, Joel felt that the schools should, “...give kids training so they can get jobs and stay here.” Charles, a businessman, was blunt when he was asked what the role of the school was when he answered that schools “...should give kids training for a job.” These answers were not given as a critique of the school system. Both men felt strongly that the school district was giving a proper and appropriate education. Rather, their comments reflect nervousness about the future of their communities as young people move away to seek better economic opportunities. Concerns about the brain drain in the communities were also evident in educators’ views of the purpose of schooling. Joe, a building principal, summed up his view by stating, “Schools are failing if the students don’t get the skills to become productive members of society.” Jerome, district guidance counselor, felt that schools should help prepare students to live anywhere in the world. This reflects the influence of the global economy in the thinking of the educators in the school district. The guidance counselor also worried that the strength of the parental commitment to schooling was waning because parents’ views of the options their students will gain from

schooling is deteriorating. He specifically felt that parents viewed education in the past as a way for their students to have more choices after graduation and they now felt these options were very limited. The effect on the school of this shift in attitude is enormous. Parental support of the school will decline as parents sense that their children may not be as socially mobile as past generations. A retired veteran educator felt that parents were torn between wanting their students to earn a better living and also wanting the students to stay close to the family and not move away. She felt that educational leaders should work to put parents at ease by showing them that education can be relevant for young people and allow them to reliably earn a living close to home.

School administrators and guidance counselors mentioned how they felt the gain in human capital for the students would lead to better employment opportunities for students both inside and outside the community, while community members wished for human capital to be used to keep students in the community. When discussing the entrepreneur center, Tanya, who is a school board member stated, “The entrepreneur center would be a big plus to keep the students here if we could give them the training that would provide them a better skilled job.” He hoped the entrepreneur center would be a vehicle for students to stay in the community.

The vision of human capital gain expressed by the board members seems at odds with the “opportunity trap” mentioned by the work of Philip Brown (2006). However, the important piece is that the local community is formulating their own “meaning” concerning how they want to change the way globalization affects their community. The local perspective allows students to gain knowledge that allows them to use the forces of globalization to their benefit, while avoiding the “opportunity trap.” Entrepreneurial

skills allow this subtle change to take place. Both viewpoints looked at human capital as a way to become economically competitive in the global economy. The question that is missing from this discussion is, “What are the abilities one can gain to strengthen the community?” (Flora, Flora & Fey 2004). The economic framework for human capital was prevalent in everyone’s minds that viewing other skills beyond those that gave students an economic advantage were simply not considered.

Vocational education often was a topic mentioned in these conversations, but there was not an agreement on whether vocational education was good or bad for the students and communities. The views of vocational schooling for people in this study ranged from, “Vocational education is good in the sense that it is gonna give people hands on...machinery type work,” to the concern that students will be forced to choose a trade too soon and will not be able to move out of that particular trade. The opposing views can be summed up easily. One group of people felt strongly that vocational education would increase the human capital of the students. The obvious benefits, they believed, would assist the students in finding better economic opportunities after they graduated from the school system. The opposing view held that vocational education tracked students and led to a limitation of choices for the students. Interestingly, the opposing view does not disagree with the idea of human capital per se, only that the students have their options limited because of early tracking into a career.

Social Capital

Social capital is a thread that runs through the story of this study. The importance of social capital in an entrepreneurial economy is based on the observation that everyone in a community will benefit from the skills that an individual acquires. The interconnection between people in a community is important in the formation and sustainability of social capital. Coleman (1988) observes that social capital "...exists in the relations among persons" (p. 100). Furthermore, social capital, "...refers to connections among individuals –social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000 p. 19). In a sense, human capital and social capital work in concert to help build an entrepreneurial community. Social capital is also important for education, as Ben stated:

We have people here that are qualified and that know a lot of things, but we're not using the resources...we have retired professors from Penn State living in the area. I'm sure they would volunteer their time [to the school]. Engineering people, we have them here...we have people that know. They're here. We just aren't using them.

An elementary principal in the district thought the entrepreneur center was an opportunity to, "influence parents into different ways of thinking" about education and what is needed to raise children. The school system can promote social capital in other ways. As Joe stated:

I suppose that if the community as a whole supported the educational institutions to the tune of serving on committees, stepping forward, giving their expertise because these people do have expertise. They have expertise in a lot of different areas. And if they would do that, and if the kids could see that connection and modeling and good will, you get a better educational feeling for the school.

Participants in this study believed that the school must play a role in fostering an increase in social capital for the community and the students in school. School involvement was viewed as both good and bad in fostering social capital. To truly foster social capital the school system must become a place where people feel they can go to look for help and for answers to their questions. Some members of the community worried that community members did not have the skills to approach the school system and ask for this type of help. Tanya commented that "...people defer to educators...parents don't know the questions to ask [school officials]. She explained further:

Say if I'm talking to a parent, their children will be like the parents, the glass is always half empty...and that is something that I don't see with the preschool level, I see it mostly as they go up in their teen years...[they get] cultured into a [culture of thinking the glass is half empty].

Another community member stated "...people don't have the skills to ask the types of questions that leads to change." Although these concerns were raised, a stronger theme emerged which stressed the positive role the school system could play in fostering social capital.

The positive theme that emerged viewed the school system as a physical and intellectual "place" where people meet to exchange ideas and there could be a "transfer" of human or social capital. Ben, a school board member commented "...schools should tap into people that know..." and use this knowledge as a way to increase curricular options for students. Robert, another school board member, felt that the role of the school was "...getting ideas under one umbrella... [and] to foster risk taking" in students and the teachers. Although risk-taking behavior is not a strength of

the public school system, this trait was valued by another school board member. He stated that the school should help the community to, "...breed [an] atmosphere to take chances." Both board members believed that the community and the schools would benefit from students learning to take risks in a controlled setting. The school could become a market place of ideas where people would share their skills and stories while also assisting others while they attempted construct new ideas.

Lacy, a principal in the school district agreed the school could be a place where community members could gain social capital. Specifically when discussing the entrepreneur center she felt each school in the district should house an entrepreneur center so the school could have a chance to pass on human and social capital to the community. She believes that the schools should help parents that have poor "life" skills gain more knowledge in these areas. For example, they perceived that many parents lack "parenting" skills such as proper discipline techniques when dealing with their children, and they lack the knowledge on nutrition to allow them to make the best decisions for their children's health. They hoped that such classes would provide the skills transfer in these areas, but also hoped for a positive role model to emerge for the parents and the students to follow.

The entrepreneur center implied a major shift in the curricular direction of the school district. First, the entrepreneur center, and the curriculum housed in it was meant as an economic development tool. Furthermore, the skills that students learned through the entrepreneur center would ideally slow the "brain drain" of young people out of the school district after they graduated. The curriculum was envisioned to move beyond the walls of the school, incorporate community assets, and strengthen community

weaknesses. The business incubator was for students and community members to use separately or in unison.

Summary

Two themes emerged through the data analysis for this study. First, increasing human capital for students and community members was viewed as an important role for the school to play. Second, the growth of social capital was also seen as an important role for the school. People interviewed for this study also believed that the school should play a role in the economic development of their community. There was a question as to how involved a school should be in this endeavor, however most felt that the school should be involved in some fashion. Furthermore, vocational education was cited as a method for the students to gain the human capital necessary to prosper in the global economy; however, there was a concern that forcing students to choose a career too early may limit their career options in the end. These themes and the initial community meetings resulted in the entrepreneur center concept being discussed with the school board and the community.

Chapter 6

The Entrepreneur Center

Introduction to Chapter Six

The focus of Chapter Six will shift from developing themes and discussing economics to a discussion specifically focused on the original idea for the collaboration: the entrepreneur center. The entrepreneur center unveiled an idealism in the school board members and other members of the task force. The description of the process the school board used to promote the entrepreneur center contributed to the eventual downfall of the idea. Despite the original goals of the entrepreneur center being realized, there were smaller successes within the school district that incorporated ideas of the entrepreneur center.

“And then as I got acquainted with community people, I would ask them [what they want for the school district], and they always said, ‘We want our children to be able to stay here and have work that they find interesting, a level of pay that allows them to raise families, because we want them to be near us and we want to see our grandchildren.’ But then, as you talk further, they also would indicate they really wanted them to be able to go out in the larger world and find what they really wanted to do, and be happy doing it. But come back. So that helped me see this kind of dichotomy...that existed in their minds. But the harm or the weakness of that dichotomy really negatively affects the youngsters, and I think this is what in this district we were trying to do in terms of getting a really strong contemporary vocational program that would have these youngsters actually experience that they could do...”

-Joan, retired administrator.

The Entrepreneur Center

Kenny, who holds a leadership position on the school board, was asked what suggestions he would have for a similar community that would like to undertake building an entrepreneur center. His response speaks to both the idealism that the project endeared, as well as the number one concern of the task force:

I think one of the lessons learned is that...you don't need the money first. I mean, we spent a lot of effort up front trying to figure out how are we going to fund this thing. And I think hopefully, five years from now, we're going to look back...and say what really kicked it off was when the idea got out there and people started to run with the concepts and realize...it takes a lot of money if you try to build something and teach people in a traditional way versus inspire them to figure it out for themselves...the other lesson learned is don't slow down to try to get the ducks in a row. *So the idea is important and it may really be the only thing you need to have it get going* (italics added). The little idea is more important than the \$50,000 or the \$200,000.

The quote speaks to three themes that emerged from this study. First, the concern for funding a traditional vocational school became a concern. Second, the dream of the entrepreneur center was to inspire students (and the adults creating the entrepreneur center) to "dream big." Third, ideas and creative thinking are the most important concept of the entrepreneur center. The hope and the possibilities that came through in this statement are breathtaking. What is equally breathtaking is that the money issue *did* dominate the decisions that were made even though the idealism was evident.

Joan spoke eloquently for the need of the entrepreneur center. Her description at the start of the chapter is succinct and covers the major themes of the original vision of the entrepreneur center. The original vision for the entrepreneur center focused on two aspects: a business incubator concept and a physical space to couple existing vocational offerings with entrepreneurship. A vacant building in the district was used as a model for the space that would be needed to house the entrepreneur center. The entrepreneur center would be a place for the school district's existing vocational programs (culinary, agriculture, construction trades) to have a "lab" space. This particular aspect of the model was not perfect. The building would be located in the center of the district and most students would be at least a twenty-minute drive away from the building. However, it was felt the potential gain in space and land would outweigh the disadvantage of distance. In addition, in later iterations of the model, the building would be a place to house larger vocational projects. For example, a small kitchen and cafeteria housed in the building could be used for the culinary arts program to allow them to manage community dinners.

The business incubator was envisioned as a place for the school system and the community to go to help explore entrepreneurial ideas. Tanya expressed her hope for the entrepreneur center:

... we were hopefully going to be able to give kids the opportunity to do more by living here but using the business incubator and the internet as a way of reaching out. So you could still live in this area, but actually run a business from within the area.

