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QUALITY EDUCATION: THE STUDENT VIEW

by

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A dissertation submitted to
the Faculty at the Graduate School at
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Doctor of Education

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Approved by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dale G. Ambaker", is written over a horizontal line.

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APPROVAL PAGE

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The purpose of this heuristic study was to establish preliminary language categories for student definitions of quality secondary education in rural North Carolina and to compare that language for congruency with teacher definitions in the context of selected quantitative data. The sample was 39 students and 19 teachers in three secondary schools in the same local education unit. The qualitative data from the following questions were analyzed from student and teacher interviews:

How do (STUDENTS /TEACHERS) define quality education in your school?

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

Categories constructed from an analysis of nouns and verbs from interview language are as follows:

Concrete: grades, attendance, tests or money

Program: current academic or comprehensive school

Interactional: peer and social relationships

Learning: life-long education for personal fulfillment

Don't Know: students only.

A comparison of student and teacher self-reports and perceptions of the others' definitions was conducted in the context of improved student outcomes and improved school climate. The school that demonstrated the most consistent numeric improvements did demonstrate a higher degree of consistency between students and teachers for defining a quality education as their school program or

as learning. The remaining two schools demonstrated different patterns of improvement with less student- teacher consistency in definitions of quality education. Peer and social relationships were the least frequently named category for a quality education by students and teachers. The differences between student and teacher perceptions and definitions are discussed in the context of each school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Writing a little over three decades ago Raymond Callahan (1962, p. 259) stated:

Americans who are concerned about their schools and who understand that the future of our free society depends upon the quality of education our children receive must realize that as a result of the developments in educational administration since 1911 we are, in the 1960s, caught in a vicious circle.

And so it also is in the 1990s. Educational reformers continue to call for quality. They also continue to describe educational failures and to condemn what they perceive as vicious cycles of miseducation. Fullan (1982) began a description of miseducation as the failure to understand the nine themes central to the future of change. By 1992 he specifically listed seven reasons for miseducation: faulty maps of change; problem complexity; the focus on symbol over substance; superficial solutions; misunderstanding resistance; failures to institutionalize reformation, and the misuse of knowledge about change (p. 749). In a similar context Hawley (1988) announced a "third wave" of educational reformation. The first wave "was mirrored in the hyperbole of the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* " (p. 417). The second wave has yet to crash on school shores. This

second wave contains the magic bullets of “children at risk” and investment in more and better teachers. Hawley’s prediction that the missing elements of family and cognitive development will be a part of the third wave proves accurate. Hawley noted that “Differences in school quality and social condition will increase, even if our worst schools improve somewhat” (p. 434). In further recognition of this disparity of educational success, McDermot (1989) focused on the student with the notion that “school success comes hard in America”(p. 13).

Putting school quality and social condition information into a meaningful frame of reference is essential to discussions of educational reformation failures and the creation of models that can contribute to successful educational reformation. The cloudy issues of whether educational improvements occur, how they occur, and for whom they occur are demonstrated in the May 1993 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*. Huelskamp (1993) quoted from what has become known as the “Sandia Report” about the quality of data used to make decisions about education. He reached the surprising conclusion that American education trend data are positive in spite of the quality of those data. In a spirited debate about the meaning of this international comparative information, Stotts and Jaeger (1993) in the same issue argued over methodology and spurious conclusions about the same data. Not only is the issue of quality education debatable, so too is the information used to fuel the debate. Shinning a light of critical analysis upon each school requires

a focus and framework for inspection that adds to meaning for each school in its particular context.

Statement of the Problem and Setting the Stage for Its Resolution

The role of students in our schools is defined by the adults in these schools, by the adults in the homes who send the students to school, and, finally, by tradition. Among other things, that traditional student role calls for passive acceptance of adult guidance and adult expertise in life as well as passive reception of de-contextualized facts for some ambiguous later learning. The roots of this role are in the factory model of education. The 5- or 6-year-old student begins the process and is “worked on” in the assembly line until age 16 or graduation. This role is defined by the educational system and influenced by the weight of the way it seems it has always been, and certainly not by the students themselves. Historically, the model comes to us from the late 19th century. The traditional student role is similar to the role of a prisoner: *i.e.*, demonstrate the ability to follow passively a predefined set of rules until some adult signals that it is time to stop doing that and to go do something else. The student role takes on one of its most active dimensions in the choice to disengage and dropout, or to stay within the system for more schooling.

The 1990 census reveals a picture of our students that is very

different from those who were processed by the factory model. Hodgkinson (1993) pointed out that while 22% of the total population comprise minorities, 30% of school-aged children are from minorities. This is projected to reach as high as 36% shortly after the year 2000. So, while the overwhelming majority of students used to be a nation of European descent, this is rapidly changing. He further noted "It makes little sense to focus solely on the national changes when the states are becoming much more diverse in terms of ethnicity, age of population, job production, population density, family types, and youth poverty" (p. 620). Again according to the 1990 census, approximately 40% of our nation's children under 18 live in poverty, although these children make up only 26% of the population (US Department of Commerce, 1990). Forty percent of all poverty in the United States exists in the Southern states. North Carolina's poverty rate of 15.7% compares to the national rate of 14.5%. Children's economic condition was not a concern for the schools at the beginning of this century, and rural student economics is still not a national concern. With so many of America's children living below the poverty line, another excuse, or reason for educational failure is born.

Educational reform themes have generated a special language in the literature: site-based decision making, transformation (Fullan & Miles, 1992), reformation, and restructuring (Harris, 1992; Kahne, Goren, & Amsler, 1991). These reform buzz words include reorganization, restructuring, "powering down," and making

decisions “from the grass roots up.” The language dissects the roles and functions of school adults in their various patterns and their circles of influence in school settings. These reformation themes advocate participatory governance, empowering the majority of people affected by education, and the quality control methods implicit in Total Quality Management (TQM). The local school communities, the Boards of Education, the teachers, and the school administrators have all come under scrutiny as the construction of the best educational mousetrap continues. Parents now must join the other adults and become part of the search for improved education as power down with site-based decision-making.

The one player left out of many inquiries and calls for reform is the student. Although expected to demonstrate more, better, and higher achievement, students, who are the consumers and the knowledge workers (Drucker in Derany & Sykes, 1988), are infrequently cited in the research for the design and transformation of schools for the 21st century. Adults still occupy the position of brokers and marketers of “schooling.” Yet, students also must have a place in the redirection of American education (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992; Kleiner, 1990). Their voices are absolutely essential for a clear perspective on educational reformation and transformation. An institution cannot be restructured apart from the actual consumers of that institution (Senge, 1990). Students alone determine whether what is hoped for will actually occur within the schools. As consumers in the system, if they do not learn what is

taught, the method of teaching and the assessment thereof are irrelevant.

Indeed, Bloom (1987) noted that adolescent post-secondary-school youths "feel a sense of impotence, a sense that they have little or no influence over collective life"(p. 85). An impotent student is passively enduring, "doing time," as it were. Etzioni (1961) articulated the resemblance between the prison, the military, and the schools. The prison analogy is not sufficient to describe what school life must be for our future problem solvers. Foster (1986) called for a "community of scholars" to assure a future of choices for our students (p.167). This analogy for schools includes learning by all, every day in every way. It included a continuous dialectic about school conditions and possibilities for change as practical action. If students do not have a stake in the core of their formal educational experiences, why should they learn? The true stakeholders in this current third wave of educational transformation and beyond are the students. Lipsky (1992) placed the student at the center of educational reformation with the goal of producing a "well-prepared graduate." Students must have an invested voice in the search for well-prepared graduates from a community of scholars.

The current data on families and their positive contribution to the school setting are not comforting. Bracey (1992) quoted columnist William Raspberry: "[We] knew it all along...American schools are doing a pretty good job of teaching children who arrive at school ready to learn"(p. 106). Whitehead (1993) summarized the

nation's crisis in family values for this generation of students as "the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially and economically than its parents"(p. 84). School and family bashing is, however, non-productive, as is the discussion of school reform failures. The problem is really this: if schools fail to make a difference in the lives of students who arrive without the prerequisites to make them school successes, what do the adults intend to do about it? The true questions about the problem are: "What is quality schooling for all of our children?" and "What do the students contribute to that definition of quality schooling?"

The race against ourselves may be within the context of what some would call social collapse. Things are not the way they were, nor do they seem to be the way they are supposed to be in our schools (Herndon, 1969). Indeed, Herndon noted 25 years ago "that in the old days, the kids got along with the system ...The kids are different now...upon reflection they come up with the word *deprived* " (p.196). The schools are still trying to engage in substantial meaningful reformation to address this same issue 25 years after Herndon's accurate conceptualization. Schools prefer to discuss cultural diversity and differences as a reason for failure instead of a reason to change. Indeed, instead of seeking a viable solution to school failure, educators have restated the problem using a different buzz word. "Deprived" is no longer politically correct; we now speak about "at-risk" students.

"At risk" is a collective term applied to students who try to

meet the institution in any way that is limited or limiting to their success in that school. The urban underclass is matched in qualitative issues by the rural needy. Compton, Hughes and Smith (1990) published a document, *“Adolescents in Need: An Approach for helping At-Risk Rural Youth”* as a guide for local communities to accomplish seven goals, the first of which is “completion of education”. The popularity of the student classification of “at-risk” as both an excuse for students’ not making progress and as a definition that legitimizes the need to change the way things are done still overlooks the person with the “at-risk” label: the student. Under the premise that a successful education prepares students for life-long learning and that learning is a prerequisite for the economic well-being of this country, all students must have the best that can be offered in education. Etzioni (1961) noted that the students’ belief that they will succeed and be accepted has kept them in school in spite of the prison analogy. Lipsky (1992) noted that the shift of focus to the students “involves a fundamental re-conceptualization of the process of the production of learning” from inputs to output (pp. 44-45). This is the foundation of the third wave of education reform.

The historical burden for action in school reformation is on those adults in education settings whose experiences and training imply an expectation for *re-creating* that which they themselves experienced as students (Sarason, 1982). We cannot turn the focus upon that which is not alterable in the school setting: who comes to school. Time spent complaining about past or current failures will do

nothing to bring about quality education for the children. The school givens are the foundations of school history, not the promises of the future. Schools will **be**. Students will **be**. Teachers will **be**. What happens or does not happen with these givens when schools, students and teachers mix goals up in schools? What happens when the historical weight of the institution meets adolescents who are not the way they used to be: compliant and comfortable in a socially preconstructed environment? Attention must be redirected to finding new ways to work with what now exists in each school. Teachers, parents, and students must begin to alter the ways in which they expect “the way we do things around here” to work.

The student of yesterday does not exist in schools today. Today’s “vid kid” (Combs, 1994) is a new type of learner. The problem of student participation in a quality education must be defined in terms of today’s student voice for that quality education. As Callahan (1962) noted, an accurate picture of today’s educational administrative failures is a group of adults in an endless cycle of discussion that is missing the crucial player. In summary, the problem investigated here is one of defining the purpose of schooling in terms that all stakeholders can accept, support, and articulate in a common language.

This study presents student voices in the context of the school setting. Their voices are reported in and out of congruence with classroom teacher voices in school. Teachers have traditionally determined the nature and availability of quality schooling. From

the descriptive and interpretive language of both students and teachers, conclusions can be drawn to show that the perceptions of the students are crucial in determining the path of educational reform. Willower (1991) noted that educational change is complicated, contingent, and chancy. Part of the complication and of the chanciness is the result of the necessary dialectic between educator and student. Both must believe in a common vision and consciously strive to realize it. The students' language about quality in their setting contains the beginnings of a framework for true reformation, school by school by school.

In this study data are gathered to achieve three things: 1) to report secondary students' voices and language regarding quality education in rural North Carolina schools; 2) to identify organizational contextual variables or "accumulated wisdom" (Prestine & Bowers, 1993) that seem to contribute to or define students' concepts of quality in the secondary school organization; and 3) to explore the language-action interaction between students and teachers as each group grapples with definitions for quality in schooling. This research fuses several currently hot topics into predictions for the future: "walking the talk," quality students, and using Schlechty's (1990) term for students, "knowledge workers." It explores the themes of student and teacher definitions of quality in order to determine whether there are relationships between language and action for quality within selected defined systems. Specifically, the study addresses the following five questions:

1. What are the preliminary categories for student and teacher definitions of quality schooling in selected rural North Carolina secondary schools?
2. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality schooling in the selected schools?
3. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality and norms, or recipes (Goodenough, 1981) and for outcomes in the selected schools?
4. Are there differences among the schools' contextual descriptors and the schools' definitions of quality education?
5. Do these differences, if any, support benchmarks for program evaluation?

These specific questions focus school-based operational perspectives on student and teacher definitions and language of quality schooling. Student and teacher variations, if any, in the language of quality, the descriptions and interpretations of difference between the language of quality, and the actions reflecting that quality may be useful for predicting success or failure of educational reformation outcomes in site-based choices and may also improve the chances of creating an arena for change that will contribute to a quality education for students.

Fullan quoted Sarason from the early 1970's: "Educational change depends upon what teachers do and think; it's as simple and as complex as that. It would all be so easy if we could legislate changes in thinking" (p.107). Foster (1986) noted that no one model

of change explains how or why organizations change (p.162) He described the layer-cake and the lawn-party models. Change is multilayered and interactive. Not all elements can be considered simultaneously. There is first-order and second-order change. A first-order structural alteration in a single school has a context, a baseline, and a predicted. Examples of first order changes would be changing the textbook for a course in a class or buying overhead projectors for each classroom in a building.

Second-order change digs deeper into the school regularities and norms. This change must also have both a shared vision for the future, and dissatisfaction with the present organizational arrangements. It probes the function of structures in schools to address future needs and the dissatisfaction with the current way of doing business during the school day. Reorganizing a six-period day into four periods with 90-minute classes is an example of second-order change in one of the study schools.

The gap between Argyris' "espoused theory-of-action" and theory-in-use" (quoted in Foster, p.156) must be reconciled. Change must be enacted, not just discussed and inspected. The assumption that changes will predictably fail is based upon unclear long-term goals and the subsequent lack of commitment to changes.

The root of school failure to transform dissatisfaction with the status quo into a shared vision of the future may be intrinsically bound to the lack of student views in the organizational vision. Student perceptions of change and its contribution to improvement

affect the outcome changes for quality schooling. If the alleged benefactors of school change are the students, what is their necessary role in selecting and electing changes?

Limited research on the discrepancies of language between students and the adults with whom they interact in secondary schools focuses upon the language-action differences and their predictive use in the determination of successful site-based educational changes. Research questions derived from this limitation are site-specific to build common language. The culture of each organization is the filter or "emic" context for the perceptions, language, and action of the teachers and the students (Gudykunst, 1988; Sarason, 1982). A framework of being "looped for life" through language, action, and predicted outcomes has guaranteed preservation of the past in the way things are currently done (Senge, p. 366). This framework has roots in socially shared cognition where "relationships have a strong reality of their own deriving from historical legacy of their existence over time." (Damon in Resnik, Levine & Teasley, 1991, pp. 384ff.) The anthropologically qualitative "emic-etic" distinction defines this research (Fetterman in Spindler, 1982, p.43ff). The "emic, or insider's view of reality in no way debates the knowledge that ethnography is a lifetime career, not a dissertation. (Wright, 1995). personal communication). This is but an opening crack at massive information about crucial questions about finding schools sick with an epidemic of quality education. This investigation spotlights the tentative language of quality for major

actors within a culturally mediated setting: the community of learners. It is heuristic and optimistic about what we say about what we want for and with our students.

The student voice is paramount to the outcomes of any educational reformation (Fullan, 1982, p. 147). Students, as the customers of educational organizations, are increasingly literate in the needs of the post-schooling world (Owens, 1994). The “native’s point of view” is an account of behavior and language *in situ* (Geertz, 1974 in Maxwell, p. 282). Students as consumers subjected to a media barrage are more worldly at an earlier point in their developmental progression than were their teachers. These “new teens” endure a “riskier passage” out of adolescence with less adult attention than their teachers had during their adolescent passage (Gelman, 1990).

