THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS
TOWARD THE LA LOCHE PROJECT

A Project
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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Education
in the College of Education
University of Saskatchewan

by

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Particular attention should be given to the education of Northern and Indian/Native children by developing appropriate courses, facilitating adjustments to school organization and the school year, and creating alternative ways of delivering instruction (Rec. #10).

Directions
Minister's Advisory Committee
Curriculum and Instruction
Review, February, 1984
INTRODUCTION

In recent years, throughout Canada, there has been an emphasis on the need for increased community involvement beyond locally elected representatives in the process of public education. For example, Saskatchewan, in revisions of the 'School Act' in 1978, provided for greater public representation in school affairs through the formation of Local Advisory Committees to school boards. In Manitoba, the Department of Education set up a grant system as an incentive to the formation of parent groups. The implication seems to be that representative democracy is not sufficient for the governance of public education.

Much of the research on schooling during the 1960's suggests that the home, rather than the school, is the main determinant of educational progress (Thompson, 1984). Typical, and perhaps best known, of the studies from this period is Coleman (1966). He concludes that educational attainment is largely independent of the schooling that a child receives.

Research in cross cultural education has been disheartening. The failure of native students in the Canadian school system has been well documented. The Hawthorn Report (1967), which was published over fifteen years ago, stated that among Canadian Indian students enrolled in schools across Canada, the drop-out rate was ninety-four percent between grades one and twelve. In a similar study, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (1973), reported an even higher drop-out rate among treaty Indians of ninety-six per cent by the grade twelve level. In a more
recent study (CEA, 1984), native students finishing grade twelve represented only twenty-five per cent of the national average. In Northern Saskatchewan, the Report of the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan on Education (1980), cited that over seventy per cent of northern students do not complete high school.

However, native education has undergone significant changes during the last decade. There is a growing desire by native groups to gain more control and involvement over the education of their children (NIB, 1972).

Beyond question, a new era in Indian education has been launched with the publication of the paper, Indian Control of Indian Education in 1972 by the National Indian Brotherhood and the acceptance by the Federal Government in 1973 of the basic goals expressed in it. A major policy change in Indian Education administration has occurred. Native people can control their education and administer their schools. The new mentality is that education can be given based on native values and that native culture can be maintained with the help of the schools (CEA, 1984).

Similarly, the provinces have also taken measures to ensure local community participation in education. Native culture and language have a place in the school curriculum. In Saskatchewan, the Community Education Branch was established in 1980 in response to native educational and socio-economic needs. It has responsibilities for inner-city and native education in Saskatchewan. Its major functions are in policy analysis, development and implementation of program, native curriculum development as well as research and evaluation studies (CEA, 1984).
The Community School concept is not a recent phenomenon in education. Particularly in North America, "the school has had strong roots in local community concerns and forging links between popular education and the resolution of social problems has its own honourable tradition in Canada" (Hay, 1981, p. 51). As early as 1942, a one-room school was built in La Loche, Saskatchewan "with relief labour...this school is classified as a community day school.... The building and equipment are in the hands of the local community and the building is on government property" (Piercy, 1944, p. 59).

In 1973, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan favored the position of building a high school in La Loche because "local involvement is critical to the success of high schools in the north.... Community schools can respond to the local factors of the area when developing new programs (DNS Records, 1973).
BACKGROUND TO THE LA LOCHE PROJECT

The Setting

In order to have an understanding and appreciation of this study, it is necessary to have some background information on the history of the Chipewyan people, the community of La Loche and the La Loche Project.

Early History

The Chipewyan Indians originally occupied the sub-arctic tundra and were the most numerous Athapaskan tribe in Northern Canada in the first half of the eighteenth century (Kupsch, 1977). They were referred to as Northern Indians in the Hudson's Bay Journals and called Chipewyan by their southern neighbours, the Crees. Chipewyan is a Cree word for 'pointed skins' which is presumed to refer to the pointed tunics they wore (Turner, 1973).

With the advance of the fur trade into the northwest in the eighteenth century, permanent contact by fur traders was eventually made with the Chipewyan Indians whose territory was along the Churchill and Clearwater Rivers (Paul, 1975, p. 10). Their reports of the richness of furs, meats and fish in the Athapaskan country eventually brought the traders over the divide at Portage La Loche into the Arctic watershed. Peter Pond was the first to document this crossing in 1778 (Kupsch, 1977). During the mid-eighteenth century, the twelve mile Portage was the major highway between the two watersheds and into the northern reaches of the
continent. A number of trading posts were established in the area serving as fur trade outlets as well as supply depots for brigades moving over the Portage.

After 1885, the Portage was used infrequently as goods destined for Athabasca-Mackenzie were shipped from Edmonton North to the Athabasca River, thus bypassing the original water route. By this time, the life-style of the Chipewyan Indians had been permanently changed by the fur trade and the contact with the missionaries who had followed the traders into the area occupied by the Chipewyan people.

As early as 1895, a Catholic mission had been permanently established at West La Loche across the lake from the present community. During this era, there seems to have been a gradual movement away from wilderness camps and traplines to fixed settlements around the lake - the largest settlement being La Loche West which at one point had thirty houses (Lemaigre, 1981).

In 1937, the Hudson's Bay Company story in West La Loche burnt down and was never rebuilt. Eventually, the Hudson's Bay Company and the mission relocated across the lake. A new store and school were built in 1940 and a hospital in 1943. Attendance at school was small until Family Allowance was tied to school attendance. If the children did not attend school, the family allowance was withheld (Piercy, 1944). In the marginal economy of the La Loche area, this action by the government had a profound impact. Gradually, the people abandoned their homes in West La Loche and moved to the present new townsite. This new responsibility of caring for children in a fixed residence while they attended school changed forever the hunting-trapping-fishing travel cycles of the Chipewyan people.
The population continued to be centralized in La Loche since the 1940's. Today, the community has a population of approximately 2,500 with fifty-nine per cent being under the age of twenty years (Samson, 1981). The town is located six hundred kilometers northwest of Saskatoon on Highway 155. It has remained largely isolated from southern communities since it was not until 1963 that an all-weather road from the south reached La Loche.

The Chipewyan people of treaty status are located on a Reserve fourteen kilometers north of La Loche. They signed Treaty #10 with the Canadian government in 1901 (Lemaigre, 1981). They too had, originally, settled on the west side of Lac La Loche. In 1939, the Chipewyan Indians numbered seventy at their previous Treaty payment date (Lemaigre, 1981).

The Chipewyan Indians moved about freely in the area surrounding La Loche. They had different reserve lands assigned to them but the majority lived in the Chipewyan-Metis community of La Loche. In 1978, they relocated to their present reserve. Presently, the population is five hundred approximately. They are integrated into the community of La Loche and share the same familial ties. Treaty status is gained/lost by intermarriage. There are no services on the reserve. The children are bussed to school in La Loche.

The non-native population of the community is transient, consisting mainly of teachers, nurses, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Hudson's Bay Company staff, mission personnel, social workers, government employees and other service personnel.
With the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in 1972, government investment in La Loche in the form of housing, roads, electrical systems, sewer and water systems increased rapidly.

Today, hunting, trapping and fishing cannot sustain the urban type living of the Chipewyan-Metis people of La Loche. With the growing population and the narrow economic base, there is high unemployment and people are caught in a welfare economy. While the new homes and modern conveniences have made life more comfortable and helped improve health conditions, social costs have increased.

Many of the native people of La Loche are in cultural conflict and are dissatisfied with their new way of life (Samson, 1981). Their lack of education and training to sustain this urban way of life is a source of frustration. This frustration is often expressed in aggressive and violent behaviour and is exaggerated by the excessive use of alcohol. Their problems are being made worse by "the exceptionally high birth rate and low out migration, contributing to the current population 'explosion'" (Samson, 1981, p. 19).

**Educational Background of La Loche**

It was not until the Spring of 1940 that the first school was built in La Loche. School instruction was received from the local Roman Catholic missionaries (Piercy, 1944). In 1942, the student enrollment had increased sufficiently to warrant three teaching staff. In 1944, the first major study in education in Northern Saskatchewan was completed by Piercy. Since that time, the provincial government has become more involved in Northern Saskatchewan education realizing that education in the north, an area
populated predominantly by Indian and Metis people, was an area with special problems and needs (Piercy, 1944).

Today, there are three schools in La Loche. They are Ducharme School, an elementary school with an enrollment of 470 students, Dene High School, constructed in 1979, for students between the ages of 13-21 years old and with an enrollment of 250 students and Poplar Point School. The latter school is located two kilometers from town along the lakeshore of Lac La Loche. Classes from Kindergarten to Grade Three are taught for the children who live in this particular area.

Education in La Loche is under the jurisdiction of the Northern Lights School Division #113 with Headquarters at Prince Albert. The Northern School Board of Education is an autonomous Board comprised of nine Northerners elected to represent the nine sub-divisions in the North. La Loche belongs to Area #1. In each community, there is an elected District school board which acts in an advisory capacity to the Northern Lights Board of Education.
THE LA LOCHE PROJECT

How the La Loche Project Came About

In September, 1975, the student enrollment at Ducharme School, La Loche, was 565 students; student placement for 350 of these students was between Kindergarten and Grade Three, with one third of the students being twelve years old and older. The attendance varied greatly over the school year. By June, 1976, attendance had dropped to 298 students (School Report, 1976).

The administration and staff of Ducharme School at that time came to realize that the instructional program was unrelated and irrelevant to the needs and interests of both the student population and the community as a whole. Neither did it have the support of students and parents. This rejection was manifested in student absenteeism, a high drop-out rate and low academic achievement. According to the Principal's Annual Report in 1976, there was an age-grade disparity of two to three years. The school records (1976) showed that there was a drastic seasonal drop in student attendance, particularly in the months of November, March and June.

Similarly, according to the school statistics (1976), there was a 95 per cent exodus of students in Ducharme School, La Loche, before they ever reached high school entrance level. The average monthly attendance varied from 60 per cent to 75 per cent. Any attempts by school administrators and staff to work within the prescribed curriculum did not
dramatically improve the situation. The need for an innovative intervention program was most evident throughout all the grades.

In May, 1976, with the realization that drastic changes in curriculum and programs were necessary, the principal of Ducharme School contacted the Director of Education of Northern Lights School Division, Prince Albert, to discuss the issue of curriculum change in the educational program in La Loche. The Director supported the position of administration and staff and set in motion the administrative mechanisms to begin the planning process. He stated that two key principles must be kept in mind: 1) that the program be adapted to the needs and lifestyle of the local community and 2) that parents as well as teachers be involved in the program changes (NLSD #113 Records, 1976).

The following week a Public Community Meeting was held in La Loche to discuss the educational needs of the students of Ducharme School. One of the key areas for discussion was the parental expectations of the school program and if they were being met.