The original dream, or hope, for the entrepreneur center addressed many of the concerns from the original community meeting held in January 2003. First, the

curriculum must be changed to reflect the needs of the students; second, an attempt was to be made to stop the “brain drain” from the area. The board believed in the hope offered by increasing a student’s human capital. This same board member also touched on a theme that the entrepreneur center was a way to “get out of this box” that we are in [speaking of education], and that technology would help foster that ideal. Teachers and students could use the incubator as a resource for expanding a class project, or students could use the incubator to learn how to start their first small business. The community could also use the incubator to receive assistance about how to start and efficiently operate a business. The incubator would also be a physical space where community members could have a delivery site for their business, as well as a place to rent office space and equipment.

The Task Force

The school district formed a task force in February 2006 to explore the concept and the feasibility of the entrepreneur center. The school district operates a committee system as part of its board structure. One of the committees is called “the academic initiatives” committee. The president of the school board, the superintendent, and the chairman of the academic initiatives committee agreed to manage the task force as part of the committee. As mentioned earlier, the school district is divided into three sections. The board members, the superintendent, principals and guidance counselors invited people to participate on the task force. This committee consisted of board members, administrators of the school district, key business leaders, and invited

community members. Walking into the meeting room for the academic initiatives committee meeting was a “who’s who” of leaders in the Northern School District. Business people from all three regions of the school district attended. Principals, guidance counselors, and teachers were representing the educational system. Community members from all three regions were also there showing their support to their communities by volunteering their time to serve on the task force. The task force first learned about the history of the project and the initial vision for the entrepreneur center. I spoke briefly of the steps that had been taken in the exploration of an entrepreneur center.

When I was done speaking, Robert spoke passionately about the hopes and dreams he associated with the entrepreneur center. He told the group that there was a way to stop the brain drain from the school district and that people could earn a good living in our communities. He stressed the importance of ideas when discussing the entrepreneur center, “And I think even an entrepreneur center, just nothing more than an entrepreneurial thought—the center for opening up ideas, bringing us speakers and talking about it. Just funneling that stuff [ideas] and keeping it local, here.” The task force learned of the trip to Juniata College to visit their business incubator as well as the curriculum adjustment undertaken by the school board to add an “entrepreneur” curriculum to the approved district curriculum. A group of teachers, with support from the building principal and guidance counselor at Williams High School initiated significant changes in their business curriculum to incorporate entrepreneurship into the curriculum. The school board willingly accepted the changes required for the change. The business curriculum was changed by combining two traditional classes into one class as well as the teachers “giving up” their preparation period so they could teach an extra

entrepreneur class. Four other meetings followed the initial meeting over the course of the ensuing eighteen months. With each succeeding meeting, attendance dwindled. The topic of why the attendance dwindled will be explored later in this chapter. The initial meeting had close to forty people while the last meeting attended by the investigator for this study was attended by twenty-four people. The declining interest in the initiative speaks to the process that was undertaken to discuss the entrepreneur center, as well as the content of the original vision itself.

The remaining sections in this chapter will discuss the initial vision of the entrepreneur center and how the initial enthusiasm and hope for the project diminished over time. The themes that emerged are a concern for money (how to pay for the center); a shift in focus from an entrepreneur center to a vocational school. Finally, the future of the project and the smaller success that it has fostered will be discussed.

Hope for the Project

During the meetings of the task force, I was attentive to the “examples of evidence” that were in my observation protocol. The initial meeting of the task force was different in that the task force spent more of their time discussing the possibilities of the entrepreneur center. Later they would get fixated on the perceived cost of the initiative. In other words, the initial dream for the entrepreneur center attracted the idealism of the task force members. Joe commented that his hopes were no less than to “...provide a way out” for some of the students that the school system does not connect with at times. His hopes rested on the idea that students would make a connection to something in the

curriculum and become motivated based on that connection. Kenny was also just as enthused by the prospect of the entrepreneur center:

And I think that's the concept of the entrepreneur center where you'll want to—you want to encourage people to take a chance and let them know it's okay to fail. But the education they gain along the way—that's the output we are looking for. It's not a business to employ 100 people out of this thing. It's a safe place and a safe environment for people to understand what it takes, fail a few times, then go out and do something on their own.

The hope associated with the initial vision of the entrepreneur center was profound. One aspect that enthused people was the idea of helping the present generation of students become more financially stable than their parents. Dale was concerned that this generation of high school students may not be as financially well to do as their parents. However, he viewed the entrepreneur center as a way for students to gain the skills necessary to be more financially successful than their parents, he stated:

Like when you were talking entrepreneurial stuff, I was spinning because I really think that we need to start planting the seed to get people to think bigger than what they are right now. Thinking international, ...because there's people becoming millionaires over just a little pipe dream, starting a backyard project and then putting it on the internet and finding it explodes. We need to get people to think bigger than what Northern School District boundaries are.

Idealism also became a factor in the strong support the school board had for the vision of the entrepreneur center. One board member is a retired farmer who has experienced the hardships brought forth by the forces of globalization. Agriculture has become increasingly dominated by fewer and larger farmers. The result in rural areas like Northern School District is that farmers cannot compete with the larger dairy farms in the West and Midwest and many farmers in the school district had to go out of

business. This board member did not let any bitterness he may have felt over these results dampen his enthusiasm for the future:

I think youth and the kids are capable of anything. Some say it's scary leaving the future to them. I'd say bring 'em on. We need more young people doing things. They get to [in the entrepreneur center] develop ideas quicker than the traditional [educational system] maybe would accept.

The idealism expressed in these statements did not translate to overwhelming support for the project after eighteen months of public meetings and study. What happened in the ensuing months is a reflection of the changes brought forth by globalization and the neoliberal philosophy that supports it. The talk of sustainability, a code word for efficiency in operations, turned many board members against the idea because of the associated cost with building a traditional vocational school. Additionally, when the discussion shifted from an entrepreneur center to a vocational school, concerns with certification and credentialing came to the forefront. Finally, the process that was undertaken by the school district contributed to the feeling among the public that the process was a “dog and pony show” as stated by Jared.

Efficiency, Sustainability, Money and the Entrepreneur Center

As mentioned in an earlier quote, a school board member was concerned that people got scared by the scope of the vision. His concern centered on the fact that people are unfamiliar with solving issues involving economic development. In other words, their experience had always been that issues as large as these had always been “corrected” by forces outside the community. The hope that he felt passionately about

was that the community would attempt to come together to solve the problem that they raised in the first place. Finally, the task force felt the entrepreneur center would help ignite the passion for learning in students within the district.

It was during the task force meetings that the observation protocol assisted me in finding themes during the meeting. Specifically, the significance given to the cost of the entrepreneur center was overwhelming. At every meeting of the task force significant amount of time was spent discussing how, and if, the district could fund such an enterprise. Overwhelmingly, members of the task force expressed a concern about the perceived financial costs associated with the project. In these times of fiscal constraint and accountability, these concerns are very rational. In a society that glorifies the money accumulated by large corporations in the name of efficiency, school districts are forced to operate in an atmosphere where “efficiency” is a consideration. What is instructive for the purpose of this study is to understand the process that led members from utopian idealism to eventual monetary “reality.” The initial dream and vision of the entrepreneur center was very powerful. After formulating the initial vision, a meeting with the director of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was arranged. The ARC encourages entrepreneur education and infrastructure building in rural Appalachia. The meeting was an opportunity for the district to explore the options, both financial and in infrastructure, for the entrepreneur center. After the presentation to the Appalachian Regional Commission in the summer of 2005, they suggested that the school district conduct a needs assessment to judge the feasibility of an entrepreneur center in the community.

The school district contacted a company that had done economic development work in the county before and asked them to submit a quote for a needs assessment that would answer the appropriate questions raised by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The quote given to the district by the company was over \$60,000. The superintendent stepped in at this point and suggested that we use the district's architectural firm to do the feasibility study since there would be probable renovations in the empty building being considered for the entrepreneur center and in turn, PlanCon (Pennsylvania Department of Education process of building renovation) would require that type of needs assessment. A particular concern at this point was the sustainability of the project after the initial funding was exhausted. The architectural firm was contacted and they agreed to conduct a feasibility study. Coinciding with these decisions the task force meetings started to occur. So, at about the time the task force was being introduced to the concept of the entrepreneur center, the school district's architectural firm began the feasibility study.

An immediate concern expressed by a community member was the role of the architectural firm in this process as Blaine stated:

If the district really wants an objective view taken, the party that's doing the study has to be at arm's length with no potential for financial gain, but only have the interest of the students, the faculty, the district at large in mind to make it a factual study.

The architectural firm would stand to gain a significant amount of money if the district undertook a building project. Additionally, the firm is not an expert in the kind of study that was suggested by the Appalachian Regional Commission. At this point, the "switch" of a "bait and switch" started to occur. The framework for discussing the entrepreneur center shifted away from economic development and creative curricular

options, to a traditional vocational school. Sally stated, “And I feel that the study that had been done has not emphasized entrepreneurial study...it has eliminated that word and moved towards a centralized, comprehensive high school with vo-tech”

As the feasibility study progressed, the focus of the task force moved away from the possibilities of the entrepreneur center, into the realities of how to make it work. These two separate foci, the feasibility study and the task force, started to influence each other. As the architectural firm began asking for information for their work, the questions they raised influenced the direction of the task force. For example, the needs assessment focused on vocational education and the programs the district offered which in the initial vision was an ancillary focus for the group. However, “traditional” vocational education quickly became the focus of the task force as well. The focus on vocational education significantly shifted the discussion within the task force. The discussions about the possibilities of entrepreneurship embedded into the existing curriculum (both vocational and non-vocational) quickly turned into discussions about specific issues related to vocational education. For example, the cost of vocational training in personnel and equipment, teacher certification, the physical space needed to house these programs, and finally an important question: does the district have the students to “fill” the vocational programs and make it cost effective. Soon the task force was arguing over the merits of one type of vocational education model over another. Additionally, the idea of merging high schools within the district to try to make vocational offerings cost effective began to dominate. In essence, the task force began to explore school consolidation instead of an entrepreneur center. As one community

member stated, “I do not want to be associated with anything that may shut down our [Tannerytown’s] school.” He also felt the task force was significantly off task.

Meeting on November 16th, 2006

The climax to the work done by the architectural firm occurred on an autumn night in 2006. Up to this point, the firm had collected data from the students of the school district as well as the community members who got online to fill out a survey. The firm also used information gleaned from economic studies of Mill County and job forecasts based on these reports. The firm did not seem to understand the initial vision of the entrepreneur center because they focused their analysis of the data on different building projects that could occur throughout the district. It was at this meeting that the idea of closing high schools and creating a comprehensive high school (a high school with all curricular options being offered) started to be discussed. The firm posted numbers that showed how inefficient some of the high schools were because they were built to house “x” amount of students, but they only housed “y” amount today. For example, Tannerytown High School appeared inefficient because it looked like there were many empty rooms because only high school classrooms were being considered. However, the fact was that in that school, five of its classrooms were being utilized by Clark Wood Elementary School. Therefore, in this case the numbers did not tell the whole truth. At Cownaesque Valley, a major reconstruction had skewed its numbers. Although the firm explained that they understood that rooms were being utilized in different ways to reflect different needs of the district, the numbers still were there for all

to see. The numbers alone are misleading and may lead one to believe that the school was being “*inefficient*” in its operations; the story behind the numbers is more telling of the true nature of efficiency at the school.