The increasing poverty and minority demographics of American children, television, and the speed of communications for the Information Age and Knowledge Age are all responsible for a different kind of student. The impact of television on learning, reading, and hours of homework is part of an annual Gallup Poll on education in the nation. These different students may be temporarily disempowered in the models of management and pedagogy of the classroom, but economic and political pressures will prevail and alter the power imbalance (Keedy, 1992, p.19). The model that includes student perceptions of the school organization is emerging. Counter-culture students have been included in the literature, but

not yet in the technology age where media can re-invent the public perception of an institution as in the public perception of judicial system before and after the O.J. Simpson trial.

Student perceptions on quality education may differ across a number of variables. The students in different grade levels in our high schools may differ in perspectives of quality schooling. Gender and socio-economic status are other universal variables for discussion about educational outcomes. Sample size and demographics prevent an adequate inspection of grade level, gender or socio-economic differences in this study.

The teachers potentially differ on perceptions of quality in schooling from their students and from the parents in the community. Teachers' voices contain patterns for the discovery of behavioral regularities (Sarason, 1982) or recipes (Goodenough, 1981) required to comprehend the students' phenomenological meaning in our schools (Tesch, 1990). Re-setting the classroom norms is a cultural process (Keedy, 1992) prerequisite to reformation that must include the student perception. The degree of congruence between teacher and student perceptions of quality education is another point of inspection to develop common language categories.

The student as a vessel for knowledge, and as a passive recipient of adult knowledge and direction is a distinctly familiar model. The student as a quality knowledge worker in the Information Age (Knowledge Age) has no precedent in our secondary educational institutions. The student as an active consumer and

producer of services with a world view gained from media bombardment is not a comfortable entity for the teacher in the classroom. The transition from teacher as knowledge expert to teacher as facilitator of learning is just under way (McClure in Costa, Bellanca, Fogarty, 1992, p.131). Understanding the nature and degree of consistency of quality expectations between the teacher and the student in the school context is essential for future schooling architects. There is a necessity for examining classroom and school processes simultaneously to find what facilitates and hinders each and their contribution to overall school effectiveness (Good & Weinstein, 1986). This examination from the student perspective contains new elements for adult consideration and understanding as they move toward next-century schooling with last-century paradigms. Instead of the perpetuation of the way schooling has always been done, there may be another perspective: that of the students. The consideration of quality schooling as defined and enacted by the adults is predictably not the same as that of the students in that same context. To eliminate students from the discussion of change for quality in a specific school community is to guarantee the failure of that choice to improve a school. Students must develop a definition of and belief system for a quality education to assure continuous school improvement. Likewise, adults must acknowledge the elements of students' perceptions that are valid. It is essential to explore their current language and notions in school contexts to begin the process of amplifying the student voice. It is

necessary to counter-balance student perception with teacher perception in order to examine the language of quality education in the context of education outcomes that may benchmark evidence of a quality education.

Therefore, the following assumptions underlie this dissertation:

Quality schooling is an essential element for America's political and economic future.

A common vision for a quality education will not be legislated, since it is developed within a school community context.

Improvement is the driving force for change in each school.

School improvement is a building-by-building series of events that requires commitment by all stakeholders.

Today's students are different and disempowered because they are used to media-enhanced "fast-forward" pacing and their teachers are not.

The need for change must be responsive to student perceptions or there is at least a need to make the perceptions of students and teachers roughly congruent.

Methodology

There is a natural set of information about every public school. The examination of that information without prejudice is an unnatural act. To paraphrase Benjamin Disraeli, we blame, complain, and explain away that which does not fit personal biases about the outcomes of schooling. This is a naturalistic inquiry that combines quantitative and qualitative information about three specific schools to discover definitional patterns.

The "participant-observer" perspective is considered unique to social anthropology as a long-term method for yielding data (Ellen, 1984). This methodology, in a classic sense, is used in anthropological fieldwork in other cultures. Spindler (1982) translated the classic principles into *anthroethnography* for application in the study of schooling.

This study is rooted in the researcher's 17 years of working experience in the schools under investigation. Through training and experience as a teacher, as a school psychologist and as a system-level and school-based administrator in the same school system, the researcher's organizational roles and perspectives have transformed, yet remained focused upon students and their realities. As a vested participant observer immersed in protracted fieldwork, she believes that illumination of a theoretical issue can only arise from "subjective soaking" (Clammer in Ellen, 1984). That means, researching a lived experience.

In order to transform quantitative data into contextualized qualitative action, it is necessary to "name" such qualitative action.

One way is by developing specific interview questions to formally define the common language usage that quantifies the environment. Further, data for examination and for understanding of the larger issues in the field of study can be extracted. All qualitative information has a context (Tesch, 1990). In this case research in student voices is seen as a primary building block for successful school improvements. However, it is acknowledged that the dangers of personal, interpersonal, and organizational biases exist at every point during this investigation and reporting.

Nevertheless, the longitudinal numerical data describing student outcomes for each school and the comparisons of school climate measures from 1991 and 1994 for each school contributing to contextual frameworks for the schools are as unbiased as possible given the nature of standardized assessments, and changes in student populations and the researcher. Triangulation of school historical data, longitudinal climate comparisons, and student and teacher interview data verify contextual meanings for the actors and the observers.

By comparison of quantitative student performance and outcome data for each school at the same two points in time and an assessment of school climate in the same time frame, a framework is developed in which the interpretive analysis of teacher and student interviews is placed. This is a generative (Maxwell, 1992) research with the intention of contributing to the conceptual dialogue on benchmarks for improving school programs. It is intended to

diminish unwitting biases in a search for confirmation of the student language of quality in the schools.

Overview

Chapter II presents a review of the research and literature about quality, about language values, beliefs and actions, about rural schools, and about organizations and their emic or folk cultures, school climates, and adolescents.

Chapter III includes the specific schooling contexts and their historical perspectives and student outcomes. Survey data from 1991 and 1994 administrations of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) School Climate Survey are compared and discussed. Three-year patterns of school attendance and dropout rates and student scores from nationally standardized testing from statewide data collection systems frame the context for student and teacher interviews.

Data collection from interviews, and document reviews will add depth to quantified data. A computerized program assists in the structural analysis of language categories for teachers and students in their definitions for quality education.

Chapter IV presents the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data within the prescribed school contexts.

Chapter V summarizes the research data and presents conclusions in the context of the literature review and these specific schools to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE AND RESEARCH REVIEW

In a discussion of context and meaning and the differences between the ways the community and the school view successful and failing students, Concha, Delgado & Gaitan (Spindler, 1982) stated that “students are not failing, rather the system was failing the students” (pp. 93-4). Erlandson (1992) named the power of context as the essential bridge for understanding the gap between research and practice on meaning in organizations. He deferred to Lincoln and Guba to support naturalistic inquiry in place of the positivist, or quantitative, excesses of research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) discussed both quantitative and qualitative methods as vehicles to bring order and insight to the human experience through the search for patterns. However, both quantitative and qualitative methods of research explore patterns through different lenses. Glaser (in Darling-Hammond, 1994) framed this lens difference in a discussion about another set of differences: those between standardized testing and program evaluation. He used Senge’s (1990) frame of a learning organization. The shift in paradigms from one of controlling to one of learning was based in the overall future concern about educating all students, instead of setting a predestined

successful percentage.

In the context of this work four separate literature bodies contributed to the following assertions:

- 1) Similarities in given schools predict common descriptive student and teacher language for defining quality schooling.
- 2) Similarities and differences in quantifiable student outcomes relate to consistency between student and teacher descriptive language as evidence of “good” schools.
- 3) Differences in schools and their quality definitions in rural North Carolina occur among schools in the same local education unit.
- 4) Similarities in the meaning of language and definitions for quality schooling between students and teachers are keys to successful school improvement efforts.

The four components of the literature to be reviewed are school culture and climate, rural schools, adolescents, and quality education. Each component contains background elements for this contextual discussion. The relevant bodies of effective schooling literature and recent research set the stage for individual school analysis and diagnosis. Setting and context are crucial to

understanding shared meanings necessary for school reform (Sarason, 1982; Willower, 1991).

Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) reviewed eight limitations on current schooling effects research from Good and Brophy: a) failure to address a wider range of variables on how schools vary quantitatively and qualitatively; b) focus on student testing achievement only; c) lack of stability over time; d) use of multiple criteria; e) attention to context limitations; f) lack of focus on participants' reactions and perceptions of specific schooling events; g) unclear conceptualization and operationalization of school effects; and h) failure to disentangle effects.

Even popular literature contains seeds of failure to communicate about the meaning of schooling effects and hence, improvements. *U.S. News & World Report* (January, 1993) outlined nine reforms to revolutionize American education to a level beyond the "rising tide of mediocrity" proclaimed in *A Nation at Risk* (1983). Those reforms were teachers as entrepreneurs; slashing the bureaucracy; training in the classroom; less-is-more curriculum; testing student performance; incentives for good teaching; technology for learning; choice and competition; and stretching the year. Obstacles to each of these innovations were complacency, local control, lack of incentives and special interests. Financial barriers were not part of the discussion.

The enumeration of themes and barriers to change for implementing those themes was commonly perceived as the reason

change was a “problem,” not only for Sarason but for each school. The language of change was separate from the people in the organization as well as their daily actions.

School Culture and Climate

School Culture

Sarason (1971) pointed out that our cultural blindness prevents us from seeing the school structures that preserve the institution. Political approaches answer questions about power and its distribution within the organization. Structural approaches examine boundaries and communications. Human resource approaches examine the players and their needs within the organization. The symbolic approach captures visionary stories and tacit assumptions about the organization. No single approach finds all the problems nor all the answers to questions about an organization and its meanings. The dynamic interaction within an organization in a context is much like a thumbprint: unique, individual, and captured in the lens of time.

Although the languages of organizational culture and climate appear to be interchangeable, they are not (Allen, 1992). School culture and school climate are applied extensively and interchangeably in the restructuring and reformation literature as

levers to cause change (Fullan & Miles, 1992). School culture is that unique thumbprint of the organization, while school climate is the way the teachers, the administrators, the parents, and the students feel about their socially constructed way of school life (Furtwengler, 1986). School culture is an identification of how it is. School climate is the way the players feel about how it is.

Hofstede (1990) named four dimensions of organizational culture that explains 73% of the variance between international business companies. Each of the four dimensions carries a specific meaning within a business organization: power distance, avoidance uncertainty, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity. The first two, power distance and avoidance uncertainty, are especially significant in the analysis of schools with teachers and pupils as necessary players for restructuring to improve student outcomes. The necessity for change --that is, to restructure and reform has seeped into the fabric of our schools since 1983 when the "rising tide of mediocrity" became part of our language. The discussion of educational change and reformation prior to 1983 is not germane to this study. In Hofstede's study, power distance defines the extent to which less powerful members of organizations accept that power was distributed unequally. Avoidance uncertainty is the extent to which people are threatened by ambiguity and have created institutional beliefs to avoid it in their daily work.

A second point in the distinction between culture and climate was the differences in practices among people who hold the same

cultural values. People in varying roles in the school setting may have the same institutional beliefs, although their behavioral regularities, or daily actions, reflect patterns that are inconsistent with that belief.

The popular notion that culture as a manipulable variable can cause significant organizational change, and therefore, improved student outcomes in our schools is pervasive, though not consistently defined, or consistently proven effective. These notions of culture and their governing metaphors (school as a factory, as a garden, as a hothouse, as a prison, as a family, as a war zone) are abundant in the literature as the search for consistently improved student outcomes becomes a common mission (Schlechy & Joslin in Lieberman, 1988).

The school as a "community of leaders or learners" was one of the newer metaphors (Barth, 1988; Sarason, 1982; Comer, 1993) that weaves the language of schooling into a coherent pattern of improvement or continuous successes. That continuous success pattern was not evident in the origin of public schooling. The school as an *organic* learning institution follows a shift in focus from inputs to outcomes or results. The paradigm shift from the individual to the organization, from teaching to learning, and from the actors in the organization to the relationships between the actors and the organization pay homage not only to the operating culture, but also to the contextual nature of all human social interactions. Senge brought organizational systems thinking to the best seller list

(1990). He noted that today's problems come from yesterday's "solutions" when those solutions merely shift the problem to another part of the same system (pp. 57-58). The shift from reacting to the present to a system of creating the future was a necessary shift of mind for business and for education (p.69).

Henry (1963) and Sarason (1971) brought school and culture into education reformation long ago. The "problem of change," however, remains as it was in these earlier works: changing behavior by substituting one *quick fix* or *silver bullet*, or, a *here we go again*, or *someone else's idea*, from *out there* to what we do here in our daily school world, does not work. If the ways in which we look, feel, do, and think remain the same, no changes and improvements occur (Sarason, pp. 215; 236). The qualities of the environment, the interrelationships between the organizational players and the mutuality of productive learning often exist as unarticulated givens within our schools (Weinstein, 1990). These preserve the organization in its current operation. A preventive dialogue about the articulated and the operational cultures that directly sustains changes in schooling was not usual in the literature. It is now fairly common.

Anthropology makes certain distinctions about culture that assist in understanding the school culture crucible that prevents change. Goodenough (1981, p. 62) defined culture as the product of human learning. He conceptualized the content of human cultural learning or "cultural capital" (Foster, p. 97) as follows:

1. The ways in which people organize their experience of the real world
2. The structure as a system of cause and effect relationships...the propositions and beliefs by which they explain events
3. The ways in which experiences are organized in hierarchies of preferences
4. The ways in which principles of actions and recipes are organized for accomplishing particular future ends

"Culture, then, consists of standards for deciding what was, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it" (Goodenough, 1963, 1981). These standards define the "way we do things around" our schools (Bower in Bolman & Deal, 1991, p.268). They define the alternative probe from Goffman (1959): "What is *really* going on here?"

The operating culture for an occasion necessitated individuals' participating in the occasion to make different action selections in different settings. If all of us remained acculturated to the same operational frame, culture would not be a governing principle for organizational development. No choices would be necessary, since we would all be governed by the same standards of behavior in the

socially constructed settings called school.

Every organization develops distinctive beliefs and patterns over time (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The symbolism within an organization is defined in its myths, stories, rituals, and ceremonies. This symbolic frame of reference has been a lever to change our schooling organizations. The choice to de-emphasize the political, structural, and the human resource frames of reference is deliberate given our failure to adapt schools to the changes necessary for accommodating the 21st century. The discussions about school cultures are no different. The political, structural, and the human resource frames have spanned this entire century as potential levers for change, and schools have not improved educational outcomes with a common language of agreement about improvement. The symbolic frame was the newest lever in a series of trial-and-error attempts to find the handle for improvement in schools.

Two patterns of belief persist in American school culture that ensure failed attempts at changing schools for improved student outcomes. These patterns exist in spite of recent attention to the need to change daily instructional practices (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p.238) to meet the demands of the “new learners” in our classrooms. The patterns are those of recitation teaching and teacher autonomy (Arends in Wyner, 1991, p. 204). Recitation teaching contains teacher talk, student response, and teacher comments on student response within a tight pattern of teacher control. This pattern has been alive in rural schools. The second

pattern places a lone teacher in a single classroom with unlimited decision-making and little external intervention within those four walls. The autonomy norm and the "hands-off" norm cannot drive a school where the current context creates a need for group participatory decision-making. This is currently a norm in certain schools.

Systematic changes from recitation teaching to inquiry teaching, with its reduced emphasis on teacher talk and the systematic changes from teacher autonomy to teacher collaboration are necessary for 21st-century schooling (Holtzman,1992). No wide-scale changes in daily instructional practices have been evident, since our teachers tend to continue in the patterns learned in their initial training and from their own personal experience. "Cultures occur to the extent that teachers and students *live them.*" (McLaren in Wyner, 1991, p.233). They do not impose and do not exist apart from their meaning. Sarason's early assertions about the "problem of change" and school cultures, still cause inspecting school culture and change nearly three decades later to determine what needs to be "fixed" to improve what our students know and can do when they are finished with public schooling. Schlechty (1990) reminds us that a look to the past for the good way ignores the structure-culture relationship. We must teach our students for the emerging and unknown social and economic realities of the 21st century.

Peters and Waterman (1982, p.239) described covenantal relationships based upon "shared commitments to ideals, values and

goals” when they discussed the enemy of excellence that is lurking in the minute-to-minute behavior and language of our daily activities. When Brubaker (1992) noted that the adult’s passion for learning is at the center of creative leadership process in schooling rhetoric, he bridged the gap in goals between the adults and students for a learning organization.