Present at the community meeting held in June, 1976, were parents, other members of the community, the Local School Board, the Director of Education and the Superintendent of Northern Lights School Division, Prince Albert and the Administration and Staff of Ducharme School. The minutes of this meeting indicated that the parents did have concerns regarding the education program and expressed them in this way:

The children do not want to go to school because they are always failing in school.

The children should learn to speak, read and write English in school. (Parents did not want Chipewyan taught in the school program. They wanted their children to become fluent in English).
The children should be able to get a job and earn a living after 'finishing' school.

Because of the parental and staff concerns, the La Loche Project, in collaboration with the Northern Lights School Division and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, was launched in August, 1976 (School Records, 1976). The target group selected for this project was the students of 12-13 years and older. This group was chosen because it evidenced the greatest age-grade disparity, the highest drop-out rate and the most sporadic attendance.

In August, 1976, a Planning Committee was set up at Ducharme School, La Loche with representation from the Local School Board, Northern Lights Division, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and the administration and staff of Ducharme School. It was the task of the Planning Committee to develop curriculum and programs that were based on the needs and lifestyle of the local community. A Curriculum Development Spiral Model was designed for the task. (Appendix B) Central to the model was the identification of La Loche community needs. The other functions, such as program development, program implementation, program evaluation and program revision, were dependent on the first function, needs identification. Each function was interdependent and cyclical, each stage dependent on the other.

The Planning Committee held a Summer Workshop in August, 18-20th, 1976. Together with consultants from Northern Lights School Division and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the Planning Committee set up course outlines with the goals and objectives for each course in the core subjects of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and the vocational subjects of Industrial Arts, Home Economics,
Motor Mechanics and Outdoor Education.

Following the workshop, a five-day in-service was held for the teaching staff of Ducharme School. The purpose of this in-service was to orient teachers to the philosophy, goals and objectives of this new direction in curriculum and programming.

**Definition of the La Loche Project**

The La Loche Project was the development of a school-community program as an alternative to the regular academic program for students 12-13 years and older who had an age-grade disparity of two to three years. The design of the program was a modified version of Division III and IV curricula with greater emphasis on vocational skills training that would be relevant to the needs of students and community. This program came to be known as the Senior Educational Program of Ducharme School.

**Program Goals and Objectives**

The goals of the Senior Educational Program were to allow students to make educational choices based on their abilities, interests and lifestyle and to provide the students with the skills to enable them to function in the field of their choice and the milieu in which they chose to live.

Being community-based and sensitive to community needs, the program was oriented to enhance the students' self-concept and understanding of their cultural heritage.
The objectives of the Senior Educational Program were:

1. to direct the emphasis from a university entrance course of studies to one which would include a number of vocational and work oriented classes.

2. to establish an ungraded system and implement more of an individualized program approach to student learning.

3. to set an age entrance requirement of 12-13 years rather than a grade entrance requirement.

4. to adapt the school year to accommodate the traditional lifestyle of the community of La Loche. This would involve the implementation of the Trimester System.

5. to involve, as much as possible, the community and especially the community leaders, in the development of the progress.

Program Structure

The Senior Educational Program was a four year program consisting of the following program categories:


Each subject program was made up of twelve units of work distributed over a four year period. For example, each year consisted of three units of work, each unit being approximately twelve weeks duration to correspond with the Trimester System.

The unitizing of the program was basically for the convenience of determining starting points in each program for each student. Dependent on the age and level of progress, each student would access the program at the appropriate unit.

The Senior Educational Program consisted of three streams: an academic stream where the goal of the student was grade twelve and/or further education; a vocational stream where the student's goal was grade ten or eleven and a Vocational Certificate and an early employment stream for older students whose goal was to upgrade themselves sufficiently to be functional in their work situation. Criteria other than age, such as ability and attendance was taken into consideration when counselling students into each of the program streams.

**Cultural Programs**

The local community, parents and teachers were asked by the administration to work as a team on curriculum and program development. The following culturally related programs were developed: To Make Snowshoes, Beading, To Make a Baby Moss Pack, Snaring Fox and Lynx, Preparing and Keeping Food, To Make a Log House, To Make a Canvas Top Canoe, To Tan a Moosehide and The Beaver Family (A Reading Program).
Remedial Programs

Remedial programs in the core curriculum were available for every student. The objective of the remedial program was to concentrate on upgrading students sufficiently in the basic subjects so that they could benefit fully from the other programs.

Work Study Program

Students, 16 years and older, had the option of a work-study experience program. The general objectives of the program were:

1. to provide practical experiences in a work setting that would enable the student to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for employment.

2. to increase the students' awareness of the job opportunities in the community and to help them gain insight into the aptitudes and skills required for various occupations.

3. to facilitate the transition between school and employment by enabling the student to continue school and at the same time receive supervised training in a real work situation.

4. to create, on the part of the student, a positive attitude toward himself, others, school and work by providing a meaningful and relevant learning environment.

Students in the work-study program took classes on a half day basis. For the remainder of the school day, they were assigned to a job site in the community.
Language of Instruction

The language of instruction in the Senior Educational Program was English. The first language of the students was Chipewyan. English was taught as a second language. As a consequence of this, the Language Arts program was perhaps the most critical of the basic skill areas not only as the basis for communication within the program but as a set of skills which enabled the students to function in life beyond the school setting: "The Language Arts program is not a school subject. It is a program for the development of a set of functional skills that must interrelate with the students' endeavours in other vocational and academic areas as well as with the student life outside the school setting" (Summer Workshop, 1976).

Class Organization

"The aim of organization is to establish a situation where students rather than subjects become the key responsibility to staff" (Summer Workshop, 1976). In the Senior Educational Program, the primary concern of the homeroom teachers was their relationship to the students rather than the delivery of a subject or content area. The purpose of the homerooms was to provide a secure setting and support to the students as they moved into new experiences. Teachers were encouraged to create an atmosphere that would help the students integrate their other class experiences, to assist with difficulties they may encounter and to provide opportunities for them to discuss their feelings, problems and goals. This unique student-teacher relationship was central to the program.
The student population in the program was 276 students (Fletcher, 1978). The students were divided into ten groups. For administrative purposes, each group was identified by a letter, A to J to make up the ten groups. Groupings were based on age as opposed to an achievement oriented grade system. Each group was assigned a homeroom for the purpose of recordkeeping of attendance and level of progress and student counseling.

Individualized instruction was implemented as much as possible. Because of the individualized programming, students were grouped and regrouped according to student subject needs. For example, students in some of the groups might stay together almost the whole day, particularly first and second year students or the older students with specific similar goals. Recordkeeping of school progress was the responsibility of each teacher.

**Timetabling**

Timetabling flexibility was the greatest single factor in providing suitable programs for all students. A six day cycle with seven-fourty minute periods per day with a ten minute break morning and afternoon was introduced. Timetabling was done individually as much as possible. Basically, a student need not stay with his particular group for the whole year. He might have moved with the group in the first year for most classes but may have moved up or down the scale in some subjects to accommodate a strength or a weakness. On the other hand, some of the older students' classes stayed together for most of their subjects because they had reached similar levels.
Timetabling in the vocational areas provided suitable programs for students. In order to facilitate choices at all levels in the programs and in order to allow sufficient time in the shops, it was necessary to have a fairly continuous flow through the shops and a considerable amount of overlap. For example, if three students in their last year chose sixty per cent labs, mostly all construction, those students would have to remain in construction shop while other younger and possibly larger groups would come and go.

**Staffing**

In the first year of the La Loche Project, staffing for the Senior Educational Program consisted of one administrator, fourteen teachers, each specialized in their respective subject areas and a teacher aide from the local community. The cultural programs were taught by different members of the community. Depending on the length of the program, they were hired on a daily basis, twice weekly basis or for a longer period of time. To ensure local community involvement in the school on an on-going basis, funds were secured for Teacher Aides through the Local Education Assistance Program (LEAP). As well, the Northern Teacher Training Education Program (NORTEP) was initiated by the Northern Lights School Division to train parents in the north especially in their own community. Teachers and parents could truly become partners in the school program.

**The School Year**

The school year was based on the provincial school year of 200 days. However, in order to accommodate the traditional lifestyle of the community,
the school year was adapted to the trapping and hunting season of the community of La Loche. The Trimester System was implemented. The academic year was divided into three semesters with each semester consisting of twelve weeks of instruction. Between each semester, a five day 'semester break' was set aside for program development and evaluation, teacher in-service, regrouping of students and other administrative duties related to the school program.

The semester breaks coincided also with the trapping and hunting season. Parents were able to take their children with them on their hunting and trapping trips and feel that their children were not missing school.

With the implementation of the Trimester System, other adjustments had to be made in order to meet the requirement of 200 teaching days that was already set by the Department of Education. School Opening was three days earlier than other Northern schools in the Fall; Christmas and Easter holidays were 'banked' for Semester Break Days and there was early dismissal in the first week of June.

**Method of Evaluation**

The method suggested for the evaluation of the Senior Educational Program was the following:

1. The Canadian Test of Basic Skills would be administered to each of the students in September and June. Results would be used to diagnose student progress in the core subjects.

2. A subjective analysis of parental attitudes toward the school and formal education would be undertaken. (survey)
3. A thorough analysis of the attendance drop-out rate would be carried out to determine whether or not the situation had improved in order to determine the effectiveness of the program.

4. Accurate records would be kept on each student's progress.

5. A survey of teachers would be undertaken prior to the start of the program and at the end of the year to assess their reaction to the program.

6. The Local School Board and community would be polled to determine their feelings toward the program.

In researching the school records, the researcher found no evidence that an evaluation of the program was ever undertaken with the parents and the community.

**Expansion of the Senior Program**

With an increase in student enrollment and more programs being offered in the vocational areas, the Senior Educational Program soon demanded new facilities.

In May, 1978, a school planning committee was set up for the building of a new school in La Loche. Members of the committee were the Local School Board, two students from the program, representatives from the Local Community Authorities, the parent's group and the administration of Ducharme School. The planning committee toured other schools in Saskatchewan to study other school designs with similar programs. The site chosen for the new school was a new sub-division of the town of La Loche, one kilometer distance from Ducharme School.