The task force now found itself debating the merits of building projects to support vocational training. Sally commented “...instead of facilities and equipment, we should look at skills we can give to the students.” She went on to add, “...building a building does not educate students.” Her perspective harkens back to the original vision for the entrepreneur center where ideas and skills were stressed more than physical buildings. There were two points that were made by participants in the study to try to explain how the task force moved away from the original vision. These two factors led the group to be concerned more about funding than the original vision.

First, Cliff was concerned that there was a lack of understanding in the community for the entrepreneur center. He used a visual to make his point, “Communication, communication, communication. Communication is the fulcrum the school board and the community are on.” He went on to state:

The major pitfall is a lack of understanding on the part of the community. They don't recognize the term [entrepreneur center]. They are not terribly familiar with it and as a result they don't know how or where to grasp it to deal with it.

When asked if the term could be articulated he said, “It can, but it has to be taken in a slightly different direction. Instead of talking about the center, you need to address the other side of the goals. What can be achieved through it.”

He also felt that a little pressure not to pursue this line of thinking would have prevented the discussion from moving to a school consolidation/vocational education

argument. Along the same lines, an administrator also stated that *if* the community knew the vision they would support it. The communication issue seemed to be an overlooked piece in the entrepreneur center plan.

Communication is an easy scapegoat for the failure of the original vision of the entrepreneur center to be realized. However, there is more to the story than just a lack of communication. If the analysis were to stop at this point, blame could be laid on the school district for not “communicating” enough and make recommendations based on that assumption. A more constructive explanation, however, involves the role globalization plays in the continuing degradation of public spaces. People in this study did not have many options for public spaces to discuss the entrepreneur center outside of the school system. As mentioned earlier, these communities are suffering from a lack of civic organizations that traditionally provide the public space to discuss issues important to the community. The problem was exacerbated in this particular case when the community members started to feel that the task force was off task and not being responsive to their concerns. Since the school was the lead organization in this initiative, the meetings took place within the school walls, and people started to feel they were involved in token participation.

Another possible explanation for this lack of communication is that the school did not articulate *among themselves* a coherent vision for the project. More time was spent explaining the vision of the entrepreneur center to the school board while very little time was spent discussing the ideas with school employees, especially administrators. This is reflected in the lack of internal communication among school district personnel. During the initial meeting, this oversight was apparent when two of the teachers who served on

the task force were very adamant that the school district can not add any more vocational classes because of certification issues. A lot of time was spent at the meeting trying to correct this misconception, but the die had been cast in these teachers' eyes. I even had experience with teachers in my school approaching me and asking if they were going to be transferred to the new vocational school being discussed. Of course, at this stage, talk of a vocational school had not even been mentioned; the discussion was still focused on an entrepreneur center. The lack of a clearly articulated vision to the staff of the schools was a mistake that affected the outcome of the initiative.

Finally, the effects of globalization on the community play a role in the difficulty a rural school board experiences when trying to communicate with a rural community. In urban and suburban areas, it is easier to get the school district's message to the people because of local newspapers and other media. Most small, isolated rural communities do not have this luxury. In Northern School District, a weekly paper covers all of the communities in the school district. In the past, the larger communities had their own local newspapers that were supported by the community. As businesses and people left the towns, these papers could not survive. Gone were the days when announcements were made in the paper about who visited whom on a Sunday afternoon. Rural school districts struggle with how to get the message they want conveyed to the public. As Kenny stated, "We don't have communication, you have to go twenty miles before you find a community with a daily newspaper....So you don't get timely information. We don't have a radio station. It's hard to know what's going on here."

A second criticism of the process used by the school district deals with time; two community members wanted more time for the idea to "grow" into itself.

Kenny further offered this advice, "...don't get confused with size...don't go for all the marbles. Try to start out slow, depending on your resources and stuff." The ideas presented in the initial task force meeting were a radical departure in the school's traditional role in economic development and community relations. Community members will support a good idea, but there needs to be a "digestion" period for the ideas to ferment in the public psyche. Ideally, the "digestion" period occurs in community public spaces. Unfortunately, these public spaces are not available for people in today's globalized world.

Another factor expressed was that there was too much time debating the merits of the entrepreneur center. Some members of the board felt this allowed the process to get off track. Joel, who serves on the school board said he "...would have liked to see it [the ideas of the entrepreneur center] pushed a little harder." Furthermore, Kenny stated, "We almost stopped for a year waiting for some kind of foolish process to take place." The message seems to be "don't go too fast or too slow." Again, the fact that there was no public space outside the school setting contributed to these two viewpoints. If there was a healthy discussion outside the confines of the meeting, the discussions during the meeting would have been more fruitful, and the public better informed.

The Future of the Project

"I'm disappointed because I feel that the school board at this stage is giving only lip service, but no real support [to the entrepreneur center]. And that's from a great deal of observation even though there's never any public discussion of it. I really don't know where they're coming from. And not knowing, I don't expect much from 'em."

-Cliff, community member of Northern School District

The above quote speaks to the problems that arose when the task force and the school board started discussions about the entrepreneur center. The school board members interviewed for this study were enthusiastic about the possibilities of the entrepreneur center, but that enthusiasm did not come through to members of the task force. The school board articulated the initial vision of the entrepreneur center well, but as different issues arose, the communication of the vision was not as well articulated. The lack of an articulated vision allowed the process undertaken by the task force was to become more important than the initial dreams and hopes for the entrepreneur center.

The entrepreneur center project morphed into a school consolidation issue. This development was a contributing factor in the initial vision of the entrepreneur center not being realized. Foremost among the reasons why school consolidation is not a positive framework for this discussion is the emotional volatility of the subject with all of the communities within the school district. When the architectural firm presented information that pitted one school as more/less efficient as other schools, then the community members “regurgitated” as one of them graphically explained when he described getting something shoved down his throat. In addition, the discussion from ideas and dreams to efficiency of operations contributed to the initiative stalling.

Change of focus for the task force

Many factors contributed to the task force changing its focus to a school consolidation issue. As mentioned above, fiscal constraints when the entrepreneur center is framed in traditional vocational education were influential. Also contributing was the pace of the deliberation of the task force. Finally, the lack of a clear, articulated vision by the leadership team of the district was a factor in a shift away from the original vision. All of these factors contributed to the discussion of the entrepreneur center changing into a discussion about vocational education and school consolidation. Presently the school board has asked the district's architectural firm to have a proposal for a new comprehensive high school to be built that would consolidate two of the district's three high schools.

The vocational education question has been a part of the entrepreneur center discussion from the start. In the initial community meetings people expressed an interest in a vocational education for their children that would give students the skills they need to live in the community. As the task force began to explore the idea of the entrepreneur center, and the architectural firm began its needs assessment, the vocational education question changed slightly. Instead of discussing the benefits of a non-traditional vocational education (non-traditional farming, entrepreneurship embedded within the curriculum), the task force incorporated a traditional vocational education model into the discussions. This occurred by accident and no one purposefully changed the focus. However, the change in focus is indicative of what occurs when a local community relies on an outside entity (in this case the architectural firm) to conduct

research for a problem in the locality. It stresses the importance of local people making decisions regarding the meaning of the globalization. The outside expert cannot make meaning of the outside world for a local community. As Angus (2004) has pointed out, globalization can have a local meaning attached if the local community is given the opportunity to attach a local meaning. However, this slight change in meaning of vocational education greatly influenced the resulting decisions of the task force.

Traditional vocational programs require much more financial and human resources, while more non-traditional vocational offerings are not so capital and human resource intensive. For example, the resources needed to operate an entrepreneur curriculum are much less than one in which automotive technology would need.

The questions about the entrepreneur center shifted away from “what are the possibilities,” to “how will we pay for all of the programming involved.” When the architects presented their study, they discussed how the task force must decide if they wanted one, two, or three comprehensive high schools. A comprehensive high school is one in which there is an academic curriculum and a vocational curriculum with at least eight PDE approved vocational programs. Thus, the school is comprehensive in the fact that all students have choices in their curricular offerings. The cost in building renovations, curriculum lab supplies (in some cases in the hundreds of thousands when looking at automotive technology), the issues with finding vocationally certified teachers, and assuring there were enough students to sustain the program, combined to make it unfeasible to have each high school within the district to be considered a comprehensive high school.

Once the decision was made concerning the feasibility of three comprehensive high schools, another question arises: how can the district offer vocational classes to two thirds of the schools in the district and leave one school without the option. The board felt this was unfair to the students and community that would be without the vocational offerings and politically untenable. The architects were confident that one of the existing high schools could be a stand alone comprehensive high school because their student population was large enough to sustain vocational and regular curricular offerings. The one school in the district that met the requirements for a comprehensive school when the study began was experiencing significant enrollment decreases and this concerned people that they could not sustain the programs. The solution that made the most sense, at least fiscally, was to combine the smaller two high schools (Tannerytown and Cameron Valley) and build a new comprehensive high school.

While these discussions were occurring, some task force members voiced their concerns about the proposed changes in the focus of the committee away from the original entrepreneur center and the focus on traditional vocation training. At the task force meeting on November 16th, 2006, a community member stated that she, "...worried vocational education would limit the choices that students have...they would get 'pigeon holed' into a vocation too early." The result of these meetings was a study to consider building one comprehensive high school and closing two of the three district high schools and send their students to the new school. As a community member said when asked what the future of the project was, "The whole thing will disappear."

Smaller Projects

“Before the interview we were talking about the kind of adjunct programs...I’m a huge supporter of that. I think we need to have someone out there championing the cause, but when we tried to put together the academic initiatives committee to figure it out, I think we stalled out...trying to organize creativity or organize inspiration is difficult. But when you get word out that we’re going to support these ideas then you get groups like the people working on the community dinner...you get a few people in a room that just want to make it happen and they can come up with a plan without a big organized committee and all of that stuff”

-Kenny, school board leader.

Although the all-encompassing vision of an entrepreneur center and business incubator did not come to fruition, the school district did implement some important ideas that originated in the entrepreneur center concept. The first action was a motion by the school board in May of 2005 to approve an entrepreneur curriculum at one of the high schools in the school district. The curriculum would start with a “teaser” class in eighth grade introducing the concept of entrepreneurship to the students. The students could then choose to take the class in grades nine through twelve as an elective. The curriculum progression is in Appendix E.

The students in the entrepreneur class work closely with the culinary arts program in the school to organize different events for the school. The culminating project the first year was a community dinner where local food was served and students organized and operated the entire dinner. The school board let the entrepreneur class “borrow” seed money (\$5,000) to start the project with the hopes that the classes will be able to pay the district back in a few years. They involved the agriculture department from another high

school in the district (they raised and sold a cow for the dinner), the art departments from all of the high school for a small art show, and the childcare classes at the school provided baby-sitting services for the adults attending the dinner. In another high school, a home economics class operated a small cookie factory and sold cookies to students and staff. They also provided cookies for special school events. In many ways, these examples of small-scale entrepreneur projects displayed the skills and knowledge that the entrepreneur center hoped to foster.