School Climate

While school climate is a variable so institutionalized that evidence of a "good" climate is part of regional accreditation processes, it is a more elusive portion of the defining interactions within each school (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1992). School climate was its "atmosphere for learning" (Howard, Howell & Brainard, 1987, p. 1) Good climate would be evidenced by the following factors:

1. continuous academic and social growth
2. respect
3. trust
4. high morale
5. cohesiveness
6. opportunities for input
7. school renewal
8. caring (p.7)

School climate is a finger in the wind of the persistent and pervasive school culture. School climate ebbs and flows in the

daily practices defined by the American public school culture. Henry (1963, p. 283) noted that "school was an institution for drilling children in cultural orientations." Raising a finger to test the school climate becomes a sampling of those cultural orientations to define our daily existence in this society.

Halderson, Kelley, Keefe, and Berge (1989, p. ix) summarized the following concerns about assessing and improving school climate for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP):

1. Measures of climate are unclear and vague.
2. Measures of climate were usually based upon a single stakeholder group.
3. Measures popular with practitioners lacked psychometric validation.
4. Positive school climate was assumed to be indicative of positive student learning outcomes.

They based their instrumentation upon the following assumptions: a) the building was the proper level for analysis of school climate; b) perceptions of climate, not outcome measures, are influencing factors for student outcomes; and c) cognitive, affective, and psychomotor student outcomes and school cost effectiveness are appropriate measures of school efficacy and efficiency.

The instrument subsequently developed compared what most

people in a specific group think with what most people think about their school. The groups were students, parents, teachers and community members. The thoughts for each role group were reported in ten categories. Each respondent answered all items on a five-point Likert scale with a sixth category called Don't Know. Respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed with 54 statements.

Table 1
Subscales of NASSP Instrumentation

Scale Name	# Items	Perceptions
1. Teacher/Student Relationships	12	Quality of interpersonal & professional relationships
2. Security & Maintenance	7	Quality of maintenance & degree of security
3. Administration	6	Administrative communication with different role groups & setting high standards
4. Student Academic Orientation	4	Student attention to task & concern for achievement
5. Student Behavioral Values	3	Student self discipline & tolerance
6. Guidance	4	Quality of guidance & counseling services
7. Student-Peer Relationships	4	Students' care, concern, respect & mutual cooperation
8. Parents/Community-School Relationships	4	Amount & quality of parent & community involvement
9. Instructional Management	7	Efficiency & effectiveness of classroom time
10. Student Activities	4	Opportunities for participation in school-sponsored activities

The average internal consistency measure for the NASSP School Climate survey was .81.

Since schools are presumed responsible for the nature and quality of student outcomes, and since teachers and their classroom environments determine that quality, the consistency in student and

teacher perceptions of school climate is presumed essential for defining quality schooling. The definition of quality education is presumed necessary to its creation school-by-school.

Rural Schools

Rural schools educate one-third of American youth. Attention is now being focused upon rural schools and educational reformation efforts there (Bobbett, Henry, & French, 1991), especially with the implementation of technology. Rural schools have an edge on current trends in education reformation with established histories of site-based management as well as with technology implementation when compared to urban and suburban schools. Rural schools have problems with less experienced teachers and the lack of qualified personnel in sciences and second languages (Lewis, 1992). Buildings tend to be substandard and rural teachers have more instructional preparations during the school day. Ultimately, more post-secondary students leave for the economic opportunities of metropolitan areas than stay in rural areas. Therefore, quality rural education is as necessary to our future as are the urban pictures we constantly experience (Lewis, 1992).

A description of rural America today is difficult. Rural America is more diverse than it was at the beginning of public schooling in the early 20th century. Data must now be disaggregated to analyze rural

Maine in comparison to the rural delta South, for example. So vast are differences in geography, population, economics, and culture, that comparisons are dubious. The two major common characteristics of rural schools and rural school districts are low population density and distance from metropolitan areas; nevertheless, among the states a high degree of variability exists in number and proportion of rural schools (Stern, 1994, p. 3). Stern (p. 53) quoting Edington & Koehler (1987) noted that rural education has often been discussed as a deficit model of instruction from which relatively low outcomes can be expected. Most data do not support this view (Stern, p.53). National assessments rank rural student achievement extremely high in comparison to the national averages.

Levine & Lezotte(1990) noted the paucity of research on unusually effective rural schools, but, they concluded that their correlates for effective schools were no different for rural than for urban schools. Bobbett (1991) reviewed the lack of formal research into the "goodness" or quality in rural Appalachian schools in Kentucky and Tennessee. His comparison of 6 Appalachian schools to 16 composite indicators of goodness (See Figure 1) combined data from adult interviews, two formal inventories-- one for climate and one for organizational characteristics, a school effectiveness inventory, and Research by Wandering Around (RBWA). The finding of positive and caring adult relationships with students was named as a characteristic of these good rural schools.

When Bobbett, French, and Henry (1990) measured

educational perceptions of students, teachers, and business leaders in 9 Kentucky and 12 Tennessee "good" school districts , they found a wide range in performance rankings between participant groups in spite of the similarity between the performance indicators (e.g. ACT, dropout rates) for the schools. The conclusion that each participant group evaluated its school's strengths and weaknesses differently was especially noteworthy since students in both states significantly differed from teachers and from business leaders in academic and personal expectations for performance. The conclusion that there are significantly different educational values between these two states and among the participants within each state raised several questions, not the least of which was, "Are student expectations for quality schoolwork more related to the peer culture or to the media than to expectations of the teachers and other visible community adults?" Owens (1994) investigated students as co-constructors of

Table 2
Indicators of School "Goodness" (Bobbett, Henry & French, 1991)

A. SCHOOL CLIMATE	
1.	have safe orderly climate
2.	have positive caring relations with students
3.	have positive relations with outside constituencies
4.	have clear standards of conduct
B. MISSION/GOALS	
5.	have a clear mission and goals
6.	have a shared sense of purpose
7.	engage in regular evaluation of students and school programs
C. LEADERSHIP	
8.	have strong instructional leadership
9.	have good human relations
10.	use shared decision-making, problem-solving, and program planning
11.	promote teacher autonomy and continuous growth and renewal
D. INSTRUCTION	
12.	emphasize effective instruction
13.	utilize variety in instruction
14.	use facilities and resources effectively
15.	promote independent learning
16.	use positive reinforcement

language in context to support the sparse set of literature on Virginia high school student-generated views of schooling.

Stern (1994) edited the OERI report on "The Condition of Education in Rural Schools" to describe a full range of data about the rural segment of school-aged students. Nationally, 28% of regular

public schools and 16.69% of school aged students are rural. North Carolina counted 34.29% of their schools and 28.45% of school students as rural in 1991-92. About 26% of school systems in the state are classified as rural.

The Stern report identifies eight current problems impacting rural education (p.69): the undermining of stable rural communities by emigration; poverty and a surge in single-parent families; a decline in resource capacity coupled with an increase in service need; a crisis in school finance for property-poor districts; multiple responsibilities and preparations for teaching and administrative staff; facility repair and replacement needs; limited opportunities for alternative curricula and advanced courses; lower student aspirations; and the alarming rate of emigration by the more educated rural community members. The "identified successes" of rural communities are also enumerated: the positive link between the school and the community; the increasing educational level of the people; the relationship between learning outcomes (e.g., parent education & social circumstances) rather than community type; and the pervasive existence of a basic curriculum in spite of geography. Teddlie and Stringfield (1993, p. 111) noted that the fundamental conservatism of rural Louisiana schools buffered them from the worst educational fads, but also appeared to block out some of the more thoughtful movements. They concluded that rural schools had a more reflective and even-paced approach to educational changes so that academics made sense to students.

Rural student access to technology may predictably homogenize standards for school success, but does it set standards in the values and practices of rural schools? Combs (1995, p.19) stated that “when parents and teachers begin to treat electronic media as a serious part of children’s culture and learning rather than mindless entertainment, psychologists and media scholars agree(d) that the negative influences can be tempered...”

These variables notwithstanding, limited systematic data exist about a significant portion of our potential and future workforce: the school-aged rural student. If the southern rural student will compose over a quarter of our 21st century workforce, what is their perception of the quality of education they are receiving to compete in the workforce of a world society?

Elam, Rose, and Gallup (1993) in *The 25th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* reported answers to these questions about fiscal support and the quality of public schools in poor communities:

The quality of public schools varies greatly from community to community and from state to state because of differences in the amount of taxes taken in to support the schools. Do you think more should be done to improve the quality of public schools in poorer states and in the poorer communities or not?

Ninety percent of the people polled in 1993 responded yes to this question. The premise that inequality in educational quality was the result of uneven funding has more support now than in the 1989

survey where 83% of the respondents agreed. Poverty was associated with rural education. Even with a lack of consensus on the definition of quality education, the public was willing to pay to achieve it.

Harris & Wagner (1993) surveyed teachers across the United States about multiple school-related issues. One question asked teachers to rate the quality of education in their schools. The percentage of teachers rating schools excellent increased from 1984 (42%) to 1993 (58%). Only 41% of small town and rural school teachers rated their schools excellent compared to 55% suburban, 45% urban and 34% big central cities. However, the real question is and will be ... does the perception of an excellent school mean a quality education? What are we asking about?

Adolescents

Schwartz (1991) in a special edition of the popular magazine *Newsweek* identified four broad truths about students today that sounded like clichés to him. He called them clichés because of their widespread veracity:

1. Kids seem to get smarter all the time.
2. Kids grow up too fast these days.
3. Kids think we're made of money.

4. Kids today think they are going to change the world.

He notes that television and electronic opportunities provide today's students with a window on the whole world of woes and wonders. These kids come to schools where the adults may work differently than the those in the electronic world.

The key relationship in a school has always been between the teacher and the student (Cooper, 1988, p. 47). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) published *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. The report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents called attention to the need for educational reformation in early adolescent programs. The roles of parents, teachers, and the community each occupy prominent positions in an educational focus for the future. In this report, students who are treated as objects rather than players cannot create communities for learning. "A volatile mismatch exists between the organization and the curriculum...and the intellectual, emotional and interpersonal needs of young adolescents" (Carnegie, p.32). The very nature of the constant shifting in peer groups and teachers during a school day creates barriers to forming close, caring relationships with adults and necessary stable peer groups. Levine & Lezotte (1990) commented that elementary school research and practices cannot anticipate unusual effectiveness in secondary schools because they are generally larger, more complex and more diffuse to goals. Many of the characteristics of effective elementary

schools do not translate into secondary education structures (for example: time-on-task) because of the structural and power differences in the roles of elementary and high school students. A significant body of current secondary education improvement literature focuses upon “at-risk” students and “alternative educational programs” rather than outlining a comprehensive total school program (Levine & Lezotte, 1990, p.64).

In an anthropological study of male and female adolescents in over 170 societies, Schlegel and Barry (1991) reported that one of the most important avenues to success in modern society was schooling (p. 177). In that same text, they also noted that schooling was an important means of transmitting adult skills in an industrialized society (p.13). The issue of adolescent training for adult life and proving one’s future worth to the adult community was common to all societies.

However, the metaphor of the student as the client or customer is new to our society and unheard of in the majority of societies. If there was a modern or industrialized adolescent culture, it was largely manipulated by adults who provide what they believe adolescents will buy. Modernizing societies have common traditions grounded in an educational system of Western humanistic and scientific thought. The influence of the peer culture was also a function of that Western cultural tradition that has “for better or worse...become the global culture, more than any other competing values or set of knowledge” (Schlegel & Barry, p. 157-181). The

media play an increasing role in homogenizing adolescent culture.

Odney and Brendtro (1992) categorized schools into “Dominator” or “Partnership” models. The dominator model is based on the patriarchal Western culture and does not contain the prerequisites for empowering schools. Students are, in fact, “silenced” in many ways. The long-standing beliefs that certain school structures limit student effort and student achievement with peer pressure and school policies preserve the current paradigm and discourage student empowerment (US Department of Education, 1992). Moses (1992), in an article about motivation as a neglected factor in educational reform, argued that students settle for mediocre performance because little is expected of them.

Another perspective on the student role in the school organization was ascribed to Sizer (in Derany & Sykes, 1988). He identified the “conspiracy of the least” that describes teacher behavior that reveals just enough to students about the organization to allow them to “get by.” The specific features that obstruct massive student success in schools are number of students, the imperative for order, dependence on textbooks, the accountability system, the influence of tests, and the press for basic skills. Willower (1991) noted that the organizational characteristics of schools have stacked the deck against reform (p. 309), as well as against the students’ active and cooperative participation. Maehr (1992) called for a transformation of school culture to improve student motivation. Task-focused students versus ability-focused students tend to

continue an interest in schooling and learning even after the completion of formal education.

“The search for ‘good’ schools was elusive and disappointing if by ‘goodness’ we mean something close to perfection...the search was instead for ‘good enough’ schools” (Lightfoot, 1983, p.309ff). A passion for institutional order and control without the necessary attention to adolescent roles demonstrates a failure to develop Goffman’s “encompassing tendencies” to inspire loyalty. Students will not take psychological hold for building teacher-pupil relationships with the other key players: teachers (p. 322). The characterization of adolescents in high school inspired by the immediacy and practicality of work, rather than with emphasis on adventure and intrigue of intellectual play continues today (p. 368).

Walberg reports in Haas (1992) that rural student aspirations have changed. Fifty percent of American adolescents intend to go to college; a quarter intend to work and attend college part-time and about 10% intend to work full-time after high school graduation. Rural youth in contrast to urban youth felt that their parents were more supportive of their taking full-time jobs, attending trade schools or entering the military than attending college. These lower educational aspirations accompanied lower values for simply making a good income and higher values on secure jobs and friendships. The essence of this research supported the whole community effort to help youth realize aspirations.

Quality Education

Pirsig (1974/1981) stated that "Quality was a characteristic of thought and statement that was recognized by a nonthinking process. Because definitions are a product of rigid, formal thinking, quality cannot be defined" (p. 184-5). He further identified quality as a cleavage word (p.196). The two-part dilemma of quality as both objective or subjective was further complicated by describing quality not as a thing, but as an *event* (p.215). Pirsig called his book a "culture-bearer." A culture-bearing book challenges cultural value assumptions...at a time when the culture is changing in favor of the challenge (p.376). His writing about ancient Greek perspectives on perceptions of reality contained presently relevant dichotomies: grade-motivated versus knowledge-motivated students; external pushes to learn versus internal pushes to learn (p.176).

Quality has followed the path from business and marketing to education through Total Quality Management (TQM) based upon Deming's Fourteen Points. There is little research base for TQM efficacy in either business or education, although there are certainly disciples (AASA, 1991). Glasser (1990) had already applied a version of quality to his conception of schools in 'lead-management,' after concluding it is "safe to say that those who manage our schools do not manage for quality and that most teachers do not even think of quality when they address the students in their classes"(p. 94). Pirsig

(1974) defined quality within the temporal and amid all the relationships of the present. Does a quality concept have any place in the behavioral regularities for rural public high schools? Deming and Glasser are more recent contributors to the literature on quality (Glasser, 1990; Schmoker & Wilson, 1993). Deming was a statistician who defined a “new” theory of management, Total Quality Management; Glasser was a who authored a “new” version of mental health treatment, reality therapy. Both theoretical foundations commonly support educational foundations to change public schools to include all the players in the setting.

Schmoker & Wilson (1993) enumerated the most important of Deming’s 14 points as they apply to schools (p.22-3):

1. A democratic, collegial atmosphere should prevail in schools...All decisions and practices should be information-driven; facts, reasoning and evidence, not power or authority or personality, should determine practice and govern decision-making.
2. Management should eliminate threat, encourage continuous improvement, and recognize and use the expertise that employees have acquired in their jobs.
3. Improvement must become an obsession that employees thrive on.

They further noted, as did Smith and Andrews (1987; 1989), that “business-as-usual schooling has not made academic achievement a priority.” Peel (1994) reported on research conducted by Schlechty

and the Center for Leadership in School Reform in North Carolina in which students responded to structured interviews about characteristics of quality work. This interview process gathered information about teacher control over the quality of work they give students to do. The characteristics of this adult-defined quality work are as follows: clearly articulated and compelling standards; protection from adverse consequences for initial failures, affirmation of performance, opportunities to affiliate with others, novelty, choice, authenticity, and substance.