In September 1979, the Dene High School was officially opened. The Senior Education Program evolved into the Dene High School Program. New
course offerings were Graphic Arts, Business Communication, Building Construction, Finishing Carpentry, Automotive Repairs and Commercial Cooking. According to the Fletcher Report (1978), the Director of Education had foreseen little change in the goals and objectives of the program other than better facilities, more staffing and program options. The age entrance requirement was raised to 13 years and older. He states:

Students who are thirteen years and older would be the entrance requirement. The students would continue their education in all areas of instruction. Possibly, some may be in school longer or they may want to go to other educational institutions or to work when they have attained a grade ten or grade eleven standing. The opportunity will be in the community to give them a chance to strive toward university entrance, vocational schools or directly into the world of work. (Fletcher Report, 1978)

Today, the enrollment at Dene High School is 325 students with a teaching staff of eighteen teachers. The unique features of the program are basically the same as those set out in the initial stages of the La Loche Project:

1. The program has a vocational/job orientation with academic requirement provided.
2. Culturally related projects are an integral part of the program.
3. The age entrance requirement is thirteen years and not necessarily a grade requirement.
4. The program is individualized and operates on an ungraded system. Students progress on a credit basis.
5. Community involvement is encouraged to allow the program to change as the community needs change.
THE LA LOCHE PROJECT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The La Loche Project was designed as a school-community program. The curriculum was tailored to meet the needs and interests of the local community. The curriculum included all the child's learning experiences that each child brought into the classroom.

The program was based on the principles of community education. Two broad categories in school-community relations are those activities which take the school to the community and secondly, those activities which bring the community into the school (Gayfer, 1976). Communication is a two-way process in which there must be an understanding of the school and its functions by the community.

One of the major goals of the La Loche Project was to encourage parental and community participation in order to develop a sense of self worth and cultural heritage in the students. It was felt that parental involvement was basic to community-school relations. Moreover, a study by Pomfret (1972), purports that direct involvement of parents in the school program may increase student achievement. Among the major findings of the Coleman Report (1966), were that family background is of critical importance in school achievement and that attitudes which include self-concept and a sense of control over one's environment, which probably result from home experiences, are highly related to achievement in school.
The Theoretical Model

In the literature on Community Education, the theoretical model that reflected the goals and objectives of the La Loche Project was that proposed by Minzey (1974). He listed the following six components as being essential to an effective community education program:

1. Community Involvement in Educational Programs for School Age Children. Minzey (1974) stated that to have a school program that is relevant to a community, there should be community involvement in the 'regular' school program.

The innovative experiment to the 'regular' school curriculum in relation to community education is to make the curriculum more community-based and relevant to everyday living. Shuttleworth (1985) stated:

In a community-related curriculum, education in the school should be enhanced by the use of a variety of community resources to enrich its curriculum and programs through students going out into the local community to learn, as well as, through the use of community resource persons in the school's program. (p. 5)

Similarly, in a Report to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan on Education for the 1980's (Task Force, 1981,18), the Department of Northern Saskatchewan had realized that the curriculum of "the present schools in the North have failed to respond to the needs of the native child.... The linkage between the home and the school need to be expanded."

One of the main goals of the La Loche Project was to develop a community-related curricula based on La Loche community needs. The educational needs of native students as well as the creation of a wholesome awareness about native people, namely, their lifestyle, culture and traditions, were addressed. For example, a locally developed program
was designed in Social Studies which reflected the history, language and culture of the Chipewyan people. Religion classes were also conducted in Chipewyan. Classes were offered in trapping, beading and canoe building as well.

Other community-related curricula was vocational/job programs which included a number of practical and commercial oriented classes so that students would be able to put their skills to use in the community itself which had suffered from a lack of skilled labor in the past. This experiential approach to learning was to give students an incentive to continue with their education. As a result, a Work-Study Program was initiated in the community. Students attended classes on a half day basis and gained experience on a job site in the afternoons. This program sought to develop in the students both personal and job related skills necessary for successful post-school employment. It also provided another avenue for the enhancement of a sense of self-worth and personal identity.

2. Joint Use of School Buildings and Community Facilities. In the use of school buildings, the school becomes the focal point of community development (Minzey, 1974). In small communities, the school is the only facility having a gym, a library, classroom space for upgrading and vocational shops where the community and parents can improve their skills.

In 1976, the school facilities in La Loche, as in many Northern communities, were cost shared by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and Northern Lights School Division. Because of this arrangement, it was feasible to integrate community-school programs in sports, library, upgrading and in other areas.
3. **Additional Programs for School Age Children and Youth.** In this component, Minzey (1974) includes the programs which took place when formal classes were not in session. This would include programs which would take place before and after school hours, weekends and during holidays. Characteristic of the La Loche Project was the development of a variety of programs in sports and recreation, remedial reading and math, photography and 'shop' classes.

4. **Community-Based Adult Education Programs.** This component included programs which were provided for all community members regardless of age (Minzey, 1974). The La Loche Project coordinated many sports and recreation programs with the community recreation leaders. The Winter Festival was one of the more successful activities every year. In conjunction with Community Colleges, upgrading classes, based on community needs, were also offered using school facilities.

5. **Community Development/Involvement.** The main principle underlying community education is that parents become partners in decision-making in all aspects of the community education program (Minzey, 1974). Various activities were developed by the school to involve parents and teachers in the educational process. Home visits, classroom visitations, parents as resource personnel in the program were some of the vehicles for parental involvement. An open door policy was introduced so that parents were free to come to the school at any time during the day to observe their children in the classroom.

Parents, as teacher aides and later as NORTEP teachers, were hired to work in the classrooms with the teacher.

The school Community Worker position was created to interpret the
school program to the community and to ensure local community participation. This was a trainee position to help principals and school personnel to improve communications among the school, the home and other community interests using the school as the focal point.

Efforts were made to involve the Local School Board in the recruitment and hiring of teachers. To facilitate the process, the teaching staff and the School Board worked together to prepare a slide-tape presentation on La Loche to be used for this purpose. School Board members and school administration travelled to Saskatoon and Regina to recruit and hire teachers for the program. This was the first time the Board had been involved in recruiting teachers for their own community.

A two-day teacher orientation at the beginning of the school year was organized by teachers and community. Members of the community presented the local history and culture to the incoming teaching staff and teachers familiarized the community with the educational program.

6. Delivery and Coordination of Community Services. Coordination of existing services in the community before new programs are introduced is crucial (Minzey, 1974). One of the goals of the La Loche Project was to involve other agencies already working in the community and to make use of their services and resources in the school-community program. Interagency meetings were initiated by the school to discuss and address school-community issues such as community curfew. Some of the agencies involved were Public Health, Social Services, Resources, R.C.M.P. and the L.C.A. to name a few.

An outcome of these meetings was the development of a Health program by the school and Health Clinic staff. This program was taught by the
school and Health Clinic Staff as part of the regular school program. The specific health concerns of the local community were the basis of the program.

Another example of cooperation was the cost-sharing by Social Services and Northern Lights School Division of the position of a School Community Worker.
THE PROBLEM

According to a 1976 school study, school attendance at Ducharme School, La Loche had been erratic since 1968 (Samson, 1981, 39). There was a high drop-out rate, sporadic attendance and an age-grade disparity of two to three years especially among the twelve year old and older students. Significant numbers of students were not benefitting from the current school system. The school program was unrelated and irrelevant to student and community needs. It was obvious that the educational program lacked community involvement.

School Officials attempted to overcome these problems by developing a school-community program based on the needs of the local community. In August, 1976, the La Loche Project was initiated by the school. The main objective of the project was to involve the parents and community in the educational program in curriculum and program development.

Statement of the Problem

The La Loche Project was the development of a school-community program which became known as the Senior Educational Program of Ducharme School. It was based on the principles of community education. The goals and objectives of the program closely paralleled the Minzey Model of community education (Minzey, 1974). The problem was to determine the perceptions of the parents toward the La Loche Project.
Purpose of the Study

No in-depth study of the La Loche Project had been carried out since its inception in August, 1976. The purpose of this study was to obtain the parents' perceptions toward the La Loche Project and to document the results. A review of the La Loche Project and its findings was a prerequisite if educators were to benefit from it.

Definition of Terms

A list of terms related to this study was the following:

Native People included status Indian, non-status Indians and Metis people.

Treaty Indians included Indians who belonged to a Band who had signed a Treaty.

Non-treaty Indians/Non-status Indians included people who claimed to be of native ancestry but who did not have Indian status. Most Metis fell into this category. The education of non-treaty/non-status Indians was the responsibility of the provincial government.

Community Education was the overall philosophy and concept which reflected the needs and desires of a particular community, namely, La Loche.

Community School referred to the location and the base of operation from which community education usually was implemented, namely Ducharme School. It was the physical resources shared by the community and supported the principles of community education.

The Senior Educational Program was the school program in the La Loche Project. It was a school-community program geared to 12-13 year old and
older students who were experiencing learning problems in the regular academic program.

Parents' Perceptions referred to how parents perceived the La Loche Project as indicated in the data collected from the parent interview.

Community Involvement referred to the participation of parents and community in school planning, policy making, as volunteers and resource personnel in the classroom. It was an on-going process of participation of the community in curriculum and program development in which parents, teachers and students worked together to improve both the quality of education and the quality of community living.

School-community Program was a program where the parents and teachers worked as a team in the school program in the classroom to make learning more relevant to local community needs.

Significance of the Study

Innovations in education were not new to Northern Saskatchewan. Many projects had been implemented. However, few projects had been documented. Similarly, there were few data available in the research literature of parents' perceptions in the community education model. The findings of this study clearly reflected the opinions of parents in the La Loche Project.

Community education is one of the fastest growing movements in this present decade. Cross cultural education has gained much recognition as well. It was hoped that future models of the program would take into consideration the research findings of this study.

Specific recommendations will arise from the research for the further
development of the Senior Educational Program in the La Loche Project.
RELATED RESEARCH

Community Education

The concept of community education has its roots deep in Canadian educational tradition. Prout (1977), states that the tradition is twofold: education is a government responsibility and is essentially a community governed enterprise:

In essence, the public school was a community school since the school board was an elected local board to represent the local community. There was homogeneity between government and community. (p. 5)

However, a new trend is for government officials to encourage public involvement beyond locally elected representatives on a continuing basis and to set up school advisory committees to ensure its occurrence (CEA Task Force, 1981).

In Saskatchewan, new interlocking processes and programs for working with communities are sought. Attention is focused upon humanizing and personalizing education as well as a desire for educational reform. More public involvement is reflected in the growing movement of community education.

Definition

Community education is a term which denotes different things to different people. It has been used synonymously with programs such as Adult Education, Community Services and Community Development. In its formal definition, Minzey (1972) sees a high degree of similarity:
Community education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as a catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living and develop a community process toward the end of self-actualization. (p. 276)

Similarly, there is no complete agreement on the definition of community school. Each community, according to Bumbarger (1981), is unique. The differences in definition are related to differences in the actual operations which may all have the same label appended to them. That is to say, the reality of the community school is defined in terms of the nature of the operation developed. Gayfer (1976, 6) had noted that "since the true community school is a 'place for people' the idea does not lend itself to a standard blueprint or organizational model."