Summary

The entrepreneur center was a concept that initially brought out the idealism of the people on the task force. However, this idealism was dampened by processes within the task force itself. The shift in focus away from an entrepreneur center to a vocational center changed the conversations about sustainability and finances so much that the original entrepreneur center concepts never surfaced again. From the failures of the task force to recognize this shift in the conversation comes policy recommendations for other rural school district that are also undertaking school/community collaborative efforts.

Chapter 7

A “Flat” World with Hills

Introduction to Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven will discuss the implications for rural educational policy and offer suggestions on how to foster collaboration between rural schools and communities. The discussion will start with an example of a project that incorporated the major ideas of the entrepreneur center on a much smaller scale. Despite these small-scale successes, the fact of the matter is the original ideals of the entrepreneur center were not realized. Finally, I will discuss how rural schools can become a “bridge” for rural communities that are experiencing the effects of changing social, economic, and educational structures.

One important facet that emerged from this study is that there are examples of rural communities and schools resisting the changes resulting from neoliberalism and globalization. In this case, individual school leaders took the initiative to incorporate aspects of the entrepreneur center idea into their schools. Additionally, school officials, school board members, and community members longed for a place where “imaginative” ideas could be “bantered about” to help their community. Rural schools can play an integral role in fostering “pushback” and resistance. Figure 7.1 illustrates how rural schools and communities “pushback” and resist the negative changes in social, education and economic structures affecting rural communities because of globalization.

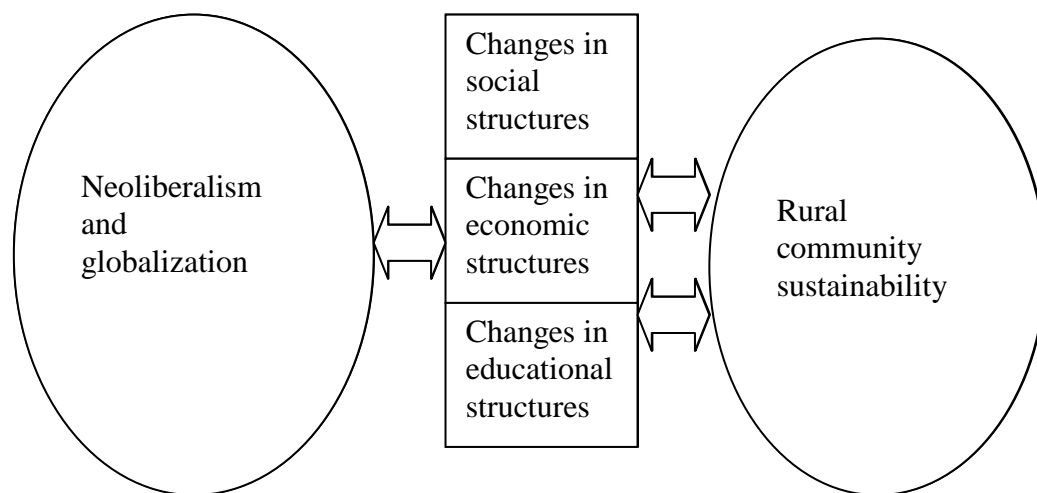


Figure 7.1: How neoliberalism and globalization affect rural sustainability

Gramp and I sat underneath a hay wagon on a muggy July day; an hour earlier my grandmother had made two bag lunches and told me to take one to Gramp for lunch and told me that I should eat the other one. Gramp and I relaxed underneath a hay wagon in an attempt to stay cool while we ate. The distant rumble of thunder alerted us to the fact that it may rain, and seeing the ominous clouds in the sky reinforced this idea. If it rained, the hay would be ruined and all of the work and time spent on the field would be for naught. I muttered under my breath complaining about the incoming rain and the fact the hay would be ruined. This is when Gramp stood up, looked at the sky to the west, and declared that the storm would not be a problem for us. I registered my surprise at his declaration since it was thundering again, and he explained that it was not going to rain because the hills to our north would “split” half of the storm to a village to our north; while the hills to our south would send the storm to a town to our south. I was skeptical of his weather forecast, so I got back on the ATV that I had driven to the field

and went back to the house before it started to rain. It never rained. It seemed as if the hills did “split” the storm and sent the storm to the north and south. The hills protected the valley from the storm.

To Gramp, the hills were a physical presence that protected the valley from the most violent storms of the summer. I cannot speak to the scientific reliability of such claims, but it seemed that more often than not, the hills surrounding our valley did offer protection from storms that threatened the valley. In the world we live in today, we need figurative hills that protect rural areas from the “flat” world brought forth by modern globalization. Because hills are not mountains (which can isolate), they allow for protection as well as mobility outward. Rural America can erect these hills to protect themselves from the vagaries of globalization, and to foster local ideas and solutions to the issues confronting their communities.

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and opportunities of a rural school system collaborating with a local community. In an effort to find these challenges and opportunities, I interviewed school officials as well as community members. Task force meetings the school district arranged to discuss collaboration with the community were also attended and used in data analysis. Finally, artifacts produced by the Task Force were used to further an understanding of the challenges and opportunities explored in this study. This research uncovered a disconnect that rural community members felt existed between their perceptions of quality of life issues on an individual basis and how they perceived the community. Additionally, participation on the committee exploring the entrepreneur center reflected a distrust of the school district as the school district unveiled the concept of the entrepreneur center. The effects of

globalization on rural communities and schools are reflected in the way the school and the community viewed the potential opportunities of the entrepreneur center. This following section will be in three parts: conclusions, implications and recommendations.

The initial vision of the entrepreneur center was never realized at Northern School District. This section will discuss the reasons why the initial vision of the entrepreneur center failed. The discussion will center on the issues first raised in the review of the literature and the theoretical framework. The first discussion will center on the opportunities and small successes that did occur concerning the entrepreneur center.

Small Successes

As my wife and I approached the doors leading into Williams High School, I smiled in anticipation of the evening's events. We entered the doors and saw that the lobby of the school had been transformed into a lounge with a coat check station, art work hanging on the walls, and examples of work done in the shop classes also being presented. The atmosphere was accentuated by the lighting for the area which came from lamps strategically placed throughout the "lounge." My wife and I approached the back of the lounge and we were greeted by impeccably dressed students who asked us our names and whether or not we had a reservation. They greeted us with manners that the school walls are unfamiliar with, and the smile on their faces relayed their enthusiasm and pride in the dinner that they helped prepare. Up to this point the community dinner sponsored by the Williams High School entrepreneur and culinary arts classes exceeded my expectation, but I was to be even more surprised when I entered the dining room.

The cafeteria of the school had been converted into a formal dining area complete with a student playing a piano in the corner of the room. The ambiance of the room had been helped by the lighting coming from more lamps placed throughout the dining room and the fact that large rolls of paper had been placed over the walls to hide the cinder blocks underneath. The host sat us at our table and immediately another student approached our table and introduced herself as our server. The table settings were high quality and menu choices were found on a card on our plates. On each wall of the room students, dressed in the garb of student chefs, were standing behind a buffet table eagerly waiting people to serve. There was a line for soup and breads, another for appetizers, (whose names I cannot pronounce) a line for the main course, and (my favorite) a dessert line. All of the set up, planning, and food preparation was done by the students.

The students were proud to answer all questions about the food they had made. Some of the students working that night are naturally shy, but they were so proud of their work they did not act shy at all that night. I watched these students explain to everyone the hard work and the lessons they had learned by preparing this community dinner. The highlight of the night was when the students “lit” the Banana Foster to the applause of the crowd. Finally, at the end the students were recognized by over one hundred adults who enjoyed the fruits of the students’ labor.

Although the initial vision of the entrepreneur center was not realized, there were pockets of success throughout the schools in the school district where the fundamental ideas undergirding the entrepreneur center flourished. At Williams High School, there is a flourishing entrepreneurship curriculum. The curriculum is taught by a dedicated teacher with support from the building principal. The entrepreneur classes collaborated

with the school's culinary arts classes to create the dinner described at the beginning of this section in April 2007. The dinner incorporated all three high schools in the district. The agriculture students at Cameron Valley raised the steer for the beef for the dinner. The art classes at Tannerytown High School provided artwork for "ambiance" at the dinner. Finally, the art, culinary arts, industrial arts, and entrepreneurship classes at Williams High School organized the dinner. In this respect, entrepreneurial ideals were taught to the students through a real life experience that resulted in a community activity. Robert, a school board member, saw the community dinner as a first step to realizing the larger goals the entrepreneur center was reaching for:

We came up with one smart idea...and now we've got the dinner started. We're incorporating all of the schools, multiple different layers of classes and what not. They've got little projects...Eventually they can bring in project leaders from the students and they can write their ideas, learn how to run it, let it grow. You're involving the community.

There are other examples throughout the district as well. At Cameron High School the Home Economics classes sold cookies once a week and also provided cookies for special events in the school and the district. The students operated the class like a small business and small business skills were taught. At Tannerytown High School, the Industrial Arts classes formed a club and started to refurbish an old mobile home. A local businessperson donated the mobile home, and the students were remodeling the structure themselves and then they were to auction it off to pay for the remodeling. They are responsible for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. This was another example of small business skills being taught to the students in a non-traditional manner.

The entrepreneur curriculum at Williams High School is aimed at adding human capital to individual students, as well as social capital to the community at large. In this sense, the local policy makers have placed the students into the “opportunity trap” where they are still competing in the job market against those students who are also gaining human capital. The difference in this case is where the reform originated and more importantly, where the reform places students in relation to figure 2.4. The skills these students are gaining will actually allow them to “skip” over one of the filters that prevent them from attaining the best possible occupation in their local community. By stressing to the students that they can gain and use these skills in their own community, small successes such as these have influenced the economic well being of the students. The potential benefits of the community in terms of economic development are increased because entrepreneurial communities are more likely to thrive in our global economy (Korsching & Allen, 2004, K. Dabson & Soni-Meyers, 2005, Macke, 2002, B. Dabson, 2005). This is an example of “hills” being placed around a community to protect itself from negative globalization.

These are examples of individual schools taking small parts of the ideas from the entrepreneur center concept and implementing them in a limited way in the school. The students involved in all of these projects benefited from the skills that they learned. It is interesting that these ideas flourished while the committee studying the entrepreneur center was discussing topics not related to the entrepreneur center, such as school consolidation. Individual educators and educational leaders implemented aspects of the entrepreneur center that they felt their school could absorb. This may be an example of

how a school reform initiative is never implemented in the fashion that its proponents wish (McLaughlin, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1990).