Glasser (1990) applied Deming's quality management theory to the students and how they are managed within schools, not just how the adult employees are managed. Glasser described schooling as boring from the student perspective (p. 7). He sees schooling as a top-down ripple of coercion to improve test scores. His non-coercive lead-management asks workers to inspect or evaluate their own work for quality (pp. 23 ff.). There has been little evidence of this self-evaluation for quality in our current program evaluation or accountability systems (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993).

The state of Kentucky legislated an "adequate" education in an "efficient" system. The seven categories for adequate education are communication skills; knowledge to make economic, social and political choices; understanding of government processes; physical and mental self-awareness; sufficient grounding in the arts to appreciate one's heritage; preparation for life's work; and sufficient skills to enable Kentucky's students to compete favorably with

students from other states (Brannan & Minoroni, 1993). In defining an efficient system, Kentucky views these seven strands for an adequate education as a constitutional right.

North Carolina, a sister southern state, sets the floor for education with a statewide minimum Standard Course of Study (SCS) legislated in the Basic Education Program (BEP) (1984). The call for a quality educational system was absent from this legislated equity, or adequacy. Minimally acceptable fiscal resources are evident in both states. However, the very act of setting a floor for opportunities and funding has contributed to a cry for excellence and national standards by which to assess that excellence.

Wilson and Rossman (1993) combined quantitative and qualitative data to examine high school responses to state curriculum reform generated by this education legislation. Their framework for reform has a technical, political, cultural and moral dimension (p. 200). Statewide mandates such as those in Kentucky and North Carolina are essentially the first step on a road to develop schools as partners in experimentation and innovation.

Roueche, Baker, Mullin, and Boy (1986) presented an integrated model of excellent schools that places the excellence axis on the effort, motivation and performance of the students. The integrated model places the excellence themes with effective principals and teaching in a school climate that includes order, purpose, and coherence; student-centeredness; efficiency and objectivity; optimism and organizational health. The model requires

an organizational synergy that embraces its main actors, the teachers and the students, and emphasizes quality measured by these student outcomes: percentage of students attending some form of post-secondary training; number receiving scholarships; number competing in academics; percentage of dropouts and student performance on standardized measures.

Willms (1992) discussed school performance monitoring as both: 1) compliance monitoring and 2) diagnostic monitoring. He pointed out that the input-output model upon which these types of monitoring are based was insufficient. School processes were also necessary. Willms recommended the following guidelines for developing a performance monitoring system (p. 36-37):

1. Include inputs, process and outcomes.
2. Include aspects at several levels of the school system: pupil, family, neighborhood, classroom, school, district, and community.
3. Relate school performance to processes associated with school organization and teaching practices.
4. Prefer measures of growth to measures of status.
5. Use longitudinal assessment of schools.

Willms (1992) advocated the identification of schooling processes to help teachers and administrators understand how the system operates (p.66). He acknowledged that the systematic inspection of any school cannot be done under "a model for all seasons --a model

that would apply to all schools in all communities at all times” (p.65). The goal was to provide a balanced picture across Tagiuri’s constructs of ecology, milieu, social system, and culture at selected levels of measurement: student, class, and school (p.68). He concluded that a monitoring system must be sensitive to the goals of the school and the particular qualities that the administration and the teachers want to influence (p. 90). When Senge (1990) defined quality in a business organization, he meant “all things that matter to the customer...disgruntled customers go elsewhere...or...if they can’t...they stop asking for what they can’t have” (p. 124). The disgruntled public school customer does not yet have the same choice about schooling.

The effective schools “movement” has undergone several stages according to Levine & Lezotte (p. 71): 1) identification of effective schools; 2) description of the more effective schools; 3) development of guidelines and approaches for improving school effectiveness; and 4) addressing the larger organizational context for the single school. We are currently in the fourth stage. They held that the necessary school-by-school change process succeeds and is sustained in the larger district context. The conclusion that technical changes must be coupled with political and cultural changes addresses the very heart of where we are not: quality education defined by whom and for whom?

Taking national steps to design an indicator system for quality mathematics and science education was necessary to address

positive, proactive curricular reformation. These indicators that addressed national trends, state-by-state trends, emerging problems that linked teachers and curricula to achievement, and to the ability to monitor for inputs, processes and outputs were hallmarks of those standards (Steps, 1991). Addressing national, state, or local sets of standards is incumbent upon schools to create common and cohesive purpose for learning and language for quality education.

Resnick & Nolan (1995, p. 9) named what could be the next stage of transformation for successful school improvement: the coherent school. Lezotte's language for effective schools may be transformed into a common language for coherent schools. Bobbett et al.'s (1991) Indicators of Goodness identified 16 components, one of which was a shared sense of purpose (Table 2). Although Resnick & Nolan were discussing high curricular academic standards as prerequisite to elements for coherent schooling, instruction was only one of four Bobbett areas of required elements for good schools. The necessity to focus upon not only customer, or student, satisfaction, but also on continuous improvement is a foundation for the 21st century education paradigm. The Resnick & Nolan coherent school was in an international context: the United States in comparison to France, Japan, and other countries. While Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) reminded us that schooling-effects research was essentially oversimplified and out of context regardless of national or international comparisons, improving schooling effects will increasingly drive decision-making about school efficacy.

In another part of our current context, Giroux (1994, p.301) repeated the mantra that our school consumer stakeholders, the students, are different from their teachers:

Contemporary youth increasingly rely less on the technology and culture of the book to construct and confirm their identities; instead they are faced with the task of finding their way through a decentered cultural landscape no longer caught in the grip of a technology of print, closed narrative structures, or certitude of a secure economic future.

This decentered cultural landscape includes the ability to sign on to nationwide computer networks to research databases and read information about education and other topics in forums that are being re-created on a daily basis. One day in 1995 a consumer telecommunications service, *America On-Line*®, listed over 150 sources for information about quality education. There was even a folder to participate in national interactive discussion about Total Quality Management (TQM) in schools on one Education Bulletin Board. This instant access to an evolving national and international connection with educational opportunities cannot be ignored in defining local school quality. However, school quality will always be a local issue if the definition of quality education resides in this school, in this program, with these students and these teachers.

Summary

Literature addressing school culture and climate, rural schools, adolescents, and quality education provide context for school-by-school analysis in this study. School climate information is available to make some predictions about school culture. Since rural schools contain unique societal characteristics that reflect a cautious resistance to rapid and superficial change, the adolescent as customer rather than product represents a significant change in perspective in a cautious culture. This change in perspective for the student is necessary because of media exposure and current failure to ordain the adolescent as a player in the organization. Also, quality schooling subscribes to the student-as-customer model. The teacher needs to learn language as a noncoercive director of learning and a lead-manager for quality.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND CONTEXT

Schools exist within local communities and as one part of a whole district system. They are multidimensional, loosely linked systems in themselves that focus upon student outcomes as an indicator of efficacy (Weick, in Sergiovanni & Moore, 1992, p.219). The assumption that no school exists outside its unique web of community, constituency and history is not new (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). The school as the unit of analysis for equity or excellence is meaningful, especially within a context (Willms, 1992).

The school system for this study issued directives for each school to begin individual school improvement planning as indicated by the statewide initiatives of Lezotte's Effective Schools Model in North Carolina in 1989. A first-time legislated individual school accountability process also inspired attention to individual school efficacy. The effort to "raise standards" and to improve student outcomes preoccupies many Southern states, since they rate low; and since national ratings are generally anchored in quantitative measures of student achievement and in funding issues. (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1993). North Carolina's efforts to raise standards began in earnest with Senate Bill 2 in 1989. The current School Improvement and Accountability Act of 1992 is a modification of the

initiatives begun in 1989 (§G.S. 115C-238). .

North Carolina Performance Based Accountability legislation was in its first revision and second three-year cycle in 1994. The tightening of links among the school, the system and the state through accountability was in opposition to the philosophy of the site-based decision-making model where those closest to the customer make decisions to improve programs (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Peters, 1987). School assessment programs are now directly related to additional bonus packages that rest upon the "continuous improvement" in Lezotte's and the TQM model in the quality assurance movement of the business world. The school as a loose organization keeps units of analysis separate and apart, but embedded in systems that may have little or no effect upon each other. Local school improvement initiatives may therefore be perceived as mandated opportunities to change the status quo and to improve student outcomes in individual schools.

In this spirit of restructuring to accommodate local and state accountability efforts, each of three rural North Carolina high schools in the system under study embarked upon data collection and analysis from multiple sources for diagnostic and planning purposes in the 1989-90 school year. This study was designed to examine "snapshots" of these three high schools in 1991 and again in 1994. The snapshots include comparisons of historical quantitative percentages, results from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) School Climate survey instrument, and

qualitative interview analysis from random samples of teachers and students in each of the schools.

Population and Sample

In 1991-92 the school systems in North Carolina contained 25.56% rural districts (Stern, 1994, p.82). The local education agency (LEA) under study was designated as a mid-sized rural system with 9,700 students in 21 schools, four of which are high schools (May, 1994). The geography of the county was piedmont to the crest of the Blue Ridge mountains with the seventh largest square mileage of the 100 North Carolina counties (752 square miles). The local economy was mainly agricultural, producing poultry and beef. Local industries include low paying production: chicken packing and mirror production as well as corporate headquarters for a national hardware chain and two international mirror companies.

The county also has a rich history of illegal enterprise. During the Prohibition era it was the "liquor making capital of the world," and in recent years it was in the top five North Carolina counties for marijuana as a cash crop. A National Association of Stock Car Automobile Racers (NASCAR) racing hero still makes his home and business headquarters in the county as a result of the boot-legging legacy. During each of the three years of this study, the school

system ranked in the top five systems in the state for the greatest percentage of drop-outs from public schools. During each of the three years of the study, the county also ranked among the top five counties for the most miles of unpaved roads, a classic indicator of poverty.

Private schools and home schooling served less than one percent of the potential student population. Total student membership in the LEA has declined approximately 700 students since the initial data collection during the 1990-91 school year. The minority population, approximately 6% of the school age students, was stable from 1991 to 1994 with a minor decrease in African-Americans offset by a 15% increase in Hispanic-American students. The 1980 to 1990 census data confirms a county-wide trend toward a "graying" or retirement population.

Rural Appalachia traditionally placed a low value on formal education since its economic base consisted of agricultural and low-skill career opportunities. This county was no exception to that tradition, and the anti-intellectualism common to the rural South still prevails (Stern, 1994). An exodus of corporate middle management jobs from the county to metropolitan areas of the state due to mergers, transportation, and available work opportunities has raised concern about the quality of education within the local school system. Poverty, as well as a low value upon formal schooling, is part of the system fabric.

Census data (1990) from the statewide annual Report Card

showed the following comparisons between this school system and the state:

Table 3
Comparison of State and LEA Populations

	<u>State</u>	<u>System</u>
Percentage of Working Mothers	76.5%	78.5%
Percentage of adults with no high school diploma	30.0%	45.9%
Percentage of adults with some post high school education	41.0%	27.2%
Percentage of single parent families	26.7%	19.9%
Per-capita family income	\$12650	\$10755

Information for this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were derived from 1) comparisons of the College Boards' s Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and Advanced Placement Tests (AP), attendance and dropout rates, and percentage of students earning five units of credit during the school year, and 2) effect sizes from the NASSP School Climate Survey. Qualitative data were derived from interview attribute analysis. School participation in the study was determined by which of the four high schools had complete sets from the three data

sources. Three of the four high schools participated in both the School Climate Survey and the teacher and student interviews and, therefore these three schools became the subjects of this study. The following descriptions for each school contain information from the 1990-91 school year unless otherwise noted.

School 1 is located on 29 acres that serves the eastern part of county school system. Approximately seventy-five percent of the land is farmland. Families worked in local textile, poultry and wood product industries or on the family-owned farm. The farm products were poultry, beef, tobacco and grain. This is a stable family community of West European descent with the church and school as predominant cultural centers. The local community college is approximately 20 miles away. The 8 school campus buildings housed 475 students in grades 9 through 12 at the end of the 1990-91 school year. The school building construction dates from 1955 to 1987.

The School 1 principal and assistant principal oversaw a staff of 33 part and full-time classroom teachers. Support staff included two school counselors, an itinerant school social worker and school nurse, a dropout prevention specialist, a media coordinator, three special education teachers, a curriculum coordinator, three secretaries, 5 custodians, 6 cafeteria staff and 6 bus drivers.

One way to describe the post-secondary outcomes for individual schools could be a measure of high school seniors attending the state university system. This state university system reports percentages of seniors from each high school enrolled in one

of sixteen state four year schools. From School 1 in 1990, 16 of the 107 seniors (14.9%) enrolled in a state four year school. The 1991 year's graduating class sent 8 of 96 seniors (8.3%) to a state four year school.

School 2 is located on fewer acres and in fewer buildings than School 1. School 2 is located in the northern section of the county. Once again most of the families supplement their factory and business jobs by farming.. This is a stable family community of West and Northern European descent with the church and school as predominant cultural centers. The local community college is approximately 20 miles away. The 3 school campus buildings housed 642 students in grades 9 through 12 at the end of the 1990-91 school year. The school building construction dates from 1957 to 1981.

The School 2 principal and assistant principal oversaw a staff of 39 part and full-time classroom teachers. Support staff included two school counselors, an itinerant school social worker and school nurse, a dropout prevention specialist, a media coordinator, four special education teachers, a curriculum coordinator, four secretaries, 4 custodians, 7 cafeteria staff and 9 bus drivers. From School 2 in 1990, 13 of the 120 seniors (10.8%) enrolled in a state four year school. The 1991 year's graduating class sent 10 of 114 seniors (8.7%) to a state four year school.

The School 3 campus is located on essentially the same acreage and in the same number of buildings as School 2. School 3 is located in the western section of the county. Poultry and lumber agricultural

endeavors make up the economy of the school community. This is an entirely Caucasian family community of West and Northern European descent with the church and school as predominant cultural centers. The local community college is approximately 5 miles away. The 3 school campus buildings housed 669 students in grades 9 through 12 at the end of the 1990-91 school year. The school building construction dates from the early 1950s to the late 1980s.

The School 3 principal and assistant principal oversaw a staff of 39 part and full-time classroom teachers. Support staff included two school counselors, an itinerant school social worker and school nurse, a dropout prevention specialist, a media coordinator, two special education teachers, a curriculum coordinator, four secretaries, 4 custodians, 8 cafeteria staff and 6 bus drivers. From School 3 in 1990, 22 of the 140 seniors (15.7%) enrolled in a state four year school. The 1991 year's graduating class sent 25 of 143 seniors (17.5%) to a state four year school. The drop-out rate for School 3 has consistently led that of the other two schools in this study.

Between 1991 and 1994, the school years that enclosed the quantitative data snapshots and the qualitative interview data, School 2 changed principals and School 3 re-organized a six-period day into a four-period day.

Quantitative Data

The data from the 1993-94 school year constituted the first annual School Improvement Report that required public disclosure in a school-by-school report card. Using mandated data from the state testing program and from other student performance measures, this public reporting by a school to its constituent community was so novel to this school system that it was seldom discussed. Before this school year all publicly reported information about the school system consisted only of aggregated school data. Because of this method of reporting some of the obvious differences among the schools within the system were obscured.

The local initiative for school improvement effort began in 1989 with a focus upon documentation for school climate and home-school communications, each of which is now included in legislative revisions for reporting, in addition to the usual test scores and other quantifiable data (dropout rates, attendance, etc.).