However, Stevens (1971) does define community school as

a school being concerned with the involvement of all residents of its community. It seeks to improve the total environment and quality of living for children families, older people, all who live in the neighborhood. It brings the services of health, welfare, recreational and educational agencies so close to the people that they readily available. (p. 276)

In summary, the terms, 'community education' and 'community school' are often used interchangeably but they are not synonymous. The term 'community education' designates the overall philosophy and concept whereas 'community school' is the identifiable location and the base of operation from which community education usually is implemented (Holman, 1975).

Inherent within the philosophy of community education is the belief that each community education program reflects the needs and desires of a particular community. It is a process based on citizen involvement and
participation which produces essential modifications as time and problems change (Gayfer, 1976; Stevens, 1971; Minzey, 1972).

**Community Involvement/Participation**

One of the components of community education is community involvement or community participation. While not overlooking the fact that community participation has occurred on all societal levels, the emphasis has been on the lower socio-economic stratification of society where the community schools are generally located in Canada and the United States.

The literature on Community Participation in community schools is both varied and extensive:

Citizen participation in education is not one, but many topics. The phrase itself is a proxy for a wide range of ideas, programs, issues, and mechanisms that touch nearly every aspect of educational policy and politics. The widespread use of the phrase, as nebulous and multifaceted as it is, reflects a great upsurge of activity, discussion and controversy. (Olson, 1974, p. 3)

There are many writings in community participation varying in scope from statements to opinion, to first person accounts of experiences to case studies. Ways to implement these examples are also given but are unclear to the researcher. Attempts at theoretical overviews and syntheses are rare.

A further problem is a scarcity of Canadian studies. Only a few Canadian works (Stevens, 1971; Prout, 1977; Gayfer, 1976), were found in the search. Canadian publications were chiefly case studies. For example, Gayfer's *Open Doors* (1976) was an account of case studies of community schools in the public school system of Ontario. She concludes her report with a synthesis of approaches regarding community school interaction. She provides useful descriptions but no analysis of the
case studies. With the exception of the Canadian theoretical works of Lucas (1978), most theoretical works referenced are almost entirely American. Pomfret (1972) is the only extensive work which gives a comprehensive description and analysis of parental involvement in educational decision-making.

**Nature of Participation**

According to Fantini (1974), decline of parental and community participation in the educative process was a result of the professionalization of teaching. He goes on to say that the two main factors that have kept parents at a distance from participation are

first, the attempt to educate the individual according to middle-class values where education became totally unrelated to daily living and low education of parents were unable to challenge teachers. Secondly, the growing size and impersonality of the large school systems discouraged parents in meaningful school decisions. (p. 51)

However, Montano (1970) gives a different orientation to community involvement in education. He claims that, historically, it was the middle class that was more active in school affairs than the poor, often dominating it, while the poor have been used to support the schools.... The relationship of school and community is one of dominance and subordination, that of 'boss-worker'. (p. 151)

Montano (1979) proposes instead the concept of school-partnership as a joint exercise in communication and redistribution of power, responsibility and money.

Citizen participation is not a unitary concept but rather an all-purpose phrase like 'equal opportunity' and 'local autonomy' that covers a multitude of confusions and conflicting meanings (Davies, 1981, 86). Davies goes on to explain that citizen participation has always been an
important value expressed in a variety of ways in political and civic life. In educational terms, citizen participation signifies a number of ways that parents are involved in school affairs anywhere from taking part in programs to being on the Advisory Council.

The Politics of Community Participation

Much of the argument for community participation in education is framed around an ideological commitment to democracy (Popkewitz, 1979). Popkewitz claims that there is a belief that individuals should assume responsibility for decision-making institutions that affect their lives on a day-to-day basis. He focuses on community involvement in school governance and examines the 'symbolic uses' of community participation. He argues that participation can serve basically conflicting political purposes and be used to maintain as well as to change institutional practices. Whose interests does decentralization and participation serve? Popkewitz (1979) illustrates with an example:

Community participation can reallocate material goods and services for ethical reasons. Minority group members share in the decision-making process. A different type of reallocation involves the inclusion of ethnic and cultural studies in the curriculum. Community participation brings pressure on the school for instruction in ethnic studies. On the other hand, even through democracy is open to all citizens to participate, political theorists often view participation as restricted to the elite. The 'gatekeeper approach' in federal programs, restricts participation to a few. Initially government agencies identify visible leaders for participation in a 'representative council'. Political involvement for the majority of people is reduced to receiving information from expertise about school programs. (p. 220)

The power of decision-making rests in the hands of a few people.

Community needs are defined and articulated as the problem by local
educational leaders and internalized as appropriate by community members (Popkewitz, 1979).

Fantini (1974) agrees with Popkewitz (1979) for he, too, claims that elaborate structures and devices have been set up, such as Education Week, Parent-Teacher Meetings all ostensibly 'to inform'. The principal seeks a happy school; parents are paid some attention and even a degree of deference. It is clear that

the professionals feel their role is to interpret the school to the community. The chief motivation is to make the system work smoothly.... Briefly stated, the existing concept of parent and community participation in education is basically mis-directed toward supporting the schools 'status quo' (Fantini, 1974, 49).

Similarly, Mann (1974) expresses pessimism about the prospects of community involvement in the schools. He feels that few members of the public have the requisite information or skills to participate effectively. Many parents see the schools as unresponsive and themselves as lacking the ability or the time to become involved. The school uses this lack of information to argue that the public should not play a greater part in making decisions, because the information required is often 'arcane and inaccessible'.

Minzey (1972) interprets participant democracy in community education differently. Community participation is described as community development through community councils. The purpose is to assist people in a particular neighborhood in dealing with their own problems. The school aids in the development of these councils by providing the leadership and training that is necessary to help these councils become viable organizations which can deal with both problem identification and problem solving.
Totten (1975) shares Minzey's (1972) optimism. He states that community education is trending toward becoming the universal plan of learning. It is through involvement, sharing, meeting basic needs, understanding, working together on an equal basis and giving service to others, that the community is building and re-building within itself the fundamental ideals of love, justice, truth, compassion, freedom and equality.

The Forms of Community Participation

The primary focus of the literature on community participation or involvement is at the local community level with each individual school. Levin (1972) and Lind (1970) see this as being understandable since the objective of increased community input is to improve school-community relations which is best accomplished on an individual basis in a single school and community.

The issue of who is to take the initiative for increased community involvement in education is not dealt with specifically in the research literature. Where some explicit mention is made of this point, the school system itself is seen as having to take the initiative (Gayfer, 1976; Lucas and Lusthaus, 1977; Saskatchewan Department of Education, 1978). More often, more community participation is encouraged, but without any statement of how it is supposed to be expressed.

The research literature refers to many types of community involvement procedures. They range from inviting parents to teach, visit classrooms, to participate in a variety of school activities and to establish parent advisory councils.
Pomfret (1972) speaks of a variety of parental involvement approaches which seem to fall into three categories: service, meaningful volunteering or fund raising; student instruction, meaning work as tutors or aides; and decision-making. He outlines in clear terms the existing cultural and sociological nature of the school and of the neighborhood and the constraints therein to joint involvement. In his analysis of parental involvement he sees community involvement in schools as a tremendously complex problem. Two problem areas that seem to need much more clarification and development are the basic rationale and nature of parent involvement and the relationship of parent involvement to the process of change at the local level and in terms of wider societal contexts (Pomfret, 1972). In addition, the direct roles of parents in schools are not clearly defined. There is much anxiety and concern about the competency of parents to perform their roles. Eastabrook and Fullan (1978) see parental involvement as a developmental process difficult to define because of its developmental character.

In speaking of different forms of community involvement, Fantini (1974,51) distinguishes between community participation and community control: "the former envisions reform of the school system through participation and the latter disposes of reform of the system and seeks to achieve quality through a totally separate structure over which the community exercises essentially autonomous control."

The 'Community participation' type of involvement follows the Flint Model of community school where the school serves the community as a center for a variety of educational, cultural, recreational and local social development activities for both economic and social reasons. There are extended school hours for the community school. Authority and power
still remain with the professionals at the apex of the administrative hierarchy "for the decision-making process is joint partnership of school and community in a community advisory capacity, but made up of professional people.... The role of the community is that of client" (Fantini, 1974, 50). Saskatchewan community schools fall into this category:

Community involvement takes the form of volunteers, community teaching associates, parental involvement in developing creative playgrounds...the use of community resources to enhance classroom teaching, local curriculum projects and others" (Saskatchewan Department of Education, 1980, 19).

The 'Community control of schools' possesses all the elements of 'community participation in schools' but there is a fundamental change in the role of the community. The community role is not only in an advisory capacity but also as a decision-maker. It calls for a community role in such substantial matters as budgeting, personnel and curriculum. Segregated schools in black ghettos and Indian Band control of schools are examples of this category.

The Rationale for Citizen Participation

Various reasons are advanced for promoting citizen participation or involvement in education. Three major positions serve to group the research literature.

One position taken is that citizens have the right to be closely involved in the education of the children of the community (Burbridge, 1972; Fein, 1970). It is the belief that the lay role in education has declined over the years as professionals have asserted increasingly authority (Fantini, 1974; Montano, 1979; Lind, 1972). Educational needs of minority groups have not been met (Fantini, 1974; Havighurst, 1970). Community involvement is thus seen as a way of restoring a lost efficacy
to the citizenry. This desire is frequently linked to the desire of stronger neighborhoods, more closely knit communities, and in general, for a return to what is seen to have been a more desirable way of life, not lost: "Community involvement looks fondly back to an age of organic community and neighborhood government" (Cohen, 1978, 438).

A second position about community participation is that it is good for the school as an institution. Community participation reinforces the role of the school in teaching democratic values or brings community people, ideas and resources into the school (Stevens, 1971; Minzey, 1974; Totten, 1975). Community participation is seen as part of a general effort to improve schooling. For example, Burbridge (1972, 7) sees "community involvement as a feasible way of creating an environment favourable to the development of attitudes and skills necessary for democratic citizenship."

A third position regarding citizen participation is that parental involvement is a key factor in student achievement. Safran (1972, 96) indicates that children do better "because of improved self-image; in still other cases, it is due to program adaptations brought about because parent perspectives influence decisions as well as because of improved parent self-image."

The rationale for parent involvement in instruction, as Pomfret (1972, 50) sees it, is "direct participation by parents will increase student achievement by improving students' self-concept...and in general by developing a much closer educational relationship between parents and their children." Parental involvement in instruction will increase parents' and school personnel's knowledge of each and form a basis for parent participation in school policy-making; this, in turn, might lead to the
of more effective practical policies, since policies would be based on both an articulation of parental needs and objectives and school input.