Factors such as “fluctuating bureaucratic necessities” and the lack of clear goals can significantly change how an initiative is implemented locally (McLaughlin, 1987). The new school leader in the school district studied did not share the same context of the initiative with the rest of the school personnel simply because he was not present for the initial conversations. The result was that he co-opted the initiative and turned the conversation into one of school consolidation. Resistance to the initiative came from established teachers in vocational programs in the district. The administration did a poor job of explaining to the teachers what the entrepreneur center would mean for their teaching. When goals are not made clear to the teachers, they will often “fill in the gaps” of their knowledge of the initiative with what is familiar to them (Darling-Hammond, 1990). As a result, the vocational teachers unwittingly became allies with the new superintendent as he co-opted the original idea for the entrepreneur center and the initiative stalled and collaboration did not work. The explanations for the failure of this collaboration are two fold: 1. lack of effective participation by community members and 2. the effects of globalization on rural schools and communities creating less solid social foundations.

Participation

The first meeting of the task force was attended by nearly forty people. The last meeting consisted of just twenty-four. The perception from some who

participated in these meetings (as mentioned earlier, a community member stated that the whole process [of the task force] was, "...a dog and pony show...".) and from the attendance rates of the ensuing meetings indicated that people did not want to attend the meetings because they felt their opinion did not matter. What happened in the intervening months that led to such a decline in participation? In fact, as indicated by the individual above, this member did not attend any more meetings after verbalizing these feelings to the researcher. This form of participation where a governing body is not looking for real participation is called tokenism. Arstein (1969) discussed tokenism in her ladder of participation. Tokenism occurs when an entity in power (in this case the school district) asks for input from a group so they can claim that they gathered input from all stakeholders. Additionally, the process of developing an entrepreneur center could have been an example of democratic ideals in community participation (Morrissey, 2000). The chance for deliberation of the issues where various stakeholders are present, and heard, was an opportunity lost for this community. However, fewer and fewer people became involved in the process.

The lack of participation allows for fewer people to have a greater say over the lives of many people. Because fewer voices were being heard throughout the process, a dominant voice (or group of voices) dictated the direction of the conversation. As a result, this led to the initial vision being lost in discussions of school consolidation and vocational education.

The discussion centering on the entrepreneur center morphed into a school consolidation argument, which in turn contributed to the failure of the initial vision of the entrepreneur center to come to fruition. The reason for this change was the lack of

participation on the committee exploring the opportunity. The school district did not come into the process with a hidden agenda to discuss school consolidation. However, when the opportunity arose, and less people started to attend the meetings, a few key members of the school board could sway the committee into discussing these possibilities. At the meeting held on November 16th, 2006 Hayes-Large architects presented the findings from the feasibility study. Discussion during the course of the meeting centered on vocational certification for teachers and school consolidation. The school board president and the superintendent encouraged this discussion by not focusing the discussion on the subject at hand (the entrepreneur center). The discussion at that meeting started when a vocational teacher stated that the district would never be able to find teachers for a vocational school. Although this may be correct, this resulted in the discussion to be about vocational schooling for the rest of the meeting. The superintendent agreed with the vocational teacher that gave credence to the discussion not centering on the entrepreneur center. My notes from the meeting indicate that the meeting was “bogged down” by the discussion of a vocational school. The task force, which was representing the larger school district and the community, was now being dominated by a few people serving on the task force. My notes indicate that two people, the superintendent and the school board president, dominated the discussions at this meeting. In effect, two people on the smaller task force will lead the recommendations to the larger school board.

The result is that a few voices dominated the conversation and ultimately made a decision to further explore options for vocational education in the district that may result in school consolidation. Rural communities and school districts must be made aware

that just because their experience is with small, collegial bureaucracies, a few people can still sway a discussion even when a large task force is involved. This is precisely what Grant McConnell (1969) discussed and David Orr (1994) feared would happen when larger organizations are broken into smaller units of power. The school board was represented at the committee meeting by four school board members. Although this meeting was officially a meeting of the school board's academic initiatives committee, the committee members present did not act as a committee. In other words, the board president and the superintendent ran the meeting with little participation by the other board members. The board, unwittingly, had abdicated the power of this committee to a select group of people who dominated the conversation. In addition, the architectural firm presented information that was centered on a vocational schooling model with very little discussion about an entrepreneur center. The voices of the other five members of the board were not heard (because they were absent), and voices of the community members that did attend were drowned out by voices of the school system. Only four community members not affiliated with the school system initiated conversation during the three-hour meeting.

The school district did not offer a space for the community to discuss the hopes and dreams or the potential of the entrepreneur center. The school system used the space as a "managed" space where the interests of the school system (or a few people associated with the school system) dominated. The community was excited about the possibilities of offering a chance for students and the community to resist the changes brought on by globalization; however, the space turned to a cynical space instead of a hopeful space. Rural schools have the unique status in the community as a stable

community institution. With this status comes the responsibility to provide the community a space to discuss community concerns and the fortitude not to dictate the conversation. Rural schools must be the foundation on which the protective hills must rest, and often the conversations and discussions of the community may not be part of the traditional schooling discourse. Rural schools should not shy away from this responsibility because as Gruenewald (2008) points out, education means more than schooling.

Implications for Practice

Rural schools must provide an opportunity for meaningful participation on the part of the community members involved. This is especially important in rural areas where the impact of globalization has created a sense of individualism among the community. The rise of the importance of individualism undercuts the traditional sense of cohesiveness that rural areas have been built on. There are also fewer opportunities for communal actions because of the lack of service clubs and other opportunities to help the community. Additionally, people are less willing to give their time for community efforts. As stated by the local business man in this study, the reason for this lack of effort is simply that people are working so much they just do not have enough time to volunteer for the common good.

Rural educators are working in an institution that can help the community appreciate their “rootedness” and assist the community in resisting the negative effects of globalization. I have already discussed the effects of time on people because of these

factors, but there are other impacts as well. Educational leaders must keep in mind the lack of experiences that many parents and students have working together (outside the school) to solve problems. This indicates that educational leaders must spend the time working on the *process* of their work with committees and the communities at large. How the educational leader interacts with the community, and the extent to which the goals of the initiative reflect the world view of the community, not just the school, are two examples of process that are important to consider.

Effects of Globalization

The information that the school system “transmits” to the students has always been viewed as static and unchanging over time. The fact that ninth grade science will be either Earth Science or Biology in Pennsylvania is an example of a social construct that parents and community members count on as unchanging. However, that is no longer the case. In school across Pennsylvania, the state standard anchors are forcing schools to adjust what they teach and when they teach it to the students. If the state does not put the information into the anchors then the schools will probably not teach the information because it will not be on the state test. Therefore, the curriculum becomes fluid and flexible as the anchors change every year, which in turn makes the social structure of education fluid and flexible. This has resulted in a shift in the way the community and educational systems interact.

When looking at the possibilities of the entrepreneur center, the community viewed the entrepreneur center as an opportunity to combat the vagaries of globalization

and neoliberalism. The entrepreneur center, viewed through the community, would allow students and community members to gain skills needed in a fluctuating world where job stability is tied to individual job skills. Community members were hoping the entrepreneur center would promote “creative thinking” that would help students survive in liquid times. The school district’s stated end was the same: to offer the skills so students can become competitive in today’s society. However, the school district viewed the entrepreneur center as more of a traditional vocational school. The difference in viewpoint between the school system and the community can be expressed in a dichotomy. The communities longed for creative ideas that will help students thrive in a globalized economy where competition for jobs and job skills is fierce. These skills could be adapted to various places and circumstances. The school system was still operating in a traditional sense where skills are viewed as an end of themselves and once these skills are mastered, the students will be able to compete in the work force for jobs.

While community members were hoping to discuss ideas and promote creative thinking, the school district leaders stressed the importance of physical infrastructure. As Blaine stated, “... [the] current study is of a comprehensive high school, not an entrepreneur center.” The school system is further hampered by the fact that the structure of the educational system (i.e. high stakes test, curriculum standardization) prevents the creative thinking that the community cherishes in the new global age. This view was stated by Joe who felt that the educational system stifled creativity. The school system is fighting to keep the kind of education that was best for the non-global age; as Bauman (2003) states in the non-global world, “Knowledge was of value since it was hoped to last, and education was of value in so far as it offered such knowledge of lasting value”

(p. 19). Thus, the community viewed knowledge as creative and transient to fit the times, while the school system viewed education as stable and meant forever. The community inherently knows that their world has fundamentally changed, while the school system has not yet “caught up” to this framework of the world. An example is the school district hiring an architectural firm to conduct the needs assessment. The feasibility study was recommended by the Appalachian Regional Commission as a way to study the feasibility of the entrepreneur center in a specific rural community. Hayes-Large is an architectural firm that specializes in designing schools and other public buildings. This firm is in existence to make a profit and their decision-making by necessity, must be influenced by the need to make a profit. The best decision for the school district, for the bottom line of the firm, is for the school district to choose to build (or remodel) schools. Blaine offered this advice when asked about the future of the entrepreneur center, suggesting that a district should, “...not work with a firm that that has done work for the district in the past and has money interest [in the outcome].”

School systems also face a challenge when coordinating with the community because of the traditional relationship between schools and the community. In the community, the effects of neoliberalism have created a world where *individual* dreams and desires dominate. In the communities studied, this individualism is reflected in the lack of service clubs and community oriented activities. The students and their parents are experiencing the fracturing of their community as a result of the importance placed on individualism. The options available for people to work together to build a community are limited. To survive people must have what Berry (1997) described as a “hunter” mentality where one will always look out for the opportunity to further their own well-

being. People are retreating in to smaller and smaller groups and they are limiting their contact with those people that are less like them. Furthermore, politics is not viewed as a force to make change because the actual power brokers that make decisions are based in globalized, multinational companies (Bauman, 2007). A community needs a strong sense of esprit de corps among community members to fight against these urges. In the communities in this study, these community institutions are not flourishing, if they exist at all.

Contrast the tendency of the community to ignore the communal good with a look at what actually occurs in the schools. Students in schools are taught in a *group* setting focusing on *group* results. Group instruction of students from different ethnic, monetary, social, and religious backgrounds is the standard norm. Students have very little experience with how to deal with anything in their lives that is not centered on the importance of the individual. In fact, almost all of their experiences in their lives have been centered on the importance of the individual and how one can leverage their individual skills and abilities to defeat other individuals in the economy. Meanwhile, in school, the students may be working in groups where the student's grade is based on how the group performs. Schools also encourage "school spirit" by conducting class competitions where grade levels compete against one another for prizes awarded throughout the year.

Implications for Practice

The entrepreneur center concept was well received initially because it offered hope and resistance to forces seemingly out of the control of the community. People interviewed for this study expressed optimism about the concepts underlying the entrepreneur center. However, rural community members do not have a framework for discussing these hopeful concepts. The entrepreneur center was not presented in a way that the worldview of the community members was taken into account. For example, when the discussion turned from the possibilities of the entrepreneur center to a building project, the community lost interest because their worldview was not being considered. Ultimately, the entrepreneur center spawned various smaller projects centered on a place-based curriculum. The early success of these initiatives should encourage rural educators to replace the traditional, standard curriculum that holds little relevance for rural students with one that includes and encourages local meanings.