All historical percentages exist for each of the three schools for both the 1990-91 school year and for the 1993-94 school year. These historical quantifiable data are as follows:

Verbal and Math Scholastic Aptitude Test
(SAT) mean scores by gender

Number of Takers and Percentage of Takers
Earning an Advanced Placement Score of
3,4 or 5 (passing)

Average Daily Attendance

Dropout Percentages

Percentage of students earning a minimum of five units of credit annually

The first category includes a review of the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) Verbal and Mathematics averages by gender and student participation percentages. These scores were derived from national reports generated on graduating seniors by the College Entrance Examination Educational Board (CEEB) and Educational Testing Service (ETS). During this study these schools joined a statewide effort to increase SAT student participation and improving scores. North Carolina paid for every high school student who had completed Algebra I and was enrolled in Geometry to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) for diagnostic and practice purposes. SAT scores are discussed by Verbal and Math averages by gender and by school. These scores represent the information published by CEEB and ETS for the graduating classes in 1991 and 1994. Effect size compared the scale averages in relation to the standard deviation for that scale (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Comparisons are therefore in standard deviation units. The second data category was the number of Advanced Placement Test takers in each school and the student percentages earning a score of 3,4 or 5 from a five point scale. The scores reported are those sent to the

school system by the College Board for all exam takers in 1991 and 1994. The third category of quantitative data was attendance percentages as reported by the state. The fourth data category was the percentage of dropouts as reported by the state, and the fifth group was the percentage of students who earned (passed) five or more credits for both 1991 and 1994.

School Climate Instrumentation

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) School Climate Survey (Kelley et al., 1986) averages for each of the ten scales in the 1991 and the 1994 administrations of the survey comprised the data for the perception of each school as defined on those scales by both teachers and by students.

In March 1991, the staff in each of four rural high schools in this single LEA administered the NASSP Comprehensive Assessments of School Environments (CASE) School Climate Survey as one point of data for local school system improvement efforts. The School Climate Survey (Halderson et al. 1986-89) has teacher, student, parent and community standard scores for 10 subscales: Teacher-Student Relationships, Security and Maintenance, Administration, Student Academic Orientation, Student Behavioral

Values, Guidance, Student -Peer Relationships, Parent & Community- School Relationships, Instructional Management, and Student Activities. The premise for this instrumentation was school climate as an influencing factor for school outcomes. Productive students are defined as outcomes of both effective and efficient student achievement. Climate was one mediating variable for those outcomes. Data collection was exclusively on climate instrumentation and not on the satisfaction scales also available in the instrumentation. Allen, in Buros (1992) noted that there was no evidence that the NASSP instruments were valid in reflecting changes or differences across schools, or across time. However, this factor was not considered in the instrument selection in 1991. This was one of the serendipitous sources of information that was a function of definition in a local context.

The theoretical distinction between satisfaction and climate was necessary to investigate correlates and predictors of school efficacy. The major difficulties with the instrumentation lie in sample failure to address cultural diversity and in the lack of precision in the distinction between climate and culture (Leong, 1992). The sample failure to address cultural diversity was not active in this particular setting since the minority population was only approximately 6%. The inappropriate interchangeable use of culture and climate as separate and distinct constructs has been addressed in earlier discussion. Practitioners chose the NASSP School Climate Survey instrument to establish a data base for legislated school

improvement plans apparently without regard to the technical and psychometric properties of the instrument.

Data collection in 1994 replicated procedures for sampling, scoring, and reporting used for the 1991 procedures. Using the same instrument twice eliminated systematic bias in spite of the possible limitations of the instrument. The 1994 data on school climate were collected on the same instrument but from different students, although essentially the same teachers.

The procedure for the School Climate Survey repeated procedures for the 1990-91 school year. Alphabetical rosters for each of the four high schools at grades 10 and 12 were prepared. All students in these grade levels had the opportunity to complete the survey in English class. Parent surveys were mailed home to parents of students also in grades 10 and 12; however, the parent data were not included in this discussion. All faculty, staff, and administrators in each school had an opportunity to participate. The number of respondents (but not the response rate percentages) is available from the 1991 survey, and as other data could not be reconstructed, the number of respondents by each category can be reported only for 1991. School Climate Survey responses for both 1991 and 1994 were processed for a fee through Western Michigan Scoring. Mean standard scores are reported for each of the 10 scales for both students and teachers. Effect size was computed for each scale for both students and teachers.

Qualitative Interviews

To place this examination of potential schooling effects in the context of the consumers, a sample of high school students in grades 10 and 12 and a sample of full-time classroom teachers (excluding media, counselors, social workers and administrators) for each of the schools were interviewed to examine relationships between school improvement efforts and the situationally descriptive language of quality schooling for each school. Pilot interviews were conducted with students in grades 8,9 and 11 who were required to attend summer school in 1993 and with teachers assigned to those students to estimate internal consistencies of the interview instruments and to clarify ambiguous language.

Full-time classroom teachers and full-time students were systematically selected for 15- minute interviews. Each school generated an alphabetical roster for all teachers and for students in grades 10 and 12. A number was selected from a random number table for each teacher and student list. That random number identified the first interview candidate and each of the following candidates for that list. Each interview candidate was given an opportunity to decline to participate after the descriptive introduction. The decision to focus upon systematic random interviews for students and teachers limited the sample size. The 19

teacher interviews out of 114 total secondary teachers equals a sample of 16.6% for teachers. The 32 student interviews out of a total of 710 students equals a sample of 4.5 % for students.

Table 4
Interview Sample

<u>Interview Sample</u>	<u>School</u> <u>1</u>	<u>School</u> <u>2</u>	<u>School</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Refusals</u> <u>/No</u> <u>Contact</u>
Number of Full-time Teachers	33	45	46	
Number Interviewed	6	6	7	2
Number of Enrolled Students-Grades 10 & 12	200	266	244	
Number Interviewed	10	14	15	7

Teacher years of experience in each school and gender was eliminated from discrepancy consideration, since the teacher sample contained only three teachers with 10 years or less experience and the gender samples by school were too small.

Since schools in the same administrative system are expected to operate within the same organizational context, each of the three high schools was expected to demonstrate similar language about indicators of goodness and their relationships to student and teacher definitions of quality schooling.

Have any of the pressures for change and school improvement filtered to the students and what or how do they perceive schooling

and its quality? This third source of data was student and teacher interviews on quality schooling. Exploring and comparing the *in situ* language and reported actions of quality schooling were done through a naturalistic inquiry process into individual school life as perceived by the two groups of main players: teachers and students.

Student and teacher interviews were analyzed for key phrases with nouns and verbs describing a quality education. The key phrases were reviewed by two colleagues and clustered into categories. The interview data were sorted with a qualitative analysis program into ethnolinguistic response categories for both students and teachers. The interview data were then analyzed in the context of the historical data of student and school demographics, performance, and achievement accountability standards. For the purposes of this study only two of the eight questions were analyzed and compared. The analyzed questions were the following:

Teacher Responses to:

How do STUDENTS define quality education in your school?

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

Student Responses to:

How do TEACHERS define quality education in your school?

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

Summary

The relationships among the descriptive data, the school climate comparative data, and the interview data create meaning for student and teacher perspective and language on quality schooling. The student perspective has traditionally been a counter-culture whispered voice in the 10 years of educational reform since A Nation at Risk (1983) was reported. The current decade of reform has little documentation of significant and real improvement in our system of schooling. If we consider the student as our schooling organizational "product," the student definition of quality in the organizational culture of the school may have more to do with the success of performance outcomes than that of the adults who hold a corner on the decision-making about the "way we do things around here." The relationship between the student perspective and the student outcomes in the historical data may be the missing link in "what works" for continuous improvement and reform.

The language of the students and their teachers and the congruence, or lack thereof, in that language within the individual schools reflects the values and beliefs of each school community. Although parents and community members contribute to the language of the school, they need to be considered in separate follow-up research.

A rural mountain culture noted for resistance to change may be

the very place to determine whether some of the factors preserving that which is not in the best educational interests of our students reside in the failure to communicate clearly with students about the elements of quality schooling.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following five questions were investigated for this study:

1. What are the preliminary categories for student and teacher definitions of quality schooling in selected rural North Carolina secondary schools?
2. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality schooling in the selected schools?
3. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality and norms, or recipes (Goodenough, 1981) and for outcomes in the selected schools?
4. Are there differences among the schools' contextual descriptors and the schools' definitions of quality education?
5. Do these differences, if any, support benchmarks for program evaluation?

Compiling information from each data source required multiple searches for patterns in student outcomes, student and teacher perceptions of improvement in school climate, and in the language defining quality education in teacher and student interviews. These patterns were unique to each school in the study in that the patterns of no one school, in this place, and at this time,

matched the patterns of any other school, nor any preconceived ideal pattern in the literature. This school in this context with its objective and qualitative information underpins the analysis. These patterns were also meaningful out of the individual school context in the sense that American schooling is a series of cultural recipes crossing time with a hypothetically universal language. There were easily identified consistencies in language within and among the schools. The incidence of language usage varied between students and teachers in each school and between schools.

Scheffler (1960) quoted in Bracey (1993) defined education with a comprehensive purpose that includes all but a historical perspective. He wrote:

[Education is...] the formation of habits of judgment and the development of character, the elevation of standards, the facilitation of understanding, the development of taste and discrimination, the stimulation of curiosity and wondering, the fostering of style and a sense of beauty, the growth of a thirst for new ideas and visions of the yet unknown.

The missing element for this definition is the digest of what has gone before, the forces of history that undergird the individual in context of the times (Rice, 1995, personal communication; Sarason, 1971). Since schools in their context were identified as the smallest meaningful unit of improved educational performance, the similarities and differences among these schools were a source of theory building for what constitutes quality education for students

and teachers in a school.

Quantitative Data Sources

The public expectation for student outcomes to “get better” is increasing. Quantitative student outcomes are barometers of the health of the schools. The Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and Advanced Placement Tests (AP) are nationally recognized barometers of what students are accomplishing or not accomplishing in their schools. This study does not pretend to participate in the debate on the propriety and validity of the SAT or any other national assessment as a measure of school achievement (Bracey, 1995; Stedman 1995). This study does include the data as a part of the improvement frame for the historical context of each school.

School attendance rates and dropout rates also gauge the overall health of the schools. How many students attend on a daily basis, and who stays to earn an exit document, usually a diploma, are presumed to be a reflection of the quality in what is happening in the school. This information is collected annually by the state of North Carolina and reported back to all school systems. The percentage of students “passing” or earning five or more courses per year is considered a measure of student success, and therefore an indicator of organizational improvement, or lack thereof. This percentage rate is collected by the state and reported back to each school system annually. Each of these pieces of historical

information is easily collected and is part of the natural dialogue about school improvement. Each of these pieces of information is part of the discussion about schools in its community.

Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)

Improvement in SAT Verbal and Math Scale averages is considered a worthy school goal. A standardized comparison of the scaled score averages is only one way to describe improvement efforts. Effect sizes are another way to describe changes in student averages quantitatively in standard deviation units (SDUs). Effect sizes were used to describe the difference between SAT scaled score averages in 1991 and in 1994 for males and females on both the Verbal and Math Scales in standard deviation units (Glass & Hopkins, p. 236). SDUs were selected as one useful measure to describe how scores deviated or varied from the mean or average. Since the standard deviation is measured on a common scale across different tests, it can also be used to compare score changes on a variety of measures. Once the changes in scores across measures or time have been noted, the qualitative description of these changes should be considered.

The descriptive judgments characterize the degree of change between average scores for the estimated changes in SDUs were drawn from Bowen in *Investment In Learning* (1993). Smaller sample sizes are questionably reliable. Bowen (1993) described these

changes in SDUs as indicated below:

Table 5
Estimated Changes in SDUs between 1991 and 1994

<u>Increase</u>		<u>Decrease</u>	
+.75 or above	Extreme	-.75 or above	Extreme
+.40 to .74	Large	-.40 to .74	Large
+.20 to .39	Moderate	-.20 to .39	Moderate
+.10 to .19	Small	-.10 to .19	Small

The 1991 and 1994 scaled score averages and the standard deviations (Smith, 1995) for the SAT Verbal and Math scales for males and females were used to compute effect sizes. North Carolina statewide Verbal and Math SAT averages showed no effect changes between 1991 and 1994. Each of the schools in this study demonstrated a different picture for the SAT scores than this statewide pattern. The actual SAT averages and gender sample size are presented in Appendix A. The effect sizes between the averages from 1991 and 1994 are in Table 6.

School 1 showed large effect increases for male Verbal and female Math averages. The female Verbal average showed a small effect increase. School 2 showed a large effect decrease for male Verbal average. The male Math average and both the female Verbal and Math averages showed no change. School 3 posted a moderate effect increase for the female Math scale and small effect increases

for female Verbal and Math Scale averages. School 3 showed no change for female Verbal average.

Sustained efforts to improve student outcomes as part of written school improvement plans worked in both School 1 and School 3 for males on the Verbal scale, and for females on both the Verbal and Math scale in School 1, and finally, for females on the Math scale in School 3. The improvement efforts in School 2 did not make a positive effect for males or females on either scale. In fact, males on the Verbal Scale earned a large effect decrease in School 2.

Each of the three schools was under some of the same external pressure to raise SAT averages as some gauge of improved student outcomes. Each school was required to construct a written site-based plan to address this specific topic. Each school had access to essentially the same resources to address these improvements. School 1 and School 3 each experienced successes for three of the four possible improvements. School 2's efforts saw 3 no-gains and 1 extraordinary decrease in student outcomes.

Something in the improvement efforts for School 2 missed the mark. Teacher and student commitment to the improvement efforts, the dialogue for the construction of improvement strategies, or teaching and learning are each possible sources of failure to achieve improvement. The application of an external expectation for improved student SAT averages made a difference in two out of three schools. Perhaps something in the teacher-student action in school context was reflected in positive changes in SAT averages for

students in two schools.

Table 6
Changes in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Effects between 1991 and 1994

	Male		Female	
	Verbal	Math	Verbal	Math
School 1	0.46	0.06	0.18	0.60
School 2	-0.48	-0.02	-0.08	-0.04
School 3	0.18	0.10	0.08	0.34
State	0.03	0.09	0.06	0.08

Advanced Placement Tests (AP)

As another part of annually published information about individual school programs, the state derives information on AP testing from the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service's Advanced Placement Testing Program. Each of these subject area tests are scored on a national standard 5-point rubric. A score of 3 or better is considered evidence of passing. Colleges may award post-high-school credit to individual students based on these scores. The increased percentage of students earning a 3, 4, or 5 on a 5-point scale was considered a benchmark of success. The statewide percentage of students earning 3, 4, or 5 on the

nationally scored Advanced Placement exams, however, decreased from 1991 to 1994. School 2 also showed a decreased percentage of students earning 3, 4, or 5.

Schools 1 and 3 each increased the percentage of students earning 3, 4, or 5 (Table 7). The number of students participating in these national exams increased at Schools 1 and 2. Once again efforts to enjoy improved student outcomes paid off for Schools 1 and 3. School 2, operating under the same improvement conditions failed to show improved outcomes in the percentage of students earning scores of 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams. The pool increases for School 1 and School 2 may account for any measurable improvement or failure to improve.

This second quantitative data add to the three pictures of schools. Two of three schools demonstrated improvements in student outcomes. School 2 failed to execute plans that resulted in outcome improvements on these national benchmarks of secondary students.

Table 7
Percentage of Students Taking Advanced Placement Exams Who Earned a 3, 4, or 5 in 1991 and 1994

Year ending	1991	1994	1991	1994
	# of Students	# of Students	%	%
School 1	7	30	42.9%	46.7%
School 2	4	32	50.0%	18.8%
School 3	31	38	25.8%	52.6%
State			63.3%	57.1%

Attendance Rates

The state showed a slight increase (+.3%) in average daily attendance rates from 1991 to 1994. All three schools in this study showed greater attendance improvements than the state rate for the same period of time (Table 5). Each school once again made a series of site-based decisions to encourage improved student attendance. Each school was successful in its outcome at rates that exceeded the state rate of improvement.

Dropout Rates

The state dropout rate decreased slightly (-.5%) between 1991 and 1994. School 1 decreased its percentage of dropouts (-.9%), whereas the dropout percentages School 2 (+1.1%) and School 3

(+1.3%) increased (Table 5). Dropouts in a school system that ranks among the top 5 in percentage of dropouts for the years of this study required specific, intensive and focused planning for resources and strategies to decrease the percent of students leaving high school early and without minimum exit documents. Contrary to the intent of improvement efforts, School 2 and School 3 showed a rise in dropouts during the three years of this study. Once again, teacher and student commitment to the improvement efforts, the dialogue for construction of improvement strategies, or teaching and learning in the school context are each possible sources of failure to achieve intended decrease in drop out rates.