**Native Education and Community Education**

Native education in Canada has been a concern of church and government for well over one hundred years. Prior to 1940, the church took the initiative and responsibility in providing education for native peoples. For example, in Northern Saskatchewan, the missionaries were the first teachers and established the first schools: "The first schools to be established in Northern Saskatchewan were founded by missionary efforts... The schools were administered by religious denominations" (Marshall, 1966, 44).

Despite the dedicated endeavours of the early missionaries, Western educational methods have failed in their attempts to serve native people in Canada (Kaegi-Gerda, 1972). Education in Canada has been a foreign culture imposed upon the Indian child according to Kaegi-Gerda (1972). The values, language and culture of the dominant white, middle-class society prevailed in the schools. Minority groups, such as native peoples, have become immersed in this type of school system over the years.

Many significant changes have taken place in native education and attitudes towards native education since World War II. Native communities. Because of this integration trend among the native and non-native communities, the provincial school board, in agreement with the federal board, took on the responsibility of providing educational services for Metis and Inuit students (CEA, 1984).
In Northern Saskatchewan, the first major educational study was completed by Piercy in 1944. The Piercy Report (1944) gave an account of the rapid increase in population in Northern Saskatchewan communities. With the increase of student population, the provincial government became aware of the educational needs in the north.

The Saskatchewan provincial government assumed responsibility for education of Metis and non-status Indian people in the province in 1944. A building program was begun in 1945 which accounted for six new schools by 1950 (Buckley, 1963). Provincial schools were available in most settlements. Where they were not, the Department of Education paid boarding allowance to parents, so that almost all children could go to school. These measures, reinforced by the family allowance, which was conditional upon school attendance, had been highly successful. "Virtually every child in the north got some schooling" (Buckley, 1963, 32). However, because all major efforts in education in Northern Saskatchewan from 1945-1960's were aimed at getting all children of school age into schools, very little was done in adapting the program to fit the needs of the people in that area (Handley, 1970).

During the 1960's the philosophical stance of the Saskatchewan provincial government was equal educational opportunity for all. However, among the Indian-Metis children, the socio-economic and geographical factors in their background jeopardized their opportunities for equal education. School officials and provincial government were aware of these circumstances and came to realize that academic success of native students was limited in the schools. Program adaptation to student needs was obvious.
In 1972, with the establishment of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, thirty-three schools were built in northern communities, the larger schools being equipped with gym facilities. A Director of Education and three superintendents are presently employed by the Northern Lights School Division Prince Albert, and a provincial superintendent, by the Department of Education, Northern Education Branch, La Ronge. Curriculum development to meet northern needs has begun with the Social Studies program for Grade nine. A teacher training program in native education and other various needed programs have been initiated.

Despite the modern new facilities in the north, statistics still show that seventy per cent of northern students do not complete high school, while approximately forty-five to fifty-five per cent of the student population between grade one and eight are one to three grades displaced and only nine per cent of the student population is in Division IV (Native Curriculum Review, 1984).

The Department of Education in Saskatchewan responded to the educational needs of native students by establishing community schools. In 1980, the Community Branch was established. It is responsible for inner-city and native education in Saskatchewan.

Summary

Community Education as set out in Saskatchewan in participatory democracy. It supports the argument that we do not presently have a democracy but an oligarchy in which opportunities for input are based on two characteristics: wealth and education. Community participation at the local level is missing. Community education is a means of returning participatory democracy to the local communities.
As the research literature has indicated, participatory democracy can be used for supporting the 'status quo' or for bringing about a social change. The community school concept is one attempt to redress the imbalance of over-centralization and achieve equilibrium in public education.

Each province has recognized the community-school concept in some measure. In Saskatchewan, community schools are an attempt to respond to the needs of the minority groups, namely, the Indian-Metis people. In 1980, the Community Education Branch was established. Presently, the Branch is involved in several projects, one of them being the development of a Five Year Action Plan for Native Curriculum Development.

The literature has pointed out that the school is the focal point in community education. The school is the structure of meaning in the life of a community's integrity. Schools are asked to assume this new function for community betterment. An essential requirement of the school is a sensitivity to the needs and interests of the local community. A two-way communication must be established between the school and the community. Decisions of curriculum and programming must be a joint effort based on a close and accurate assessment of community needs and interests whether solicited or freely offered.

There is much of value in the literature on community education. Many questions have been raised and many avenues explored. There are numerous and mixed attitudes toward community participation in education decisions. The research literature illustrates two core positions that can be useful as reference points. The first position is that of the liberal reformer who may seek change for the sake of change, often with-
out regard for research evidence. The second position is that of the social scientist or researcher who often opposes mass change without evidence.

The community school concept is not utopia. Community involvement in the educative process is complex. Community education's proponents do not promise that it will solve all the problems of education or the many and complex situations arising from the social, political and economic scene. They, believe, however, that community education can make a difference if people perceive the concept in its totality and modify existing educational organizations' structure to accommodate these new dimensions and directions. "It is the whole notion of allowing community to help determine its future direction in education" (McClain, 1975, 29).
PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Overview

This study was designed to collect data regarding the parents' perceptions of the La Loche Project. The data originated from the parent interviews which were conducted by the researcher and two interpreters from the community of La Loche. The interviews were conducted in Chipewyan, the first language of the respondents.

An interview schedule was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study and was used in each interview by the interviewer. From the responses to the questions, parents' attitudes toward the project were solicited.

The interview schedule was pilot-tested with three local residents of La Loche to help detect any ambiguities in the meaning and wording of the questions.

Sample Selection

The parents of the community of La Loche provided the sample for this study. A ten per cent random sample of parents who have had children in the Senior Educational Program in the La Loche Project was chosen. Originally, the sample was to have been selected from a parent list that the researcher had obtained from the school. Because many of the parents were camping or out of town when the research took place, the school list of parents was adjusted to include only those who were presently in town and able to be reached. The school list was further modified by the
omission of the names of two parents, on the suggestion of the two inter-
preters, who felt that the present home circumstances would not be con-
ducive to good interviewing. Ten parents, seven female and three male,
were selected for interviews for this study.

The Instrument

An interview schedule for parent interviews was developed by the
researcher specifically for this study to help to determine the perceptions
of the parents toward the La Loche Project since its inception in 1976.

The interview schedule consisted of three sections: Section A was a
demographic profile of the respondents. The purpose of this section was
to obtain background information on the parents that would provide the
reader with the setting and give relevancy to the summary, conclusions and
recommendations of this study.

The questions in Sections B and C were open-ended in order to elicit
the opinions of parents more freely. Section B dealt with the philosophy
of the program. The purpose of this section was to ascertain how parents
perceived the new philosophy of the Senior Educational Program in the
project.

Section C addressed the goals and objectives of the Senior Educational
Program in the La Loche Project. Given the complex nature of a school-
community program such as the Senior Educational Program, it was necessary
to use a conceptual model on which to base specific questions to illicit
perceptions that focussed in on the goals and objectives of the program.
Minzey's model (1974) provided this framework. Questions were designed to
address each of the six components separately in Minzey's model to elicit
the opinions of the parents.
The summary questions at the end of the interview schedule attempted to elicit parents' perceptions of the La Loche Project as a whole and to invite comments on any areas not covered in sections A, B or C.

The interview schedule was pilot-tested to help detect any ambiguities in the meaning and wording of the questions. The researcher conducted the interviews with three local community residents, one male and two female. The respondents were asked to criticize and comment as well as respond to the questions. Later, two members of this group, one male and one female became the interpreters for the parent interviews in this study.

Following the pilot testing, it was found necessary to revise and simplify the questions. The following comments resulted from the pilot testing:

- The interview schedule was too lengthy, technical and sophisticated.
- Some concepts were difficult to translate into Chipewyan.
- Some questions were unclear and contained more than one idea.
- Some questions were repetitive.
- More interpretation was needed regarding Section B.

Because the program had been in place since 1976, it was necessary to build into the questions, a review of the courses that had been offered in the senior educational program over the years.

The revised interview schedule took into consideration these comments.
Data Collection

Data was collected by means of interviews of a random sample of ten parents. Two interpreters, residents of the community of La Loche, assisted with the data collection. The interpreters, one male and one female were chosen from the pilot-test study. A brief training session by the researcher was conducted for the interpreters to familiarize them with the revised interview schedule.

The interviews were structured in the sense that the same questions were presented in the same manner to a randomly selected group of parents in the community. The interviews were conducted in the Chipewyan language by the researcher and an interpreter. The interpreter translated the questions from the interview schedule into Chipewyan for the interviewees and translated the responses into English as each question was answered. The responses were recorded in English. Two of the interviewees preferred to be interviewed in English. The interpreters alternated in accompanying the researcher to the interviews.

A total of thirteen parents were contacted and ten parents were interviewed. Of the ten interviews, six were unscheduled. Four parents were contacted by telephone and appointments were set up. All the interviews were conducted in the town of La Loche and two on the Reserve.

Three parents gave the following reasons for not participating: one parent did not want to be interviewed without his wife being present. (This interview was not completed later because of the distance from town and the lack of time); one parent was leaving town the following day and did not have time to give for the interview; the third parent with whom an appointment had been made, refused to be interviewed but spent ten minutes talking informally about the program.
The interviews took place over a period of five days. Each interview lasted half an hour to one hour. They were conducted in the afternoons and evenings.

**Analysis of Data**

Since the data was collected by means of interviews, qualitative analysis was used. Each interview was analyzed and interpreted in terms of the philosophy, goals and objectives of the Senior Educational Program and parental involvement in the La Loche Project.
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Section A of the interview schedule was a demographic profile of the respondents. Its purpose was to obtain background information of the parents which would provide the reader with the setting and give more relevancy to the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

The target population for this study was the parents who have had children in the senior educational program in the La Loche Project. From this population a ten per cent random sample of parents was chosen. Ten parents, seven female and three male, were interviewed to determine their views toward the La Loche Project.

Chipewyan language was the first language of the respondents. Two parents were fluent in both English and Chipewyan languages. An interpreter assisted in the interviews.

The number of children per family was between seven and thirteen children in the home. The average number of children per family in the home. The average number of children per family in the program was four children. The level of formal education of the respondents was from grade four to grade eight. In addition to schooling, four of the respondents indicated that they had taken courses in upgrading, commercial cooking, Training on the Job (TOJ), and Life Skills.

Nine of the ten interviewees were employed outside the home. Their work experience was two in janitorial work; one worked at the Bay Store; three worked at the hospital; one at the Band Office; one at the Post Office and one in the mine at Cluff Lake.
Section B of the interview schedule dealt with the philosophy and innovative changes in the senior educational program in the La Loche Project. The questions were specific, each question relating to a specific change or unique feature of the program. The purpose of this section was to see how parents perceived the following changes:

1. **The Trimester System.** Five respondents were satisfied with the Trimester System because of early dismissal in the first week of June. Their responses were:

   - My kids don't want to go to school in June - it's too hot outside.
   - June is too late to go to school.
   - Early out in June is good.
   - June is too late - my kids are ready to come back to school soon (early in August).
   - It's too nice outside to go to school.