Challenges to Collaboration Created by Globalization

This study uncovered some challenges that rural schools and communities face when planning a community development initiative. Namely, there were two different worldviews. These worldviews were discussed earlier in this section. The school system represents the view of education as a stable, solid knowledge set while the community recognizes the transient “liquid” nature of the society in which they live. In a liquid society, knowledge that in the past has been useful for the students becomes unuseful, or even detrimental, in a liquid society. The school system in this study had a world view

where knowledge was stable and the foundation of the community was also stable. Meanwhile the community had a more “liquid” view of knowledge that reflected the experiences the people have been through because of globalization. As Bauman (2003) states, “It is the world outside the school that has grown quite different from the kind of world for which schools...used to prepare their graduates” (p. 22).

Three factors should be considered when trying to foster the collaboration that will lead to renewal in these communities and schools. The first factor that will foster collaboration is for the school system to encourage place-based education (Theobald, 1997; Theobald & Siskar, 2008; Gruenewald, 2003; Tompkins, 2008) . A place-based curriculum will help alleviate the loss of public spaces that were mentioned by the participants in the study. This type of curriculum will cultivate citizens that actively participate in solving problems in their communities. Additionally, place-based education has the potential for encouraging the development of physical spaces where community members and school students/personnel can meet and discuss issues important to the community.

A second factor in encouraging collaboration between rural schools and communities is for the school system to advance creativity. This cannot be accomplished by purchasing a curriculum where “creativity” is taught. Rather, as mentioned in this study, the school should be a place where risk taking is promoted in a safe environment, and students and staff feel comfortable thinking in “big ideas.” The entrepreneur center excited people because of these very ideas. In addition, the smaller successes that were spawned from the entrepreneur center were viewed positively because they gave students the opportunity to grow beyond the traditional curriculum.

Finally, the school system must encourage democratic participation through the routines of the school day and in the way the school system interacts with the community. The school system must make sure that the pedagogical methods used by the teachers reflect the reality that students and parents experience in their lives. For example, asking students to participate in cooperative learning groups where the grade of an individual is determined by the performance of the group may be difficult for students raised in the age of individualism to understand. The change in focus in the community from collaboration to individualism offers little opportunities for the students, and oftentimes their parents, to participate in activities where group goals are stressed.

Another example from the news will help explain this point. Recently two states (Pennsylvania and Mississippi) are instituting (or in Mississippi's case a court has ordered) a voter identification system that people must use if they are to vote in the state. Supporters of the voter identification cards stress that this is the only way to make voting "fair" so people will not vote more than once. Of course, the other side is that there is potential for voter disenfranchisement because the poor and those without resources may find it harder to vote. Rural residents in particular have more obstacles because they may not have a way to know about the new law (because of lack of local newspapers, and other community news outlets), or ways to respond to the new law even if they were aware of the changes. For example, residents in Pennsylvania must have some form of identification. The proponents of the law say that anyone can go and get a free identification at the driver's license center. This is burdensome to rural residents when the photo center may be in excess of thirty miles away with no public transportation to

get them to the center. This sets the structure in people's minds some people are good enough to vote, while others are not.

Many opportunities to participate in school are based on a similar system. If a student has a certain grade, they participate; if not, they do not participate. The die has been cast and students are indoctrinated into a system where some are "good" enough to participate, while others are not. Schools should tailor the rules and regulations in which they operate to allow for every student to participate meaningfully within the school if they so desire. Finally, schools should demand and expect meaningful participation from the community. They should not ask the community to rubber stamp initiatives. Oftentimes this process may seem inefficient as two sides of an issue are worked out in a public setting. However, this is the goal that schools and communities must strive for as they collaborate to save rural communities. A meaningful give and take where all people and sides of an issue are represented will help bring rural schools and communities closer together.

Recommendations

The survival of rural communities in America is intertwined with the health and vitality of its school system. The following recommendations are related to the supports for rural sustainability that were mentioned in Chapter Two. The first recommendation, schools as a community development incubator, is meant to mitigate the changes in economic structures discussed in Chapter Two. The "bridge" function of rural schools is meant to connect rural schools to the communities that are facing the changes resulting

from globalization. The school system must serve as the foundation of the “hills” that will protect rural communities from globalization. This can be accomplished if rural schools consider adopting the following roles:

1. Rural schools become an “incubator” for community development initiatives
2. Rural schools serve as the “Gatekeeper” for
 - a. Place-time travelers (helps the community by providing stability)
 - b. Public space and democracy
 - c. Critical pedagogy of place

Incubator

These recommendations are an extension of the suggestions that Hammer (2001) discussed as part of her recommendation for rural school’s role in community development. Namely she felt that educational innovations should “strengthen new development and educational programs that support place-based learning, sustainable agriculture, and entrepreneurial economic activity” (Hammer, 2001, p. 27). Rural schools can be an incubator for community development initiatives. An incubator concept will provide a place that can match local solutions to local problems. Rural communities will then become the place where solutions are created and managed thus preventing what Brian Dabson (2005) calls a series of “unpalatable defaults” if the communities rely on traditional community development. Rural schools can play a vital role in fostering the social capital rural communities need to survive. As Miller (1995)

states, “Rural communities may have a head start...because schools have traditionally played a central role in the life of these communities” (p. 164). The school system can forestall these defaults by becoming a community initiative incubator. This study set out to discuss the challenges and opportunities of school involvement in community development initiatives, and the findings support that rural schools do have the potential to serve as incubators.

The question that remains unresolved is to what extent the involvement of the school should be in developing and fostering these initiatives. The people interviewed for this study indicated an opinion for both sides of the argument, with some people wanting the school district to be an integral part of community development, while others only wanted the school to be the initiator. In rural communities, at the very least, the school system should expand on the ideas of Giroux (2003) and Bauman (1998, 2007) and offer a space for the ideas to grow as well as the expertise to allow the initiative to gain a foothold in the community. This may involve arranging for speakers and experts to meet with the local community leaders and interested parties so ideas can be shared; since the school system has clout within larger organizations (i.e. state and local governments), these conversations will be easier for the school system to arrange. A glance through the *Tannerytown Journal* in the 1940s and 1950s offers an example of how schools participated in the life of the community. The schools opened their doors for various civic organizations to play in sporting events, invited musicians to perform, and held meetings. While the school did not play an active role in these events, the fact that the school was providing the *space* for these events is important. Citizens interacted with each other in numerous ways at these events and that fostered a sense of community. In

more remote rural areas, the school may play a larger role in community development initiatives. The school may have to be the initiator, organizer, and the implementer of the initiative. Whatever role the school plays, rural practitioners must be aware that these are valid roles a rural school should play in America.

“Bridges” schools

The first role for rural schools is to bridge the differences in the community caused by neoliberalism and globalization. The school system can use the people it employs to realize this bridging function. Additionally, rural schools can offer their buildings as a physical space for the community to foster a renewal of democratic ideals in rural communities. One of the themes that emerged in this study (see Chapter Four “Public Spaces”) was the need for a space that community members could meet to discuss issues important to them. Rural schools should have a role in encouraging these public spaces. Finally, the curriculum rural schools offer to the students should reflect the place in which they live as well as offering a chance to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of living in a globalized society.

Time and Space

“Rural teachers are, or ought to be, the stewards of the intellectual life of their communities” (Theobald, 1997, p. 114).

Bauman (1998, 2007) discusses the effects of globalization on social structure. He believes that society is being broken into two worlds: those that are not tied to a “place” but live in “time” and those bound by place. Travelers are people who can travel the world at will and only use a physical place as a temporary “landing” until the next move. On the other end of the spectrum are those people that are “place bound.” These people do not have the ability (either monetarily or otherwise) to travel from place to place as the other “world” does. They may attempt to vicariously “move” from place to place by “cruising” the internet, but they are effectively limited to a place.

In many rural areas in America, the “limitation” in movement would not be seen as a negative trait. In fact, as stated in this study by a long time educator in the region, people value the land, and the “place” they live often to a fault. In my time in this district as a guidance counselor assisting students in college choices, I can remember multiple cases where the parents felt threatened if their children left town for college. Oftentimes, the parents would bribe their children with offers of cars or free rent if they would stay home. This is not an irrational fear on the part of these parents and was articulated by many community members during the initial “apathy” meeting. The community would like to see their children stay in the community because they feel a connection to the place in which they live. They would not want their children to become the “traveler” that Bauman discusses.

I want to focus on rural educators in relation to Bauman’s theory of social change while examining how their role within the school system and their relationship with the community affects the relationship between rural schools and rural communities. A strength of rural schools that is often mentioned is the close relationship between the

school and community (Theobald, 1997, Hass & Nachtigal, 1998). Rural educators are an important part of this equation since they are the visible “face” of the school district. How they act and what they do or say will reflect on the school system in rural areas. Although rural educators are not the stereotype of the traveler that Bauman discusses, they are more mobile and less place bound than members of the community at large. Rural educators are oftentimes the best-paid workers in the community, thus giving them a chance at more mobility than many others in the community. The rural educator holds a unique position in the community because of these financial resources and other experiences they have had outside of the community that separate them from many of the community members. Even if the educators grew up in the town in which they work, they did leave for at least a while to go to college, and this separates them in the experiences they had away from the community from those that have always been in the community.

In addition, rural educators are feeling the stress of “teaching to the test” and resisting the homogenized curriculum and instructional practices that are being encouraged by No Child Left Behind. The pressure for students to do well on the “state test” has forced teachers to adopt instructional practices that decontextualizes the curriculum and to adopt instructional “strategies” that place no value on local or personal knowledge. For example, in the school district studied in this paper, performance tracking of the students is one strategy used to attempt to assist the students in doing as well as they can on the state test. Under this regime, a student is tested three or four times a year and the scores are compared to the state standards. A student’s curricular weakness (as measured by the state standards) will be shown and a team of teachers will

then develop strategies to help the student in their weakest areas. The school district is showing great responsibility in attempting to help these students; however, a closer look at what the students are missing is appropriate. As the teachers are developing strategies to help the students improve in these specific standards, the question arises about what the instruction will look like for these students. Oftentimes the instruction will be a “pull out” to another room so a teacher can work with a group of students on a specific weakness. The instructional strategies are often “canned” because the “interventions” are often test prep books specifically designed for the state test purchased by the school district. These instructional strategies are not any different for a student in inner city Philadelphia, or rural Mill County. One of the goals of this model of instruction is to individualize instruction for every student, but how individualized is instruction that can be used by any of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania?

Regardless of how aware rural educators are of their teaching practices, or the methods they use to resist curricular and instructional changes, these factors also play a role in separating them from the rural community. The curriculum they teach or work with becomes less contextualized to the place in which they work and live, and instructional practices are reduced to a series of technicalities which deprofessionalizes the educator. Increasingly teachers are becoming a “vessel” by which state controlled curriculum and instructional practices are being fed to the students. As members of rural communities that have a long history of resistance to “outside” authority, rural educators increasingly must decide which end of the spectrum they want to play: the test prep drill and kill side, or the side where context, professionalism, and community count. This tension places enormous pressure on rural educators, as they must choose between

resistance and subjugation. This choice draws rural educators further away from their community professionally, while at the same time the rural educator is intimately involved personally within the community. Moreover, the educators are often from outside the community and they represent to the community members (and the students), the, "...mobile cultural capital that education credentials represent" (Corbett, 2007). In addition, as a superintendent of a small school district in western Pennsylvania, I learned quickly through school board members or community members how teachers are "behaving" outside the school walls. Rural educators understand this scrutiny and understand it as a "price to pay" for living and working in a tight knit community.