Student Earning Units of Credit

The state has measured the percentage of students who pass five units of credit or more each school year since 1989. The state rate for this measurement increased (+1.4%) from 1991 to 1994 as did the rate for School 2 (+10.3%). School 1 (-.5%) and School 3 (-7.0%) each decreased percentages of students who passed five or more units of credit each school year for the same period of time (Table 5).

While all previous indicators demonstrated that School 2 missed the mark for improvement, a higher percentage of students in School 2 passed 5 or more courses annually. Schools 1 and 3 had a lower percentage of students passing courses in 1994 than 1991. It is somewhat ironic that the teacher in his or her classroom exercised

instructional decision-making that caused more students to pass courses in School 2, yet no improvements as measured on other external criteria occurred. Conversely, fewer students in Schools 1 and 3 passed courses in 1994 than in 1991, while other quantitative data showed improved student outcomes.

Table 8
Comparative Attendance, Dropout and Passing Percents
for 1991 and 1994

Year ending	Attendance		Dropouts		Students Earning five or more credits per year	
	1991	1994	1991	1994	1991	1994
School 1	95.3%	96.6%	6.1%	5.2%	84.5%	84.0%
School 2	92.3%	95.2%	6.8%	7.9%	72.4%	82.7%
School 3	93.5%	94.9%	8.0%	9.3%	85.5%	78.5%
State	94.6%	94.9%	3.6%	3.1%	85.0%	86.4%

Summary

Comparisons of the eight categories of quantitative data (SAT male & female Verbal & Math averages, passing AP Exam percents, attendance rates, dropout rates and percent passing 5 courses) points

in 1991 and 1994 indicate a greater percentage of improved student outcomes in School 1 and School 3 (Table 9). The state data for the same eight data showed improvement in 3 of 8 (37.5%) sets of numbers: attendance and dropout rates, and the percentage of students who passed 5 or more units of credit.

School 1 showed improvement in 6 of 8 (75%) sets of data. School 1 improved male Verbal SAT average, and female Verbal SAT and Math SAT averages; percentage of students who earned 3, 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement exams; and attendance and dropout rates. School 2 showed improvement in only 2 of 8 (25%) sets of data. They were attendance and the percentage of students who earned 5 or more units of credit. School 3 showed improvements in 5 of 8 (62.5%) sets of data: male Verbal and female Math SAT averages; percentage of students who earned 3, 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement exams; attendance rate, and percentage of students who earned 5 or more units of credit. Two of the three schools in this study exceeded the statewide rate of improvement in student outcomes on these selected indicators.

These numerical indicators are already under public scrutiny as benchmarks of what is happening in school systems. Paying attention to the individual schools with quantitative information over time is one way to communicate school successes and failures with the public community in familiar language. A schools' improvement or its failure to make improvements is a necessary discussion issue for all those stakeholders in the school and in the

community that supports the school. The language for this communications presupposes a shared mission and purpose, clear standards and as well as a common language. Comparing the school performance to the average state performance is one view of the school in a context broader than the local context.

Table 9
Summary of Quantitative Data Improvements

	School 1	School 2	School 3	State
Quantitative Data (N=3)				
Attendance, Dropouts, Units of Credit	2	2	2	3
National Exams (N=5)				
Percentage Earning a 3,4,5 Advanced Placement & SAT Averages	4	0	3	0
Percentage Improving	75.0%	25.0%	62.5%	37.5%

The above data sources were naturally occurring pieces of information for all schools in this state. Comparable data are also a part of our national language for discussion of education. The comparison of outcomes in two different years (1991 and 1994) was necessary to determine a picture of improvement for the selected quantitative student outcomes. Numerous other pieces of quantitative data were available for each of these schools, but these

were specific to the state of North Carolina and, therefore, of limited use to examine schools in the national trend of higher standards in a language commonly understood between states and their schools. They were not included in this study.

School Climate Data

As another part of a comprehensive school improvement effort, each of the schools in this study elected to participate in collecting data about school climate in both 1991 and 1994. The NASSP School Climate information offers the first data set that contrasted student and teacher perceptions about school life at two separate times. Effect sizes were again computed to determine the magnitude of the differences in averages between 1991 and 1994 in standard deviation units (Table 5). The actual scaled scores for both students and teachers in 1991 and 1994 are contained in Appendix A. No comparable statewide data exist for this view of these schools. The School Climate Survey (Halderson et al. 1986-89) standard scores for 10 subscales by teachers, and students, only were used for the purposes of this study:

Teacher-Student Relationships,
Security and Maintenance,
Administration
Student Academic Orientation
Student Behavioral Values

Guidance
 Student -Peer Relationships
 Parent & Community- School Relationships,
 Instructional Management
 Student Activities.

Effect changes are described as extreme, large, moderate, small or non-existent for each of the scales for both students and teachers.

The students in School 1 showed extreme effect increases on 3 school climate scales: Teacher-Student Relationships, Administration, and Guidance. Students in School 1 showed large effect increases on 4 school climate scales: Student Academic Orientation, Student Behavioral Values, Parent & School-Community Relationships, and Instructional Management. Students showed a moderate effect increase on Security & Maintenance, Student Activities, and no change on Student-Peer Relationships. Teachers in School 1 noted extreme effect increases on 4 scales: Administration, Student Behavioral Values, Instructional Management, and Student Activities. Teachers in School 1 earned large effect increases in Security & Maintenance, Guidance, Student-peer Relationships, and Parent & School-Community Relationships. Teachers in School 1 noted a moderate effect decline in Teacher-Student Relationships and no change in Student Academic Orientation (Table 10). The students and teacher perceptions showed matching, or equal effect sizes, on two scales: Administration and Parent & School-Community Relationships.

The student effects for Teacher-Student Relationships were exactly the opposite from that of the teachers. Students perceived a

significant improvement in that which teachers perceived as a decline: Teacher-Student Relationships (Table 10).

Table 10
Effect Sizes for Student and Teacher Perception of School Climate in 1991 and 1994 For School 1

	Student	Teacher
Teacher-Student Relationships	0.80	-0.20
Security & Maintenance	0.20	0.60
Administration	0.80	1.20
Student Academic Orientation	0.40	0.00
Student Behavioral Values	0.70	1.10
Guidance	0.80	0.70
Student-Peer Relationships	0.00	0.70
Parent & Community-School Relationships	0.70	0.60
Instructional Management	0.40	1.30
Student Activities	0.30	1.30

How is it possible that perceptions of teacher and student relationships in School 1 are so vastly different? While the students perceived dramatic improvements, the teachers perceive a deterioration in relationships. One possibility lies in an internal teacher failure to consistently communicate about issues that directly affect students and their time in the classroom. Another possible

explanation relates to the dissonance between the students and teachers perceptions of the quality of the 180 day classroom instruction.

School 2 demonstrated a different pattern on the School Climate Survey. The students in School 2 rated extreme effect increases in Administration. They rated large effect increases in Guidance and Instructional Management. They rated moderate increases in Teacher-Student Relationships and Student Activities. The students in School 2 rated extreme effect decreases in Student Behavioral Values, and Student-Peer Relationships and a large decrease in Student Academic Orientation. Teachers in School 2 rated 4 scales with extreme effect increases from 1991 to 1994: Teacher-Student Relationships, Administration, Guidance, and Instructional Management (Table 11). Teachers rated large increases in Student Academic Orientation, Student-Peer Relationships and Student Activities. Those teacher scales with moderate increases are: Security & Maintenance, Student Behavioral Values, and Parent-Community Relationships . The students and teacher perceptions showed matching, or equal effect size, on one scale: Administration. Since this school is the only one in the study that changed principals during the course of the data gathering, students and teachers appear to agree on an apparent improvement. The student effects for Student Academic Orientation, Student Behavioral Values, and Student-Peer Relationships were exactly the opposite from that of the teachers.

Students perceived a significant decrease in that which teachers perceived as an improvement. This degree of discrepancy was not achieved in either of the other two schools on any scales. While student perceptions of themselves and their peers apparently deteriorated, teachers perceived improvements. Students and teachers do not hold consistent views about these elements of climate.

Table 11
Effect Sizes for Student and Teacher Perception of School Climate in 1991 and 1994 For School 2

	Student	Teacher
Teacher-Student Relationships	0.30	1.70
Security & Maintenance	0.10	0.30
Administration	2.80	3.70
Student Academic Orientation	-0.40	0.50
Student Behavioral Values	-1.10	0.20
Guidance	0.70	1.60
Student-Peer Relationships	-1.30	0.50
Parent & Community-School Relationships	1.00	0.30
Instructional Management	0.40	0.90
Student Activities	0.20	0.50

School 2 students decreased in perceptions about student concern for achievement, perceptions of discipline and student perception of mutual respect and cooperation. This deterioration occurred in a period of limited improvement for quantitative outcomes. School 2 students rated perceptions about themselves and their values on a path opposite from their teachers. School 2 students and teachers do not perceive climate factors, and possibly anything else, through the same lenses or with the same focus upon academic pressure or rigor. School 2 achieved the fewest improvements in quantitative student outcomes.

School 3 shows yet a different pattern. Students rated no effect change for 9 of the 10 scales. They rated a small effect decrease in Student-Peer Relationships. Teachers rated moderate increases on 6 of the 10 scales: Teacher-Student Relationships; Student Behavioral Values, Guidance, Parent & Community-School Relationships, Instructional Management, and Student Activities. Teachers rated a small increase in Security & Maintenance and no change for Administration, Student Academic Orientation and Student-Peer Relationships. The student and teacher perceptions showed the equal effect size on one scale: Student Academic Orientation. One student scale, Student-Peer Relationships showed a small decrease effect (Table 12).

Table 12
Effect Sizes for Student and Teacher Perception of School
 Climate in 1991 and 1994 For School 3

	Student	Teacher
Teacher-Student Relationships	0.04	0.32
Security & Maintenance	0.08	0.16
Administration	-0.06	0.08
Student Academic Orientation	0.02	0.02
Student Behavioral Values	0.00	0.32
Guidance	0.02	0.24
Student-Peer Relationships	-0.12	0.06
Parent & Community-School Relationships	0.08	0.30
Instructional Management	0.02	0.24
Student Activities	0.00	0.24

School 3 students demonstrated the most stable, or lack of changed school climate perception and the fewest improvements in teacher perception of school climate. It was in the middle on improved quantitative student outcomes. This school demonstrated consistent student and teacher perception of student attention to achievement tasks. The lack of student school climate improvements compared to the other two study schools is unusual. The adult focus upon discussions to restructure the school day into a 4X4 schedule

may have infringed upon time and energy spent in teacher-student communications and relationships.

Summary of School Climate Data

Each of the three schools in the study displayed a different pattern of perceptions of improvements in school climate by teachers and students. Essentially the same teachers rated school climate in 1991 and 1994. The summary of school percentages of improvements for perceptions in school climate follows.

Table 13
NASSP School Climate Improvements in Effect Sizes Between 1991 and 1994

	School 1	School 2	School 3
School Climate Scales			
Teachers (out of 10 scales)	8	10	7
Students (out of 10 scales)	9	7	0
Percentage Improving	85.0%	85.0%	35.0%

The Teacher-Student Relationships scale on the NASSP School

Climate instrument not only contained the most items (n=12), it had the highest reliability for both students and teachers (Cronbach's Alpha(α) = .87). For the purposes of this study, it embodied a key relationship in these schools. The variations between teachers and students on this scale over time were worth a closer look. School 1 students showed an extreme increase between 1991 and 1994, while the teachers posted their only decrease on the same scale. School 2 students posted a moderate increase, while the teachers posted an extreme increase. In School 3, the students rated no change for Teacher-Student Relationships, while the teachers posted a moderately positive effect. The 12 items on this particular scale explored issues of teacher support, teacher attention, teacher fairness, teacher understanding, grading, and praise for students. (see Appendix C) . The items ask respondents to agree or not with statements that teachers do the following:

- in this school like their students.
- in this school are on the side of their students.
- give students the grades they deserve.
- help students to be friendly and kind to each other.
- treat each student as an individual.
- are willing to help students.
- are patient when a student has trouble learning.
- make extra efforts to help students.
- understand and meet the needs of students.
- praise the students more often than they scold them.
- are fair to students.
- explain carefully so that the can get their work done.

Teacher and student relationships during improvement efforts in School 2 are the most consistently positive, yet their school earned

the least quantitative improvement.

A second scale that reflected significant information for the purposes of this study was Instructional Management. There were 7 items on this scale with a student and teacher reliability estimate (Cronbach's Alpha(α) of .79 (see Appendix C). Those items are:

There is a clear set of rules for students to follow in this school.
Taking attendance and other tasks do not interfere with classroom teaching.
Teachers spend almost all classroom time in learning activities.
Students in this school usually have assigned schoolwork to do.
Most classroom time is spent talking about classwork or assignments.
Teachers use classroom time to help students learn assigned work.
Outside interruptions of the classroom are few.

Students in Schools 1 and 2 posted large improvements. Students in School 3 posted no change. Teachers in Schools 1 and 2 posted extreme improvement. School 3 teachers posted a moderate improvement.

The variation of perceptions about teacher-student relationships and instructional management embody the serendipitous and organic nature of what goes on in a learning organization. The rational, linear thinking that "if teachers do---, then the students will do---" does not fit the chaotic and often confusing nature of what is going on between teachers and students, as well as the other players in a school setting. We know what data

says about two separate years in each school, not the meaning of such as perceived by the players. Since the search for order and connectedness in an actively constructed reality is the essence of improvement efforts, it is incumbent upon the stakeholders in an organization to create a dialogue about meaning of the data.

(Sparks, 1994)

The combined quantitative outcomes and the school climate instrument outcomes totaled a possible 28 points of improvement for school programs from student outcomes and a student or teacher perspective of school climate measures. (Tables 9 & 13) School 1 earned the highest percentage of improvements for student outcomes and the most balanced improvement in school climate between students and teachers. School 2 and School 3 each accomplished fewer of the possible points of improvements. School 2 accomplished more school climate improvements and the least amount of student outcome improvement. School 3 accomplished more student outcome improvements and less school climate improvements. Based upon this information and criteria, School 1 appears to be the most consistently moving and improving school in the study.

Qualitative Data

The interview instrument and process were created and

refined during 1993 and 1994. The naming of categories for responses followed phenomenological techniques to determine the components of meaning associated with the language of quality schooling in these schools for both teachers and students. The intent was to use teachers and students to assess “the way they classify, and the ways in which they endow their world with senses and meanings” (Ellen, 1984, p.71). Interviews were conducted in person and by telephone. They were, with permission, audiotape recorded for transcription and analysis. A summary sheet captured selected language chunks for sorting with a computer program HyperQual© (see Appendix). Language chunks from selected questions for each interview were sorted and reviewed to establish thematic consistency and build categories to define quality education.

As previously stated (p. 62) two questions for the teachers were selected for the purposes of this study.

How do STUDENTS define quality education in your school?

How do YOU (teachers) define quality education in your school?

Two similar questions were selected for students for the purposes of this study.

How do TEACHERS define quality education in your school?

How do YOU (students) define quality education in your school?

The actual interview language chunks used to build the descriptive categories are summarized in Appendix B. The summary tables for percentages of teacher perceptions of students, teachers' definitions, student perceptions of teachers', and students' definitions follow. Since some interviews contained language chunks that fell into multiple categories, percentages do not equal 100%.

Teacher Responses

Question: How do students define quality education in your school?

Table 14

Summary of Teacher Perceptions of Student Definitions for Quality Education

Common Language Themes	Percent of Incidence		Responses
	School 1 n=6	School 2 n=6	School 3 n=7
Concrete-Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money	33.3%	66.6%	57.1%
Academics & School Program	66.6%	33.3%	42.9%
Social Experiences	16.6%	16.6%	28.6%
Learning	16.6%	16.6%	14.3%

Teachers in School 1 presume students define a quality education by their school program. Teachers in School 2 and School 3 presume students define quality education by concrete attributes.

Question: How do YOU (Teachers) define quality education in your school?

Table 15
Summary of Teacher Definitions for Quality Education

Common Language Themes	Percent of Incidence Responses		
	School 1 n=6	School 2 n=6	School 3 n=7
Concrete- Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money	0	33.3%	14.3%
Academics & School Program	50%	50%	28.5%
Social Experiences	0%	0	14.3%
Learning	66.6%	66.6%	71.4%

Teachers in each of the three schools define a quality education by their school program (Schools 1 and 2) or by learning (Schools 1,2 and 3).