Parents did not see the other changes in the school year as benefitting them. They did not comment on the main reason the Trimester System was implemented, that is, to adapt the school year to the traditional lifestyle of the local community. The 'semester breaks' had coincided with the trapping and hunting season in the Fall and the Spring so that parents could take their children with them to go to the bush and not feel that the children were missing school.

Four interviewees said the Trimester System did not work out because:

- It doesn't help grade twelve students who have to hand around to write their exams late in June.
- It won't be good for kids when they get a job and have to work the same (hours) as everybody else.
- Two semesters are better, my kids like it that way. (2)
- One respondent said it didn't matter because "it's up to the kids..."
if they like it, it's o.k.; if not then change it."

2. The Ungraded System. Eight of the ten respondents gave a
definite negative response to this change of no grades in the program.
They were dissatisfied because:

If kids quit school, she doesn't know where she is.
Grades are better; my kids are good in school. (2)
A, B, C etc. groups, I don't understand. Grades would be better. (2)
Grades feel better; I know where my kids are.
I don't understand why no grades.
I don't know where (the grade) my kids are.

One respondent was unaware of the ungraded system. Another respondent
said it did not matter.

The responses pointed out clearly that they saw no value for their
children in the ungraded system. They honestly stated that neither they
nor the children understood the 'letter' method of student grouping. They
preferred the grade system because they understood it and were accustomed
to it.

3. An age entrance requirement of 12 years (later 13 years) instead
of a grade entrance requirement. The responses to the age entrance require-
ment were indifferent. Eight parents were satisfied with the age entrance
requirement; five made no further comment; three agreed it was a good
thing for the following reasons:

It's o.k. if the kids get a ride.
They are too small to walk to the high school.
My kids live close to the school.

The parents saw age requirement in terms of physical readiness. One
parent was undecided, "it's hard to tell, not everybody the same...some are too small and fool around...some are big and can look after themselves."

One parent responded negatively, "It doesn't work is 12 years old and in grade seven. Next year he can't go to the senior program. Maybe he be put back in grade six...I talk to the principal."

4. Vocational/job orientation emphasis of the senior educational program. When asked about the vocational/job orientation of the program, eight respondents stated that they were satisfied. They felt that teaching vocational/job related classes to build students' skills for job readiness was part of the solution to getting a job and earning a living. The children enjoyed the 'hands on' approach to learning. The children were interested in school and proud of their project work which they brought home. Among their answers were the following:

One of my kids got a job because learned bookkeeping in school.

My kids make things in the shop and brings them home.

My boys are interested all the time (in shops).

They learn it in school and feel they can do it.

They make things for the house.

One parent responded that more reading and math were needed like 'we used to do.'

One parent responded that he was undecided.

5. Culturally related projects as an integral part of the senior educational program. The ten respondents viewed cultural content as an important aspect of the school program. They saw the cultural programs as a means of passing on the Chipewyan culture to their children. The parents felt that it was their responsibility and not the school's to preserve the culture. However, the school was to play a supportive role
by making provisions for the culturally related projects and programs in the regular school program. They saw their role as participants in the teaching of the cultural content of the program. Among their answers were the following:

- Trapping is good...to know this way of life.
- It's the best (feature) about the program.
- My boy went trapping that time and traps now.
- I can teach what I know (culture).
- My kids can talk what they did at school.
- Teaching religion in Chipewyan is good; I know what I'm saying.

6. Community Development/Involvement. The responses to the question of community development and involvement were varied. Two respondents stated that it was good for the parents to be involved because "I can learn something and help correct mistakes with the teacher." When asked for some clarification, the parent felt that he could help with the discipline of the students for "the children don't always listen to the teacher."

Four respondents saw community development and involvement as teaching native crafts and religion in the classroom. Two other interviewees interpreted the question as being a teacher aide or native teacher. One parent who lived on the Reserve said it did not matter because she lived too far away.

Section C of the interview schedule addressed the goals and objectives of the senior educational program. A series of specific questions were designed for each of the following six components of Minzey's model (1974):
1. Community Involvement in the educational programs for school age children. Under this topic, two issues were addressed, parental satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the course offerings and parental involvement in the development and delivery of the course offerings in the program.

Nine interviewees were satisfied with the compulsory core subjects. One parent did not agree that Physical Education should be compulsory.

In the other subject areas, Vocational, Business, Fine Arts/Cultural Programs, seven parents perceived the programs responding to student needs. Three parents had no preference. Suggestions for additional classes were in Chemistry, Ceramics, Firearm Safety, a Day Care program and "lots more about our culture and the Dene language."

All ten respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of program options in the Vocational, Business, Fine Arts/Cultural Programs. Home Economics, Woods, Typing, and the teaching of Religion (Chipewyan) were the only course offerings. "Too many courses are not happening like it was two or three years ago." Among other answers were the following:

- It was good when they (students) went from shop to shop. (exploratory year)
- Too many courses are not happening...it was good 2-3 years ago.
- ___________ was a good teacher. ___________ was a good program...the children learnt alot.
- The school has no money to buy supplies for the shops.
- There are no teachers for the shops.

When asked if they had been involved in the school program, seven parents said they taught religion (Chipewyan) and one parent assisted in the classroom for four years. When the interviewees were asked if
they would like to be a resource person (willing to help) in the school, six parents answered positively. Among the answers were the following:

I would be willing to help out to talk about my job in the ________________.

Yes, as long as it is in Chipewyan.

Willing to help out because I like to learn something.

Yes, I would be able to teach religion.

I would help in sports.

I could talk how it used to be in La Loche.

2. Joint use of school facilities and (3) additional programs for children and youth (after-school programs). The responses to the use of school facilities and after-school programs were consistent. Six respondents stated that the gym was the most used facility. The classrooms and the shops were under-used. Two respondents made no comment. Two interviewees were indifferent because they lived too far from town to know what was going on.

The parents stated that the gym and shops had been used more in previous years but 'not so much now'.

From the responses, it was difficult to determine what programs were offered on a regular basis. When the question was pursued further, there was silence.

Regarding the after-school programs, three of the parents stated that the gym program was for team practices for the older kids. There was nothing for the 'little kids'. The library was closed in the evenings because there was no librarian. The respondents could not remember if any other programs were offered for the children. Two of the parents said that the kids used to go and use the shops in Woods, Power Mechanics and
Photography. They used to work on the yearbook but not any more.

4. Community-Based adult program. Several questions were asked to determine the perceptions of parents toward adult education programs. Two interviewees indicated that there were only three programs offered last year in Pre-Nortep, Training on the job (TOJ) and carpentry. School facilities and instructor were used for the carpentry class. The other two programs were offered in the Learning Centre facilities of the Community Colleges. All three courses were sponsored by the college. Five respondents would like to see more programs offered for adults. They recommended classes in typing, ceramics and fitness classes. Three of the respondents did not comment.

5. Community Development/Involvement. Questions were posed to discover how parents viewed school-community relations in the program. All respondents stated that they took part in parent-teacher interviews, visited classrooms at one time or another. Two parents worked as janitors in the school. One parent participated in class field trips. Four parents wanted more to do with the school. Among the answers were the following:

I don't know what's going on; I would be interested to be on the school board.

I want to know what's happening in the school; kids don't talk.

There should be home and school meetings again.

I never know when the local board meetings are.

6. Delivery and coordination of community services. All of the respondents were dissatisfied with the lack of Interagency meetings. They felt that it was good for the different groups to meet to talk
about such topics as, curfew, alcohol problems etc. One respondent said that she attended an Interagency meeting a few years ago and she had learnt alot. None of the respondents were aware of any of the agencies getting together or contacting the school individually. Neither did they know of any programs that were happening as a result of the agencies working as a group.

The last section of the interview schedule was made up of summary questions in an attempt to elicit the parents' perceptions of the program as a whole and to invite comments in any areas not already covered in the interview schedule.

The responses to the question of what was good about the program were general. Five respondents said 'everything' but did not go into any detail. One respondent stated she was happy with the compulsory subjects. Another respondent replied that she was happy with what was being taught at the high school. The other three parents agreed that 'it's o.k.'.

When parents were asked of what was not so good about the program, their responses were more specific. Among the answers were the following:

Some teachers.

No money to buy stuff (supplies) for the shops.

No teachers for the shop.

Nothing happening for 2-3 years.

No learning books like we used to.

We have to pay (a fee) to use the shop.

Everything (the equipment) is locked up.

No lunches at the school.
When asked what were the problems that made it difficult for them to participate more in the school program, the respondents stated that they were working part-time or full time. One of the parents who lived on the Reserve said it was too far away to take part in the school activities.

To the question regarding teacher involvement in the community, the parents answered with a definite 'yes'. Home visits were important to the parents. One respondent, in particular, stated that she wanted the report cards delivered so that she could talk to the teacher alone. Other respondents said that they would like to meet the teachers on a 'friendly' basis first as well as to discuss student problems, 'not just to kick out the kids before talking to me'. Another response was that teachers were needed to help out in sports programs, 'in the winter, no coach for hockey'. Similarly, it was important for another parent to have teachers in town 'just talking around'. A different concern was expressed by one of the respondents in that for some homes, "it won't help if teachers visit the home...it's the parents' problem if kids don't listen...parents have to tell their kids themselves...not always the teacher's fault...I tell my kids."

The replies to the question on whether the children enjoyed school were generally positive. Some of the answers were as follows:

Yes, never misses only when sick...likes shop.

Yes, they like school...English is the best.

Not much for two of my kids,,,the others, they like sports and reading.

They don't want to miss school...reading and math are good.
Everything is good.

All my kids enjoy school...everything, sports and a little reading.

My kids quit school. They don't want to go...I go to work and they sleep again. Teachers don't understand.

My kids like sometimes but teachers kick kids out...one kicked out twice before Christmas...I want classroom teacher to visit but didn't.

Kids have nothing to do...school is good.

In response to the question, do you think your children are doing well in school, four interviewees said yes because they like school. One respondent stated that three of her children did well but two of her kids got kicked out. Four parents made no comment. There was one negative response, 'they quit and won't go to school'.

The replies to the question on how far would you like your child to go in school were consistent. Eight respondents said that they would like their children to go as far as they can in school, that is, grade twelve. One parent stated 'as far as grade twelve and university'. For one parent, the decision of how much education the child got rested with the child, 'it's up to them.'

The responses to the question on what kind of a job you would like your child to get after finishing school were varied. Among the answers were the following:

It's up to the children because they are older.