Meanwhile the population of rural communities is changing rapidly. The Census Bureau started to account for rural areas that are in close proximity to urban centers because these rural communities are seeing an influx of workers who live in the community but work in the urban center. These people are the travelers that Bauman discusses because they have little connection to the place in which they live. The community becomes a bedroom community for a larger community somewhere else. In this study, an educator who had spent their whole life in the community discussed this trend by stating, "So people automatically become disjointed...it's [the community] a bedroom and they go work somewhere else." Additionally, urban retirees are viewing rural areas as a place to retire. The retirees can sell their house in an urban market, make an enormous profit, and upgrade their lifestyle in a rural community. This is another example of a traveler. Rural schools systems must involve both groups into the school system and engage them in the community. Rural educators can play this role with encouragement from rural education policy makers.

Rural schools, and more importantly the individuals that work within these schools, can work together to bridge the time travelers with those that are place bound. Rural educators are familiar with both worlds and can help each “world” understand each other. The school system can provide the foundation for understanding of the local culture and environment to travelers. Rural educators will facilitate these interactions by encouraging retired experts to come into the schools as guest lecturers, or the school can develop a volunteer program to get people involved. These are just two examples of ways to target the travelers; only the limitations of imagination can limit the opportunities to get travelers involved in the schools. The coupling of these two worlds will help reinvigorate the community because the division between these two worlds will start to dissipate. The less that people born in the Valley dismiss the “flatlanders (people from down state Pennsylvania) and the more flatlanders see value in the “ridgerunners” (native community members), the stronger the sense of community.

Public Spaces and Democracy

There is too little attention paid to the fact that the struggle over politics and democracy is inextricably linked to creating and sustaining public spheres where individuals can be educated to perform as political agents equipped with the skills, capacities, and knowledge they need not only to act as autonomous political agents but to also believe that such struggles are worth taking up. (Giroux, 2005, p. XXXI)

Educational theory, therefore, ought not to trail behind prevailing economic wisdom; it should be the other way around:

“...If we continue to reject...arguments supporting education as a catalyst in the development of civic virtue, there is little reason to hope that we might alter the trend away from democracy in contemporary politics and economics. If the people can not speak or if they will not be heard when they do so, the overt exploitation of rural places will continue unabated. (Theobald, 1997, p. 119)

Rural schools can also serve as a gatekeeper for public spaces and democratic ideals. Public spaces are a vital component for a flourishing democracy because without these spaces there is, “...little chance for norms to be debated, for values to be confronted, to clash and to negotiate. The verdicts of right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, proper and improper, useful and useless may only descend from on high” (Bauman, 1998, p. 26). In this section, I will discuss how rural schools can serve as a public space that will promote the ideals of democracy.

Schools serving rural communities can encourage the growth of democratic ideals simply by offering the space for community members to gather to discuss matters important to them. One of the themes that emerged from this study was that people wanted a place to go where creative ideas could be discussed and fostered. Rural schools need to be flexible in allowing community groups to use the school after hours for these meetings. It is easy for the school system to place roadblocks for these meetings by citing liability or policy concerns associated with allowing the community into the school. However, it is also easy to overcome these obstacles in a small community where close relationships exist between the school and the community. The meetings that take place in the school are just a first step. The school system needs to encourage the use of

their buildings as a public space by bringing in speakers and other cultural events. The speakers and other event can help the community in two ways. First, the actual content of the lectures and discussions can lead to the intellectual discussions within the community that Theobald (1997) felt were important in revitalizing rural communities. Secondly, the very act of allowing people to intermingle so they have an opportunity to sit and listen to ideas from one another. This also allows an informal setting where people can discuss the global events that are affecting their lives.

Once this conversation is started, the community can take action knowing the school system, *at the very least*, will offer a space for further discussion. One of the challenges identified in this study was that community members felt the school dominated, and changed, the focus of the original idea when discussing the entrepreneur center. By simply offering the space for people to meet and discuss issues, they can formulate their own solutions to problems facing the community. The school system will always be there to assist in expertise if needed. A grassroots effort to change the community is an example of how “hills” can be created to protect the community from the forces of globalization.

Critical Pedagogy of Place

Rural schools must resist the trend of the standardization of curriculum and the importance of high stakes testing, much like the district in this study first attempted. Education is more than a place to gain the skills necessary to become employed in the global economy. As Gruenewald (2003) states, “...current educational discourses seek to

standardized the experience of students from diverse geographical and cultural places so they may compete in the global economy” (p. 7). By taking heed to such theorists like Theobald (1997), Giroux (2005, 2003), and Dewey (1997), rural schools can become a place where students can place themselves within the context of a global economy. Students must be encouraged to do more than just accept as fate what is occurring in their communities. They must learn to understand the reasons for their discontent. Once understood, they must learn to challenge, question and change them. Rural schools must also adopt a philosophy of education that looks beyond the students within its walls. Questioning and understanding the local and global world is an educative process that should be made available to all community members. This can be accomplished once the school opens its doors to offer the space for these discussions and changes its focus to a critical pedagogy of place.

The first step that a rural school system can take to help link local and global problems and issues is to adopt a critical pedagogy of place. Gruenewald (2003) combines two concepts, reinhabitation and decolonization, to form a critical pedagogy of place. Reinhabitation refers to learning to live in the place in which one lives even after that area has been exploited in the past. Gruenewald (2003) further states, “If reinhabitation involved learning to live well socially and ecologically in places that have been disrupted and injured, decolonization involves learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (p. 9). In rural areas, the critical pedagogy of place must move beyond the school walls to include the community also. One of the problems that Baumann (1998) discusses in a liquid society is that a community has ideals forced on them without any meaning making from the local people. Furthermore, Berry (1997)

discusses how in rural areas rural people often rely on outside “experts” to solve problems that are fundamentally local. Rural schools must inhabit this space.

Rural America has always been a place where citizens have questioned and resisted power from “outside” areas (Stock, 1996). Rural school systems can encourage more questioning of the dominant culture by adopting a critical pedagogy of place that offers solutions and meaning for the local community. The more students are taught in the regular curriculum of their school to understand and make meaning of the relationship between their local issues and global issues, the more likely they will be to undertake these issues as adults.

The rural school system is the one stable community institution that can act as a gatekeeper between these two worlds. Rural educators, because they have one foot in each world, can be the link that brings the two worlds together. The school system must encourage and initiate school wide and community programs that allow an interaction between the two worlds. The interaction between the two worlds will have two benefits. First, it will provide a “rootedness” for those members of the community that do not have a real connection to the place in which they live. Once these “time-space travelers” start to plant their roots, they will participate more within the community both in school and in non-school initiatives. Rural educators will benefit because they will be seen as the experts who can navigate both worlds and act as tour guides between the two worlds. Second, the interactions will provide an opportunity for place bound community members to share their experiences and expertise with people other than themselves that are place bound. As a life time resident of rural areas I have heard many times that people feel their local knowledge and expertise does not account for “real” knowledge.

By providing this forum, rural schools are helping to promote local knowledge sharing. In addition, the group that is not connected to place (or less connected) can offer their experiences and knowledge to their space restricted neighbors. A school board member in this study expressed an interest in “tapping” into the knowledge of the people who moved to the area to retire. The school, through curriculum choices, and other community outreach initiatives, can foster these types of interactions. Finally, rural schools can mitigate the effects of the changes in social structures by offering a space for students to question and challenge what is occurring in the society in which they live.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about what it's like to live in this community.
 - a. What are the strengths?
 - b. What are the weaknesses?
 - c. What can be done to address these concerns?
2. In your opinion, what role should the school have addressed in these concerns?
3. What can be done by the community to address the issues that we have been talking about?
4. What has happened in the past to try to help your community?
 - a. Was it a success or failure?
 - b. What forces pushed it toward a success or failure?
5. What is your impression of the entrepreneur center?
6. What is your impression of vocational education?
7. What do you expect to be the next step in this process?
8. What do you wish was the next step in the process?
9. What lessons can this experience of efforts to build an entrepreneur center teach other communities like ours?

Appendix B

Data Collection Time Line

Table B1

May 2006 – July 2006	Historical Document Collection: Historical newspapers, meeting minutes, handouts from committee meetings, internal memos, first round of interviews with Board members, school officials and committee members.
July 2006 – September 2006	Document and Interview Analysis: Analyze interview and document information, looking for common themes; determine next round of interviews.
September 2006 – December 2006	Pre-Interview and future analysis of information.
July 2006 – December 2006	Observe community meetings and committee meetings.