The tacit assumption of consistency for definitions of quality schooling follows the expectation that a coherent and communicated organizational vision is necessary to clarify the roles and expected outcomes for the players. This organizational vision not only helps focus and define goals for all players within the shared social and

interaction framework, it also predicts a common language between and among those players. Just as scoring and defense clarify expectations for team sports, teaching and learning gives focus to a learning organization. Since teachers reported differences in their own definitions and their perceptions of student definitions of quality within and among the schools, there is reason to believe that focus and common language do not exist.

The student responses were grouped in the same categories as those of teachers. However, it was necessary to add a "Don't Know" category to the student summary data.

Student Responses

Question: How do TEACHERS define quality education in your school?

Table 16

Summary of Student Perceptions of Teacher Definitions for Quality Education

	Percent of Incidence Responses		
	School 1 n=9	School 2 n=12	School 3 n=12
Concrete- Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money	44.4%	8.3%	8.3%
Academics & School Program	0	25%	41.7%
Social Experiences	11.1%	0	0
Learning	33.3%	25%	16.6%
Don't Know	11.1%	41.7%	16.6%

Students' perceptions of teacher definitions in Schools 1,2 and 3 do not show similarities between schools. School 2 had a high proportion of students who responded that they did not know how teachers defined a quality education (41.7%). Students in School 1 split their perceptions of teacher definitions between the concrete attributes of education and learning. Students in School 2 split their perceptions of teacher definitions between the school program (25%), learning (25%) and don't know(41%). Students in School 3 perceive

the school program (41.7%) as the teacher definition of a quality education.

Question: How do YOU (Students) define quality education in your school?

Table 17
Summary of Student Definitions for Quality Education

Common Language Themes	Percent of Incidence Responses		
	School 1 n=9	School 2 n=12	School 3 n=12
Concrete- Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money	33.3%	16.6%	16.6%
Academics & School Program	22.2%	41.7%	58.3%
Social Experiences	0	8.3%	8.3%
Learning	44.4%	41.7%	25%
Don't Know	0	8.3%	16.6%

Student definitions among the schools are most consistent in their low percentage of Social category responses. Students in School 1 define quality education by the concrete (33.3%) and learning (44.4%) category attributes. Students in Schools 2 and 3 define quality education by their school program and by learning.

Teacher and Student Perceptions for Each Other

The comparison between teacher and student perceptions of each others' definitions showed a few consistencies. School 1 teacher perceptions of student definitions and student perceptions of teacher definitions were not close in the Concrete (attendance, grades) and Peer/Social education categories. School 2 teacher perceptions of student definitions and student perceptions of teacher definitions were not in the School Program and Learning categories. School 3 teacher perceptions of student definitions and student perceptions of teacher definitions were remarkably close in the Program and Learning categories. (Table 17).

Table 18
Comparisons of Teacher and Student Perceptions of Each Others' Definition of a Quality Education

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Concrete-Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money			
Teachers' perception of Students	33.3%	66.6%	57.1%
Students' perception of Teachers	44.4%	8.3%	8.3%
Academics & School Program			
Teachers' perception of Students	66.6%	33.3%	42.9%
Students' perception of Teachers	0.0%	25.0%	41.7%
Peer/Social experiences			
Teachers' perception of Students	16.6%	16.6%	28.6%
Students' perception of Teachers	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning			
Teachers' perception of Students	16.6%	16.6%	14.3%
Students' perception of Teachers	33.3%	25.0%	16.6%
Don't Know (Students Only)	11.1%	41.7%	16.6%

Each groups' perception of the other group's definition is a reflection of school specific participation, ownership, outcomes, and subjective climate. The differences among the students and teachers reflects the failure to speak a common language about the attributes and definition of quality education. The differing values attributed by one group to the other group is a source of diffusion of focus and

mission.

Teacher and Student Self Reports

For School 1, teachers and students agreed that the Peer/Social Category did not define quality education. Teachers and students in School 2 were similar in percentages for the Program and Social categories. Teachers and students in School 3 were similar in percentages for the Concrete (Grades, attendance) category (See Table 19).

Table 19
Comparisons of Teacher and Student Reports of Definitions of a Quality Education

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Concrete-Grades/Tests/ Attendance/ Future Money			
Teachers' Self Report	0.0%	33.3%	14.3%
Students' Self Report	33.3%	16.6%	16.6%
Academics & School Program			
Teachers' Self Report	50.0%	50.0%	28.5%
Students' Self Report	22.2%	41.7%	58.3%
Peer/Social experiences			
Teachers' Self Report	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Students' Self Report	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%
Learning			
Teachers' Self Report	66.6%	66.6%	71.4%
Students' Self Report	44.4%	41.7%	25.0%
Don't Know (Students Only)	0.0%	8.3%	16.6%

The most consistency between school groups and self-reports is evident in the category that does **not** define quality education for teachers or students: the Social category. After that each school has a different set of consistent definitions. At School 1, where quantitative data and school climate data were the most consistent

and improving of the three schools, the differences in definitions between students and teachers ranged to 33.3%. At school 1 the Learning category defined quality education (T-66.6%; S 44.4%). At School 2 where fewer improving outcomes were evident and teacher and student school climate perceptions were not as consistent, there is the highest degree of consistency between the two groups' definitions: each group was closer to the other in self definitions for Academics & School Program (T-50.0%; S 41.7%) and Learning (T-66.6%; S 41.7%). In School 3 with improved student outcomes, and limited school climate successes, students and teachers were most consistent in Concrete definitions (T-14.3%; S-16.6%).

More significant than the differences between the students and the teachers is the consistency in each of the groups and the definitions of quality education in the context of their own school program and learning itself. If the perceptions of quality education are consistently reflected in both the School Program and in Learning for both teachers and students, the focus and mission of the school can be easily communicated between the two and to the community.

Global Analysis

Although quality is an elusive, subjective entity, it is a goal in much of our experiences. Schooling defines a mandatory portion of our developmental lives: usually a minimum of 12 or 13 years. Although any external analysis of a school is subject to errors of

misperception and misinterpretation by the person looking in and analyzing, four descriptive categories of definitions for quality education were easily constructed from teacher and student responses to the interview questions in spite of differing student outcomes and differing student and teacher effect outcomes for student climate between 1991 and 1994. The categories were:

Concrete: grades, test scores, attendance or potential for future income

Programmatic: academic course and co-curricular opportunities

Interactional: social opportunities

Learning: personal fulfillment, or life-long learning.

Two categories of information were available from the interview data analysis: first, how did each group think the other group defined quality education; and, second, how did each group report its own definition of quality education. The third category of information placed these two categories of information in the context of measured student outcomes and measured perceptions of school climate.

There were patterns in teacher and student perceptions of the other groups' definitions of quality education. The category of the Concrete yielded the highest degree of consistency between student and teacher perceptions of each others' definitions for School 1.

The category of academics in the School Program yielded the highest degree of consistency between student and teacher perceptions of each others' definitions for School 2 and School 3.

There were also patterns in teacher and student self-reports of definitions for quality education. The category of Learning yielded the highest degree of consistency between student and teacher self-reported definitions of each others' definitions for School 1. The category of academics in the school program yielded the highest degree of consistency between student and teacher self-reported definitions of each others' definitions for School 2. The category of the Concrete yielded the highest degree of consistency between student and teacher self-reported definitions of each others' definitions for School 3.

Students in School 1 perceived teachers as more concrete in definition than teachers actually reported. Students in School 2 perceived teachers' definitions in the Don't Know category more than any other category. Students in School 3 perceived teacher definitions at about the same rate as the teachers perceived the students for academics in that school program.

Teachers in Schools 2 and 3 perceived that students defined quality education more concretely, or, in terms of the existing Academics & School Program at a higher rate than students actual self-reports of quality education. These patterns were loosely aligned with objective or quantitative measures of student outcomes and perceptions of school climate in that the highest degrees of

consistency in perception of definition existed in the school with the most improving student outcomes and the highest number of improved school climate indicators: School 1.

Almost half the students in School 2 (41.7%) responded with a “Don’t Know” rather than a comment about their teachers’ definition of a quality education. Social interaction was the least identified meaning by both teachers and students in their perceptions of each other’s definition and in their self-reports.

Self-reports of definitions showed other patterns. Over half the teachers in each school defined quality education as Learning. Half the teachers in Schools 1 and 2 also identified their current Academics & School Program as evidence of a quality education. In School 3 over half (58.3%) of the students defined quality education by their own Academics & School Program. No other category report exceeded half the student reports for a definition.

In a return to the originally posed questions, here is a summary of the meaning of quantitative and qualitative data about these schools.

1. What are the preliminary categories for student and teacher definitions of quality schooling in selected rural North Carolina secondary schools?

All student and teacher responses to self-reported definitions and perception of the other group definitions fell easily into one of five groups:

Concrete: grades, attendance, tests or money

Program: current academic or comprehensive school

Interactional: peer and social relationships

Learning: life-long education for personal fulfillment

Don't Know: students only

2. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality schooling in the selected schools?

There was no one category within a school to characterize the language of quality education for students and teachers. However, there was enough common language among the schools to easily establish categories that applied to each school and to both the teacher and the student group. Student self-reports about quality education fell into the Program and Learning categories more than teachers perceived for School 2 and School 3.

3. What is the relationship between student and teacher language for quality and norms, or recipes (Goodenough, 1981) and for outcomes in the selected schools?

The relationships between the three types of data and the improvement status of that data did not reveal any specific norms or recipes related to student outcomes. Out of 30 possible matches for effect size for teacher and student ratings for school climate in 1991 and 1994, only 4 actually matched. School 1 matched on 2 scales; School 2 matched on 1 scale and School 3 matched on 1 scale. School 1 and School 2 teachers and students both matched effect size on the

Administration Scale. Out of the 24 possible matches for definitions of quality education, School 2 students and teachers were the closest in self reports definitions of the school quality as defined by their Academics & School Program. Yet, School 2 made the least quantitative improvements of each of the three schools. The most consistency in student and teacher perceptions of the others' definition of quality was in School 3 in the Program category and in the Learning category, where students rated the least amount of school climate improvement.

4. Are there differences among the schools' contextual descriptors and the schools' definitions of quality education?

Yes, there were differences among the schools. The school with the most improved quantitative student outcomes and a high percentage of improving school climate scales had the highest agreement between students and teachers on self-reports of quality education as Learning: School 1. School 1 also rated teachers' and students' perceptions of each other's definition of quality education with the highest agreement in the Concrete category.

School 2 earned the least improvement in quantitative student outcomes. It matched School 1 in school climate improvement; however, students and teachers earned the highest agreement on self-reports of definitions for quality education as their own Academics & School Program. This school also had the highest percentage of students who responded Don't Know when asked

about teacher definitions of quality education.

School 3 was in the middle for improvement in quantitative student outcomes. It earned the least improvement in school climate effects, with no student scales showing improvement. School 3 student and teacher self-report definitions of quality education showed the highest agreement in the Concrete category. School 3 teachers' and students' perceptions of each other's definition of quality education had the highest agreement in the School Program category.

Do these differences, if any, support benchmarks for program evaluation?

The school operating with business as usual, School 1, was different than the school with the new principal, School 2. Both of these schools were different from the school that restructured the school day, School 3. The benchmarks support a school in the context of its own history of improved student outcomes, perceptions of climate and common definitions for the language of the purpose of schooling. The search for canons of quality (from Bracey) most consistently is defined not as learning, but as the current Academics & School Program.

Each of the three sources of information must be analyzed by school to look for patterns of improved student outcomes, patterns of improved school climate, and patterns of consistency in language

about what constitutes quality education. These pictures of school improvement efforts were expected to show positive changes in student outcomes, positive changes in school climate perceptions by teachers and students, and some internal consistency in teacher and student definitions of quality education. All three schools earned improved student outcomes between 1991 and 1994. School 1 earned the highest percentage of improved outcomes. School 2 earned the lowest percentage of improved outcomes. All three schools earned improved perceptions for teacher climate ratings. School 1 and School 2 earned improved student climate ratings. All three schools earned enough consistency in definitions of quality education to easily establish four categories of definitions. The Peer/Social experience category earned the lowest incidence rates for teacher and student perceptions of each others' definition and for teacher and student self-reports of definitions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Context

Whether we call schooling successful or not depends upon the benchmarks selected for examination. The lack of consensus on the evidences of successful schooling has contributed to our debate on ways to improve that which we have failed to define: a quality education. There are a few agreed upon common indicators for successful schooling. Do the students come to school? Do they stay until their graduation? Do they pass a minimum number of courses per school year? The public consumers of education also hold certain nationally normed and standardized tests, rightly or wrongly, as measures of successful education. Examples are the SAT and Advanced Placement Exams. Although we debate in complicated statistical methodology whether the schools are working for improved student outcomes, there is no national or local consensus on this fact.

One perspective to concisely sum up American nationalism can be summed up in the 31 word Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Our national symbol, the flag, is also an internationally recognized icon. No such succinct commonly recognized focus exists for our public

secondary education institution, which is so vast that millions of people are employed to enact the daily rituals and norms for the millions of indoctrinated students without a common vision for the destination, much less a map for the journey. An impetus for national goals to raise the floor for expectations began in 1990 with the education commission for the states and the United States President's National Education Goals Panel. It is not the purpose of this study to debate the relevance of this expectation for raising the floor for standards, nor the merits of national standards. The very act of setting some national, voluntary goals has set in motion a discussion of education and its quality attributes. This discussion must be part of a school by school dialogue, not just that for national standards.

The thesis underlying this study was that it is necessary to consistently define quality education by the teachers and students, the two prime actors in every school. The three schools in this study do not demonstrate student and teacher congruence in nouns and verbs describing quality education in their school. Some would say we cannot have what we cannot name. We cannot enact that which has no commonly recognizable focus or identity. Customer satisfaction, gathering and using data to drive future decision-making, empowerment for the stakeholders, focus on a unified purpose, and discussion of the changes required to achieve these purposes were all tenets to promote continuous improvement in a learning place. Were it not that we are in a new age of international

consumerism for public education with the eyes of the public focused upon the school in a personal community, we could afford to continue with business-as-usual. Business-as-usual for education used to mean the ways the adults experienced education and the replication of that experience . “Is it good enough?” asks for a quality education for all students as they near a future that contains only the assurance that continuous learning will be necessary to improve life quality.

Discussion

Four categories for measuring quality education were created as a result of the interviews in this study:

Concrete: grades, test scores, attendance, and potential for future income

Programmatic: academic courses and co-curricular opportunities

Interactional: social opportunities

Learning: for personal fulfillment and life enrichment.

The interview data gathered in this study were sorted easily into four categories, with a fifth “Don’t Know” category necessary for students as they described their teachers’ perceptions of a quality

education. Those categories fall from the extrinsic to the intrinsic on a motivational continuum. The teachers (N=19) and the students (N=33) were clearer in their language for defining quality education in their schools than anticipated at the beginning of this study. The teacher and student groups were not, however, consistent with each other, within their individual schools in using one of the four categories to define quality education. The teacher and student groups in School 1 were most consistent in defining quality education, School Program, or Learning, and in demonstrating the overall highest percentages of improved outcomes and improved climate: . Teacher and student perceptions did not support a clear and focused shared sense of purpose in School 2 and School 3. Schools 2 and 3 underwent either an administrative and a structural change during the course of this study.

The categories with the most mismatches between perception and self-report, and the most mismatches between teachers and students classified quality education, were Concrete or Interactional. Teachers perceived that students would conclude that concrete and interactional language defined quality education at a higher rate than students actually self-reported in both Schools 2 and 3. Teachers perceived that students would conclude that peer and social interactions defined quality schooling at a higher rate in all three schools, with the mismatch being the greatest at School 3.

Each of these three schools was loosely meshed in webs of the same local, state, and national education bureaucratic

organizations. Each of these three schools served essentially the same rural community residing within the same 700 square miles. Each of these three schools operated within essentially the same political, structural, cultural and symbolic frameworks for daily operations from 1991 to 1994. The teachers, the families and their students, and the educational bureaucracy were stable over the time period for this study. The statewide and local directive to improve student outcomes was the new force in the field that was common to each of these schools, since improvement was a legislated mandate with expected improved outcomes from 1991 to 1994. These changes in types and levels of accountability systems were never placed in a quality context at any level in the web of interactions. The context for improvement was how many did what in comparison to whom. The context for improvement never addressed quality education for the students as they defined it.