I don't know.

Any job like nursing, teaching.

Anything they (children) like.

As long as they have a job.

Any job they will stick with.
No comment.

When asked about the teaching of the history and the background of the Chipewyan people in school, four interviewees replied that it was not being done but they wanted this cultural dimension in the program. It was important to one parent to have her kids learn about 'the early days'. The other respondents did not know what was being taught in school and did not comment any further.

The question on the teaching of Chipewyan language in the school elicited mixed responses. Three parents said a definite 'no' because 'he learns it at home'. Another respondent said 'yes, and it was suppose to happen last year'. One parent felt that the children should not only learn to speak it well but to read and write it even in its original form (symbols). One parent felt that it would be good to learn the Chipewyan language because 'they could learn the church hymns in Chipewyan'.

Additional comments offered by the parents were the following:

The kids got to listen if they want to learn...the kids have to do that themselves.

A day care in the school would be good. Some girls can go back to school.

If kids can do the school work at twelve years, they should be able to go to the high school.

Too much hippy style dress of the teachers...Teachers should look clean with clean clothes...my kids clean and wash when the teacher looks like that.

Build a gym at the high school.

Use the commercial cooking lab to cook and serve lunches at noon like they used to...kids stay at the school and not skip out.
Eating lunch at the school gives jobs and work for the people.

Open up library at noon... some kinds want to work in there.

Home and school meetings once a month.

Teach kids how to respect people.

Summary of Findings

The majority of the respondents expressed general satisfaction and support of the La Loche Project. Parents were familiar with the philosophy of the senior educational program and the process of community involvement.

However, it was obvious from the responses that the parents did not fully understand the rationale for the innovative change to the parents. For example, the trimester system was an acceptable change to the parents because of the early dismissal in June. Parents seemed to be unaware that the primary reason for the adjustment in the school year had been to accommodate the traditional lifestyle of the community. The trimester system and the 'semester breaks' had coincided with the trapping and hunting seasons in the Fall and Spring so the children could accompany the parents to the bush and not miss school.

Similarly, the ungraded system was not acceptable. The parents honestly said that they did not understand the age group method of grouping the students but did understand the grade system. But on the other hand, parents saw the age entrance requirement satisfactory. However, this latter change was seen by the parents from the point of view of physical readiness only. Their concern was the availability of
transportation to school for their children who might not be 'big enough' to walk to school. In general, the interviewees were satisfied with the age entrance requirement from the mere fact that their children were already in the program. How and why they got there was not addressed.

Parents' perceptions, in regard to the ungraded system and the age entrance requirement, indicated more of a lack of understanding and confusion rather than contradiction. The purpose of the ungraded system as well as the age entrance requirement had been at address the age grade disparity of the students.

Parents indicated satisfaction with the vocational/job orientation of the program. They saw education in broader terms than the core curriculum. They perceived education as a preparation for the world of work. The senior educational program with its vocational/job emphasis was seen as responding to community needs. However, dissatisfaction was expressed with the lack of program options in the vocational areas.

Parents indicated that two to three years ago, many of the programs which were implemented when the program was first begun, were still being offered but many course options have now been discontinued. Even with the recent investment in the vocational training facilities in Dene High School, there was a reduction in programs. Parents stated that there were staff cutbacks and supplies. There appeared to be insufficient staff for the vocational areas.

The respondents approved unanimously the cultural dimension of the school program. The parents saw the culturally related projects and programs as an integral part of the regular school program. They saw
their role in the program as being involved in this aspect. They felt it was their responsibility and not the school, to pass on and preserve the culture. However, parents did not necessarily want Chipewyan language taught in the school for the children learnt their language at home.

With the staff cutbacks and minimal instructional supplies, the cultural projects and programs were also cut. As a consequence, there appeared to be little cultural integration in the classroom. There were minimal opportunities for parental involvement.

The use of school facilities and after-school programs were limited. The gym was the most used facility. The gym programs that were offered were mainly for practices in team sports which limited the variety of programs.

The respondents saw adult education classes as important but not many classes were being offered. According to the parents, the school, in the past, had closer working relationship with Community Colleges. More classes were taught for adults in the evenings where the school facilities and instructors were shared by both institutions. For example, last year carpentry was the only class offered on a shared basis. Parents were aware of the Community Colleges having the mandate for adult education in Saskatchewan. They now have their own facilities, the Learning Center in La Loche.

On the basis of the responses made on the delivery and coordinator of community services, parents saw Inter-agency meetings a good thing but stated they had been discontinued. The different agencies in the community of La Loche were not meeting as a group or was there any contact with the school on an individual basis as far as the parents were
concerned. As well, the parents were not aware of any programs that were taking place which were sponsored by any of the agencies other than the school.

Parents saw a need for a Day Care Centre in the school. They felt that the teenage mothers would return to classes and finish their schooling if they had babysitting services conveniently located in the school.

One parent was in favor of a dress code for the teachers. She saw the teacher as a role model for her children. She was also conscious and proud of the school image.

Parents saw the need for a gym at the Dene High School. Students having to be bussed to the elementary school for gym classes, was not efficient. Parents felt that there was a loss of instruction time. As well, students did not always return to classes for it was easier for them to skip out.

Parents felt that serving lunches at noon in the high school was good for the children. Commerical Cooking classes had been offered at Dene High as a training course for the community. A luncheon program was the result, open to the students and anyone in the community. The program was self-supporting from the money collected from the lunches. This program in Commercial Cooking also served as a work station for the students in the work-study program. Parents regretted that both programs had been discontinued.

Similarly, the shops in Personal Grooming, Carpentry, Automechanics extended their programs to work-study programs. They were used as a work station and were opened during the week at certain hours for community use. The respondents indicated that these opportunities were now not
available to the community.

Home and school meetings and home visits were important to the parents. The parents stated that these contacts would improve school-community relations and help them to know and understand what was happening in the school.

On the whole, the respondents indicated that their children enjoyed school. They took great pride in the shop projects which their children completed and brought home. They were always pointed out to the interviewer as evidence of their children's accomplishments.

The final comment of the parents in the interviews was usually a reference to their concern that their children be taught to respect other people.
SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perceptions of the parents toward the La Loche Project since its inception in 1976.

The La Loche Project had developed out of a need rather than as a result of any particular liberal teaching philosophy on the part of the educators. It was a response to parental and educator's concerns that the educational system at Ducharme School, La Loche, was irrelevant to students' needs and to everyday living. Drastic changes in the educational program had to occur. In August, 1976, the La Loche Project was launched.

The La Loche Project was the involvement of the school and community in the development of the Senior Educational Program at Ducharme School. This program, with a vocational/job orientation was an alternative to the regular academic program for students 12-13 years and older with an age-grade disparity of two to three years. It was a school-community program based on the principles of community education. The goals and objectives of the program closely paralleled the Minzey Model (1974) of community education.

An historical survey of the Chipewyan people and the community of La Loche and a description of the La Loche Project were provided as background to this study. The subjects for the study were the population of La Loche. A ten per cent random sample of parents who have had children in the program in the La Loche Project since its inception in 1976, were chosen. Ten parents, seven female and three male, were interviewed.
An interview program was set up for the purpose of data collection. The interviews were conducted in the Chipewyan language, the first language of the parents. Two interpreters were engaged as interviewers assisted by the researcher. The interview schedule was pilot-tested with three local community members. The suggestions that were made in the pilot study were incorporated into the revised interview schedule.

The interviews took place in the homes of the interviewees. They were a half hour to one hour in length over a five day period. The parents were friendly, warm and hospitable. They were willing to provide their homes for the interviews.

An interview schedule was the instrument used to collect the data on parents' perceptions toward the La Loche Project. It was developed by the researcher for this study. It was based on the related literature in community education. Specific questions were developed for each of the six components of Minzey's model (1974).

The interview schedule consisted of three sections. Section A was a demographic profile of the respondents for the purpose of providing the reader with the setting and information to give relevancy to the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study. Sections B and C addressed the philosophy, goals and objectives of the program. The questions were open-ended in order to elicit parents' perceptions toward the program in the La Loche Project. The summary questions at the end of the interview schedule were designed to obtain the attitudes of parents toward the program as a whole in the project.

The data from the interviews were presented and discussed descriptively. The findings indicated that parents were generally satisfied
with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the program. They had serious reservations about the ungraded system. They felt strongly in favor of the vocational/job orientation of the program. They would like to see more program options in this area. The school facilities were being under-used. The gym was the most used facility but with a limited sports program for team sports and practices. Parents would like to see the community having greater access to the use of the school facilities especially the shops.

The respondents were unanimously in agreement with the offering of cultural programs in the regular school program. They felt it was their responsibility to pass on and preserve their culture with the support and cooperation of the school.

Parents expressed a willingness to become more involved in the school program. With staff and program cutbacks, the cultural programs have also been cut. They were concerned that with fewer culturally related programs they had little opportunity to participate in the school program and activities.

Conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the La Loche Project were made on the basis of the information gained through the interviews.
CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the information obtained from the parent interviews, the following conclusions were made.

1. It was obvious that the parents did not fully understand the reasons for the innovative changes in the educational program. It appeared that the school personnel did not involve the community sufficiently in the pre-planning stages of the La Loche Project.

2. Parents indicated satisfaction with the vocational orientation of the program and felt it helped prepare their children for the field of work. However, they stated that the program options were limited.

3. Parents were pleased with the project oriented approach in the instructional program. It was apparent that the children's self-confidence and self-image were enhanced by the completed projects they brought home.

4. The cultural dimension of the program was important to parents. They saw a role for themselves in taking responsibility for this aspect of the school-community program.

5. The respondents stated that the school facilities were not being made available to the community. After-school programs were limited to team practices in the gym.

6. Parents expressed a need for more adult education classes. Some of their suggestions were fitness classes, typing and ceramics.

7. Parents saw Interagency meetings as beneficial to the community and school but stated they had been discontinued.
8. Home visits by teachers were important to the parents for keeping the lines of communication open between the home and the school.

9. The senior educational program in the La Loche Project had been in operation since 1976. There have been program changes since that time. It appeared that there was a need to review the philosophy, goals and objectives of the program.

10. The importance of having an interpreter or guide when doing cross cultural research cannot be over stressed. A local person has an awareness and sensitivity to local customs and family situations. The researcher would be well advised to respect and follow his/her suggestions. Since a local interpreter is crucial in cross cultural research, the researcher should not take this service for granted in a native community. The research should be sensitive to the amount of time and energy this service involves. Adequate monetary recompense should be given.

Conclusions of the Researcher as a Participant Observer

As a participant observer in the La Loche Project, the writer had the following observations.

1. It was evident that parents were not sufficiently involved in the discussion of the philosophic underpinnings of the program.