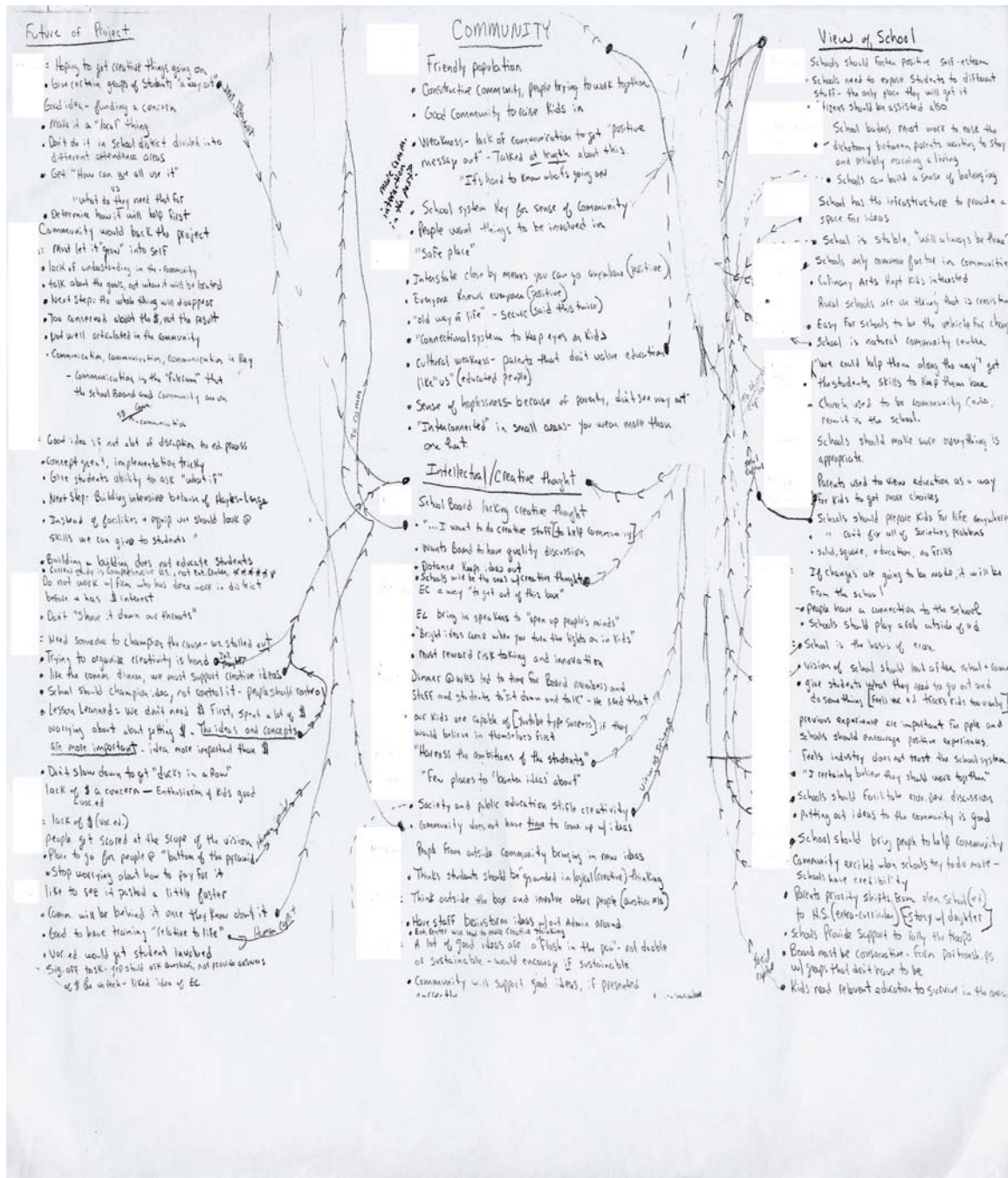
Appendix C

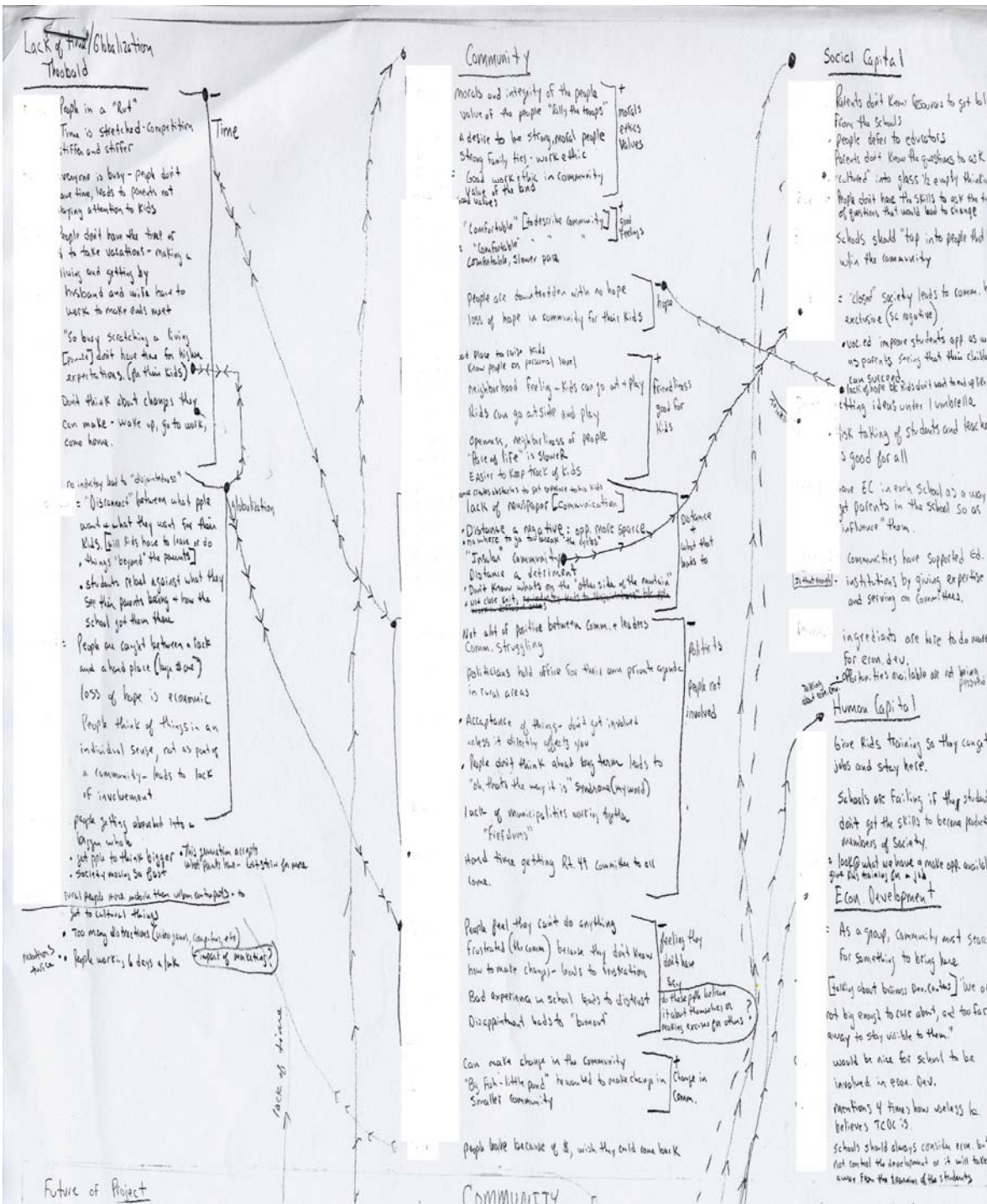
Observation Protocol

Relevant Research Topic	Examples of Evidence
School – Community Collaboration	Body language and discussion of the community and committee when a school official presents a point of view. Individual reactions to school officials will also be important. Attendance at the meetings will indicate community interest.
Entrepreneur Center as an accepted model	Discussions that arise from discussing a new curriculum model. The occupational and educational background of those who speak in favor/opposition to the model. Significance given to cost of the entrepreneur center.
Rural Economy and Community Development	What topics are discussed the most when the local rural economy is discussed. Reaction of people when school officials discuss helping the community.
Democratic Process	How the meetings are structured (i.e. layout of room, agenda) to facilitate open discussion for all. Who spoke the most at the meeting (i.e. school officials, Board members, community members). What decisions are made and how were they made (i.e. vote, consensus).

Appendix D

Data Analysis





SS: social system 7 - problem specific event	?	?	?	Social Capital	Human Capital	Econ Dev?	Globalization
N=18	Community	Future of Project	(creative thought)	View of School			
SS	Priority - and better economy	read champion; ideas more important than \$	Comm support (not just if prepared country)	Comm support (not just if prepared country)			
SS	SPARE of industries						
SS	no hope / value of people	Hope EC would get "creative things" going	no/less to learn ideas	Ed should be appropriate	Support schools through things		Both ppl have to work towards a vision
SS	models - integrity of ppl	lack of \$	SB should have more creative discussions		"Top into ppl that you're in team"		People in a "Rut"
SS	Comfortable	lack of \$	EC way to "get out of this box"	Broaden horizons and help self-esteem	"Cultures" into classes/extra activities		
SS	Safe for kids	stop worrying about \$ Ppl scared of the vision	Need to take away of innovation (not about + education)	Infrastructure to allow ideas	ideas with 1 piece history and for all	Not clear what ppl looking for	Time is starting to change things
SS	lack of effective communication device		Not the "sit down & talk"	Schools only common factor in communities			Everyone has body
SS	People want to come back, can't because of \$	wished it would have more focus - will get students involved	"Honesty" of schools	help give students skills to survive	give kids things to do		do them as if for vacation
SS	get fix / not positive between comm. + leaders	Did not ask		Schools as Community Center	EC need school to "influence" parents	become if schools involved	
SS	neighborhoods - can make change if you want	Comm would have		ppl have connection, so change can come from there			Comm must do itself
SS	model / loss of hope	keep it "real" - however we will use it - \$ a concern		Solid ed. that prepares kids for life			Disincentive + rewards - who for what?
SS	closed society - exclusive - comfortable - value the land / lack of voice	Did not ask		help build sense of belonging w/ both students + parents	Need to improve students opp		
SS	work ethic / Israeli comm	It "grew" into itself	Students grounded in "logical, objective thinking skills"	School / comm. together	important to do more for econ dev.		
SS	ppl "outlet" things + leads to disappointments	Concept - teach, implementation - teachers build up do not ed. students	EC lead to more creative thinking / involve other to share ideas	Make appearance positive / think exp. important			ppl think in ind sense, no community
SS	Make changes in smaller communities	Don't shove down throats - be comp. what firm you like to help					Work up to it, work, comm. help
SS	Good work / Distress + Problem	N/A	N/A	Ind + schools should work together	N/A	N/A	N/A
SS	Enjoys lifestyle - slower pace	Significantly off track - group should be used to ask questions, not provide answers		Schools should provide training to help kids not just - but to play in play school but responsibility to the school		give kids training for a job	STATE, country, their major role
SS	Safe, good values, good place to raise kids	Wish EC - \$ concern for no-tech	"Hard to get opinions unless they need to be" - "Hesitant" all of school work here	School should be part of discussions for now on -			More realistic too many distractions - 1 day a week People being not into a design society... data

Appendix E

The School District Curriculum Progression

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
English 9	English 10	English 11	English 12
Math	Math	Math	PE 12
Earth Science	Biology	Science - Elective	Graduation Project
World Culture	Am. History	History- Elective	American Govt't.
Health	Drivers Ed.	PE 11	Elective
PE 9	PE 10	Computer	Elective
Fine Art	Elective	Elective	Elective
Elective	Elective	Elective	Elective

Appendix F**Roles of Participants in the Community**School Board Members

1. Robert
2. Joel
3. Ben
4. Kenny
5. Dale
6. Tanya

School Personnel

1. Joe
2. Jerome
3. Joan

Community Members

1. Sally
2. Blaine
3. Cliff
4. Charles
5. Jared

Appendix G

Types of Documents

1. Meeting minutes from the task force meetings
2. Architectural firm's study
3. Artifacts from meetings (agendas, power point presentations)
4. Historical newspapers

VITA

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Dissertation: "Rural school and communities: How globalization influences rural school and community collaboration"

Alfred University, Alfred, NY
M.S. E.d. Counseling Psychology **1998**

Penn State University, University Park, PA
B.S. Secondary Education/Social Studies **1991**
Scholarship baseball player for two years
Minor: History

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Social Studies Teacher	1993-2000
High School Guidance Counselor, Williams High School/Elkland Area High School	2000-2004
Principal, Elkland Area High School	2004-2007
Superintendent, Ridgway Area School District	2007-Present

Published Articles

Teaching school in rural America: Toward an educated hope
Co-author with Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson
A chapter in the book *Rural Education for the Twenty-First Century: Identity, Place, and Community in a Globalizing World* An edited collection of theory and research addressing the changing contours of rural education and community in the twenty-first century (Working title) to be published in 2008.