2. The program was put into place too quickly because of the frustrations of teachers and administrators to handle the educational problems in La Loche. It would appear that the Northern Lights School Division Board responded to staff frustration rather than community needs in approving the program changes.
3. After the program was designed, it was not brought back to the community for more discussion and approbation.

4. The school personnel did not have the skills and time to implement the kind of community involvement necessary in a community-school program.

5. The program was premature as far as the community was concerned.

6. It appeared that the community was not ready for the kind of personal and community commitment involved in the community education model.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions reached in this study have led to the following recommendations.

1. It is recommended that in any planned educational change that there be understanding and acceptance on the part of the parents and teachers before changes are introduced.

2. It is recommended that there be more program offerings in the vocational/job area to meet student and community needs.

3. It is recommended that the project-oriented approach in the instructional program be continued.

4. It is recommended that more culturally related projects and programs be offered so that parents can be more involved in the school program.

5. It is recommended that the policy of community use of school facilities be reviewed.

6. It is recommended that more adult education courses be made available through the cooperation of the school and community colleges.

7. It is recommended that Interagency meetings be re-introduced to discuss such topics as school day care.

8. It is recommended that home visits by the teaching staff be continued for the strengthening of home and school relations.

9. It is recommended that an evaluation of the senior educational program since its inception be undertaken.
10. It is recommended that in cross cultural research, the researcher engage the services of an interpreter or a guide from the local community.
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APPENDIX A

School Board Letter
Dear Elie:

As follow-up to our telephone conversation a few months ago, I have decided to do a study of the Educational Senior program, called the La Loche Project, for the completion of my studies in the Master's Program in Indian and Northern Education.

The project that I wish to do will be a descriptive study of the development of the La Loche Project since its inception in 1976. It will involve the perceptions of the parents toward the school program. As you are aware, the educational program was innovative at the time for La Loche.

I am requesting your permission, as well as the Northern Lights School Board, to do the study of the La Loche Project. I would like to see how the parents perceived the innovative changes in the program as well as to document the creative thinking and work in education that did occur in Northern Saskatchewan through the Northern Lights School Division.

I hope my request meets your approval. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Dear Sister Anna:

I am happy to inform you that the following resolution was adopted at the August meeting of the Board of Education "... that the request of Sr. Anna McNally, as attached be approved.

I would like to wish you the best of luck in your project and look forward to reading a copy of your study when it has been completed.

Sincerely,

Elie C. Fleury
Director of Education
APPENDIX B

Curriculum Development Spiral Model
LA LOCHE COMMUNITY NEEDS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SPIRAL

- Program Duration
- Program Objectives
- Grade Level Introduction
- Units of Instruction
- Course Content
- Teaching Strategies
- Course Projects
- Program Evaluation
- Program Revision
- New Programs
- Curricula Criteria
- School Responsibility
- Availability for Other Communities
- Program Re-introduction
APPENDIX C

Interview Schedule
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Parent Questionnaire

THE PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO FIND OUT HOW YOU HAVE PERCEIVED THE SENIOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN THE LA LOCHE PROJECT.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND DATA

1. Name of Parent/Guardian __________________________ Date __________________
2. Number of Children in the Home __________________________
3. Number of Children in the Senior Educational Program __________________________
4. How far did you go in school? __________________________
5. List other classes, courses, etc., you have taken since you went to school __________________________
6. What kinds of work have you done? (employment) __________________________

SECTION B: CHANGES IN THE SENIOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In 1976, the Senior Educational Program in Ducharme School, La Loche changed. These changes came about because parents and the Local School Board were able to tell teachers and Northern Lights School Division that they were not happy with how their children were doing in school. Some of the concerns were:

-Children were taking too long after starting school to reach Grade One. Later, they were age-grade displaced 2-3 years.
-Children did not want to go to school because they were always failing.
-Children were not taught to 'value' their native language and culture.
-Children were not being prepared for jobs when they left school.
-Parents wanted the children to learn to speak, read and write English.
The school responded by changing the school program so that some of these concerns of the parents were taken into account. These changes are listed below. **PUT A CHECK (✓) IN FRONT OF THE CHANGES THAT WORKED FOR YOU.**

- Changing the school year to suit the parents' lifestyle (Trimester System)
- Setting up an ungraded system. Student programs would be individualized and they would progress at their own level of ability, rate and attendance. (Ungraded System)
- Getting the parents and community involved in the school program so that programs would change as the community changed. (Community Involvement)
- Developing and teaching courses related to the native culture in La Loche. (Culturally Related Programs)
- Having an age requirement of 12-13 years to the program instead of a grade entrance requirement (Age Entrance Requirement)
- Teaching vocational/job related classes to build students' skills for job readiness as well as providing classes in the academic subjects. (Vocational/job Orientation)

**WHY DID THE OTHER CHANGES NOT WORK OUT WELL?**

**OTHER COMMENTS:**

---

SECTION C: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SENIOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1) Community Involvement in the Educational Programs for School age Children.

The following programs have been offered in your school. **PUT A CHECK (✓) IN FRONT OF THOSE PROGRAMS WITH WHICH YOU WERE SATISFIED.**

**Compulsory Subjects**

- Language Arts/English
- Science/Outdoor Educ'n
- Social Studies
- Mathematics
- Physical Educ'n/Health
Vocational/job Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Economics/</th>
<th>Personal Grooming/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Bachelor Survival Course</td>
<td>- Child Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Management for Living</td>
<td>- Ward Aide Training Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family Life</td>
<td>- Babysitting Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- First Aid Course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Woods | Power Mechanics |
| Building Construction | Welding |

Fine Arts/Culturally Related Programs

| Arts/Crafts | Music |
| photography | Beadwork |
| Canoe building | Trapping |
| Firearm Safety | Local History |
| Religion (Chipewyan) | |

Business Education

| Typing | Record Keeping |
| General Business | Consumer Education |

WHY ARE YOU NOT SATISFIED WITH THE OTHER SUBJECTS?

WHAT OTHER COURSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OFFERED?

HAVE YOU HELPED OUT IN ANY OF THE ABOVE COURSES?

WHICH ONES?

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP OUT IN ANY OF THE SUBJECT AREAS?

IN WHAT WAY?

OTHER COMMENTS:
2) Joint Use of School and Community Facilities and 3) Additional Programs for Children and Youth.

In order for the school to be used more by the community, after-school programs were set up. **Put a check (✓) in front of the activities in which your children took part.**

**GYM**
- [ ] Sports
- [ ] Awards Night/Concerts/
dances
- [ ] Bingoess
- [ ] Winter Festival
- [ ] Community Meetings/Programs

**THE SHOPS**
- [ ] Woods
- [ ] Building Construction
- [ ] Personal Grooming
- [ ] Home Economics
- [ ] Business Education
- [ ] Photography
- [ ] Commercial Cooking

**LIBRARY**
- [ ] Use of Library in evenings
- [ ] Meetings

**CLASSROOMS**
- [ ] Upgrading Classes
- [ ] Meetings

**Are you satisfied with the after school programs? Why or why not?**

**What activities bring most people to the school?**

**Have you helped out in any of the programs (i.e. supervision etc.)?**

**Which ones?**

**Other comments:**

---

4) Community-Based Adult Education Programs.

The 'Learning Centre' has offered up-grading and other adult classes in the school.

**What classes have been offered in the last few years?**

**Which ones have you taken?**

**Where have they been offered (if not in the school)?**

**Which ones would you like to see offered in the evenings?**

**Other comments:**
5) Community DEVELOPMENT/ INVOLVEMENT

Some of the ways parents have been involved in the school are listed below. PUT A CHECK (√) IN FRONT OF THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU TOOK PART.

- Parent-Teacher Interviews
- Visiting Classrooms
- Local School Board Member
- Teacher Aid/NORTEP/TASK
- Home & School Coordinator
- Resource Person in any other area. (sports etc.)
- Janitorial Work
- Teaching Religion
- School Secretary
- Home & School Meetings
- Field Trips/Picnics

HOW CAN THE PARENTS GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOL?

HOW CAN THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER BETTER?

OTHER COMMENTS:

6) Delivery and Coordination of Community Services.

The school is in contact with a lot of groups in the community such as: Health Clinic, Hospital, Social Services, The Band, L.C.A., Day Care, Resources, R.C.M.P., the Mission the Learning Centre. Sometimes, meetings are held with some of these groups to talk about common concerns e.g. curfew, problems with alcohol etc.

HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY OF THESE MEETINGS: WHICH ONES?

HAVE ANY CHANGES OR ACTIVITIES COME ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY AS A RESULT OF THESE GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER? IN WHAT WAY?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DO YOU SEE THAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE SCHOOL PROGRAM?

2. WHAT DO YOU SEE THAT IS NOT GOOD ABOUT THE PROGRAM?
3. WHAT PROBLEMS MAKE IT HARD FOR YOU TO TAKE PART IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES?

4. WOULD YOU LIKE TEACHERS TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY? ______
   IN WHAT WAY? _____________________________ IF NOT, WHY NOT? ______

5. DO YOU THINK YOUR CHILDREN ARE DOING WELL IN SCHOOL? ______ WHY OR
   WHY NOT? _______________________________________

6. DOES YOUR CHILD ENJOY SCHOOL? ___________________________ IN
   WHAT AREAS?

7. HOW FAR WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR CHILD TO GO IN SCHOOL? ____________

8. WHAT KIND OF A JOB WOULD YOU LIKE HIM/HER TO GET AFTERWARDS? _____

9. DOES YOUR CHILD LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE CHIPEWYAN
   PEOPLE? ______ IF NOT, SHOULD HE/SHE BE? _____________________________
   HOW CAN THIS BE DONE? _____________________________________________

10. SHOULD THE CHIPEWYAN LANGUAGE BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL? _______ WHY OR
    WHY NOT? _________________________________________________________

11. WHAT THINGS ABOUT YOUR CULTURE WOULD YOU LIKE TO PASS ON TO YOUR
    CHILDREN? ___________________________ HOW CAN THE SCHOOL HELP?

12. OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL–COMMUNITY RELATIONS? ________

THANK YOU.
APPENDIX D

Maps
LA LOCHE - METHYE PORTAGE AREA, SHOWING THE
LOCATIONS OF FUR TRADING POSTS PRIOR TO 1821.
Figure 1

English River District with fur trade establishments prior to 1821. Area delineated as English River District was adopted from a map in the Public Archives of Canada (Map H1/1000 - 1832).
COMMUNITY OF LA LOCHE, 1984
Population - 2,500

Schools: Ducharme School, Mission Street
Dene High School, La Loche Avenue, 1.8 kilometers northwest
located in the new subdivision of town. (not shown on map)
Popular Point School, 1.4 kilometers south along Lac La Loche. (not shown on map)