Two of the three schools were involved in major self-selected restructuring events between 1991 and 1994. School 2 changed principals for the 1992-93 school year. School 3 embarked upon a block scheduling program that turned a six-period day into four periods per semester (4 X 4) for the 1993-94 school year. School 1 did not participate in any such transformational event between 1991 and 1994. It was "business-as-usual" for them.

School 1 teachers and students defined a quality education in terms of the Academics & School Program (T-50.0%; S-22.2%) and most consistently in terms of Learning (T-66.6%; S-44.4%). For

School 1 over half teacher perceptions of student definitions fell into the Program category (66.6%). Over one-third of the students perceived their teachers as viewing a quality education in the Learning for personal fulfillment category. The degree of congruency in mutual definitions of quality education was clearer in this school than in the other two schools. If these teachers and students were comfortable with their local definition as evidenced in their school, how does that measure up with external information? This school, with all its quality definitional consistency, also demonstrated improvement for three-fourths of the quantitative indicators. The students scored major positive changes in 9 of 10 climate scales. The teachers earned moderate school-climate-effect improvements in 8 of 10 scales, including Teacher-Pupil Relationships and Instructional Management. Compared to the other two schools in the study, School 1 earned comparable school-climate-effect changes and the most quantitative and national exam improvements. Are School 1 adults moving forward to a quality education and communicating that vision with their students? Yes. Do the students in School 1 define a quality education in terms that are consistent with a focus? Yes, and more consistently than the other two schools in this study.

School 2 changed principals for the 1992-93 school year. School 2 made progress on the fewest of the quantitative indicators of the three schools (25%). The positive effect in school climate included all 10 scales for teachers and 7 of 10 for students and

matched the percentage of improvement for School 1. How do teacher and students' definitions look in comparison to this? School 2 teachers and students defined a quality education in terms of their school program (T-50.0%; S-41.7%) and in terms of Learning (T-66.6%; S-41.7%). In School 2 over half of the teacher perceptions of student definitions fell into the Concrete (grades, tests, attendance and future money) category (66.6%). School 2 posted the highest percentage of students who claimed Don't Know (41.7%) as to how their teachers defined a quality education. Between 1991 and 1994 did teachers and students communicate consistently and clearly with each other about quality education for their mission? No. Do the students in School 2 define a quality education in terms that are consistent for students and teachers? It is hard to tell.

School 3 elected to embark upon restructuring with the block scheduling program called 4 X 4 for the 1993-94 school year. School 3 earned the second-most quantitative improvements and the fewest school climate improvements. In fact, students scored no school-climate-effect improvements in School 3. School 3 teachers and students defined a quality education in terms of the program (T-28.5%; S-58.3%) and in terms of Learning (T-71.4%; S-25.0%). For School 3 over one-half of the teacher perceptions of student definitions fell into the Concrete (grades, tests, attendance and future money) category (57.1%). In School 3 almost half of the students' perception of teacher definitions related to the Academics & School Program (41.7%). School 3 demonstrated the most

inconsistencies between the teachers and the students. Are School 3 adults moving forward to a quality education and communicating that vision with their students? No. Do the students in School 3 define a quality education in terms that are consistent with a future focus? It is hard to tell.

The quantitative data for this study were selected because of their universal existence in public school information databases; schools routinely count attendance, dropouts, and courses passed annually. The SAT and Advanced Placement national and international testing programs were accepted, rightly or wrongly, as standards for annual public discussion on the state of education. The same student and teacher interviews about quality education were applied to randomly selected interviews each of the three schools.

To create an educational mission with an eye to the students' future and their roles for the 21st century, Sarason (1971) pointed out Dewey's emphases on participation and upon translating theory and thinking into actions and organization. He also noted that teachers and students required the same conditions for productive learning.

This productive learning has become a clarion call for the 21st century. Senge's (1990) learning organization is a way of life for long-term economic and [inter] personal satisfaction. Nanus (1989, p. 173) stated that "education is inherently anticipatory, as it is responsible for preparing the next generation for citizenship,

employment, and leadership.” Do those very institutions, whose mission it is to perpetuate some of the cultural orientations that will carry us to the future, communicate the definition and necessity of quality education?

The three schools in this study contain two groups of participants who did not consistently describe and demonstrate definitions for a quality education for themselves, or for the other group. The school that engaged in no major change effort demonstrated the most consistent definitions for quality education. Since descriptive attributes are assumed necessary to focus and communicate “What is going on around here, anyway?”, common language for those descriptive attributes was presumed necessary to communicate goals, roles and expectations.

Two points of concern require explanation. Student-teacher interaction is the bridge upon which any school rests. This bridge is an historically negotiated give and take that resists change. When a structural change is made, new rules and norms must be renegotiated. This is a process that requires renegotiated language with new meanings. Bobbett, Henry & French (1991) grouped the 16 indicators of goodness into four main categories: school climate, mission/goals, leadership, and instruction. This study addressed elements for each except leadership in a context of measurable improved student outcomes. Renegotiating student relationships with teachers for a shared sense of purpose can be measured in the language of education talk. Two of these three schools were in the

process of this renegotiation: one with a new leader; the other with a restructured schedule.

A second point of concern addresses failure. Students enter the educational process as a partner. Indeed, they take the greater portion of the risk in the partnership since their trust apparently lies in the definition of their own school program as a standard of quality education. What if their school program's standard of quality is not a future-focused adapting and learning organizational view? What if their school program's standard of quality does not include any student learning as evidence for school success? What if their school program does not recognize the difference between espoused theory and theory-in-use? what if their school talks the talk but does nothing about walking the talk?

Implications of the Results

What do these findings mean in the context of current theory, practice, beliefs, and actions? The tug for voluntary, meaningful national standards currently follows every student to every school door. While on the verge of the next century, the students in these rural schools sit in classrooms and accomplish educational tasks with teachers who do not clearly communicate the meaning of quality education as a life-long or life-wide learning process. Over 40% of the students in two of the three schools in this study self-reported a

quality education in terms of Learning. Over half the students in the school that made major structural changes in the school day reported quality education in terms of the academics in their school program. Teacher perception that social attributes defined students' quality education was not verified.

Our students not only have a stake in what is going on in their education, they can define quality education in a context that challenges their teachers' perceptions of their values. Contrary to teacher belief, students actually use the word **learning** to define a quality education, especially in School 1 and School 2. The school where students and teachers most consistently defined a quality education as their own school program, or as Learning, was the school that engaged in the least structural or organizational change for the purposes of this study. No change means a stable and consistent perception of quality to these teachers and students. Change requires a redefinition or a renegotiation of quality education. For the change to make a difference in a positive sense, the focus on a process of redefinition is probably necessary. School 2 and School 3 were in the midst of such redefinition or a renegotiation.

Assessing the language of quality education as a measure of clear and consistent focus in a learning system at one point in time, and in relation to some external comparative measures of student outcomes and perceptions of school climate is one way to benchmark whether the school is continuously improving.

Bracey (1995) quoted Scheffler's (1960) definition of education in more than one forum:

[Education is...] the formation of habits of judgment and the development of character, the elevation of standards, the facilitation of understanding, the development of taste and discrimination, the stimulation of curiosity and wondering, the fostering of style and a sense of beauty, the growth of a thirst for new ideas and visions of the yet unknown.

This 54-word definition with the addition of a consistent historical perspective is comparable to our Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country. It briefly and succinctly provides a language focus for the people involved in the transmission of values and beliefs.

Coherent schooling with a quality outcomes requires a common language to name not only the product but also the benchmarks to achieve that goal. The success of our students, their options and futures are increasingly a common national goal. There must be a common language for the canons of quality for our public education.

It is necessary to develop a common and accepted language of quality schooling. Gathering the language of student success and quality used in other states, in suburban and in metropolitan populations is necessary to create a baseline for how the participants and consumers in the schooling process are defining their common mission. When Callahan wrote over three decades ago about the vicious cycle in educational administration, he identified what we did not have in our common language: a definition of quality education. We still do not have this common language within our schools, much

less among our schools.

Teaching as a model of cultural renewal is now an act of transformation not an act of cultural maintenance. The educational metaphors must now renew our current cultural recipes for a future cultural web. In this context of change, this program, in this school, in this place, and right now, must have a clear and common language of a future purpose. Quality education is that purpose. The school leadership has a role in facilitating a common language and shared set of expected outcomes and perceptions that are benchmarks for communicating progress toward that goal. The school leadership used to be the school administrator. The school leadership will become those adults who can create, enact and empower the students to become learners with a future in any socially constructed web, not just in school. The school administrator will become the process facilitator who oversees the accomplishment of this goal.

Recommendations for Further Study

More reports about definitions of quality education from other adolescents and their respective teachers in urban and suburban schools need to be compiled and compared. These additional reports must also be set in an historical context of a particular school since

no set of language exists outside of a context. It is essential to verify not only categories, but also whether current school program is a definition of quality education.

Follow-up interviews need to be conducted in these three schools. Focus group discussions by teachers and students within improving schools, as well as troubled or not so successful schools need to probe the language nuances of response categories about quality education in multiple settings.

Methodology for future studies needs to consider natural points of historical data collection for each school. Random selection of interview candidates is essential to eliminate any systematic bias for either students' or teachers' perceptions. Verbatim transcripts are necessary to capture idiosyncratic perceptions of definitions. No search for meaning occurs in a vacuum or without a history. An historical window includes multiple slices of time and meaning with matches between different actors in the setting.

Studies of schools need to be conducted with a results-orientation, or with student outcome benchmarks. Educational activities are essential for setting and re-setting new schooling directions for a quality education for learning. The student view is essential to set the conditions for achievement of that goal.

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Appendix A. Quantitative and School Climate Data

A-1

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Verbal Scale & Math Scale Averages by Gender for 1991 and 1994

	MALE				FEMALE				Total % of graduating Seniors	
	VERBAL		MATH		VERBAL		MATH			
School Year ending	1991	1994	1991	1994	1991	1994	1991	1994	1991	1994
School 1	399	451	498	505	389	409	402	472	41%	38%
		n=21	n=15		n=23	n=19				
School 2	423	369	451	448	405	396	408	403	24%	32%
		n=19	n=16		n=10	n=20				
School 3	376	396	418	431	407	416	409	448	41%	49%
		n=17	n=20		n=40	n=28				
State	403	406	462	473	398	405	430	439		

A-2

Student and Teacher Perception of School Climate in 1991 and 1994

	School 1			
	Students		Teachers	
	1991 (n=212)	1994 (n=91)	1991 (n=37)	1994 (n=36)
Teacher-Student Relationships	52	60	56	54
Security & Maintenance	56	58	59	65
Administration	50	58	61	73
Student Academic Orientation	53	57	48	48
Student Behavioral Values	56	63	48	59
Guidance	60	68	59	66
Student-Peer Relationships	65	65	59	66
Parent & Community-School Relationships	49	56	46	52
Instructional Management	51	55	46	59
Student Activities	51	54	42	55

Mean Standard Score=50

Std Dev=10

A-3

Student and Teacher Perception of School Climate in 1991 and 1994

	School 2			
	Students		Teachers	
	1991 (n=263)	1994 (n=595)	1991 (n=42)	1994 (n=37)
Teacher-Student Relationships	41	44	31	48
Security & Maintenance	40	41	40	43
Administration	17	45	19	56
Student Academic Orientation	42	38	31	36
Student Behavioral Values	39	28	39	41
Guidance	51	58	34	50
Student-Peer Relationships	53	40	42	47
Parent & Community-School Relationships	35	45	35	38
Instructional Management	35	39	25	34
Student Activities	45	47	39	44

Mean Standard Score=50

Std Dev=10

A-4

Student and Teacher Perception of School Climate in 1991 and 1994

	School 3			
	Students		Teachers	
	1991 (n=293)	1994 (n=267)	1991 (n=36)	1994 (n=34)
Teacher-Student Relationships	50	52	43	59
Security & Maintenance	44	48	40	48
Administration	40	37	53	57
Student Academic Orientation	44	45	45	46
Student Behavioral Values	43	43	41	57
Guidance	56	57	45	57
Student-Peer Relationships	51	45	50	53
Parent & Community-School Relationships	44	48	37	52
Instructional Management	47	48	44	56
Student Activities	48	48	43	55

Mean Standard Score=50

Std Dev=10

Appendix B. Interview Data

Teacher Responses:

How do STUDENTS define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u>	<u>School 2</u>	<u>School 3</u>
be part of a winning team	number of A s	better than average grades
college bound to learn all you can not college bound for social reasons	preparation for college & life in general	test scores
not as good as bigger schools	good attendance & average grades	good course selection teacher willingness to work with students
readiness for college function in life	social contact & good grades	course offerings social contact
resources to make a decent living	number of As variety of courses	acquiring the proper life skills
by the amount of money they can make		social events, sports number of earned A's B s, A s and a feeling of accomplishment

Teacher Responses:

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u>	<u>School 2</u>	<u>School 3</u>
doing everything you can to reach all students	success coping with college or life	high student aspirations good student feelings about self and grades
academic excellence character building contributing member of society	school concern with all aspects of education not just academics	giving tools for life to students
doing the best for all students	good attendance mental alertness absence of suspensions	production of the well-rounded student: academically; socially; morally
producing an educated person who contributes to society	test scores preparation for life	school life
learning enough to contribute to society	students returning to thank you for the extra push	a combination of book learning and social skills
opportunity to become a self-directed learner to pique interests to make them want to learn	students learning the right attitude for life as well as academics	the best start for life taking pride in a job well done

Male Student Responses:

How do TEACHERS define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u> n=4	<u>School 2</u> n=4	<u>School 3</u> n=8
to learn all you can	as a good education	expect you to know & remember every little thing they teach you
going to college after high school	don't know (1 student)	when they try to teach you everything they know
being an honor student or making straight A s	good environment	when you know a lot about a subject
teaching everything students need to know for college or on the SAT	taking education seriously	don't know (2 students)
		they try--I don't know what they really think
		informed students
		by how much students learn

Female Student Responses:

How do TEACHERS define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u> n=5	<u>School 2</u> n=8	<u>School 3</u> n=5
good for teachers because they make the money	trying with students	how well students are turned on & listen to what teachers say
teaching students what they need to know & getting the best out of them	doing the best you can	teaching students as much as they can in the time they have
don't know	don't know (4 students)	as the best they can be
being a good person instead of a person who does not do anything or work	giving a lot of homework	being the best teachers they can be
being on time, making good grades and being ready to learn	different teachers define it differently...some by learning	giving us lots of work to make us learn a lot

Male Student Responses:

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u>	<u>School 2</u>	<u>School 3</u>
getting a good job after you get out	good environment, friends & good program	using your potential & how much you get out of class
learning all you can	good	more involved teachers
going on to school & learning something	going to college	where you can learn without a lot of pressure where teachers care, support & help you
when teachers teach so that students would understand everything they need to know in the course	if you are learning stuff	don't know (2 students)
		a good level of education
		having teachers who care & grades

Female Student Responses:

How do YOU define quality education in your school?

<u>School 1</u>	<u>School 2</u>	<u>School 3</u>
being the best you can be	when I know I have learned something	doing homework and stuff
helping you be the person you want to be	when you learn enough to make good grades	spending a lot of time with my work & homework helping your friends
teachers knowing what they are teaching trying to make good grades and be the best I can	being able to learn without others goofing off Don't know	learning as much as I possibly can & getting along with the teacher have a good education & discipline
an okay time at school	need a good education to get a good job	quality depends on atmosphere, what is being taught and your interest
	the amount students learn , techniques with which we are taught, safe environment & extra curricular activities	
	if teachers are willing to work with you & explain when you don't understand	

having teachers that
can get their point
across easily--lots of
visual aids



Appendix C. NASSP School Climate Survey Instrument

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

FORM A

Edgar A. Kelley, John A. Glover, James W. Keefe,
Cynthia Halderson, Carrie Sorenson, and Carol Speth

Directions

This survey asks different groups in a school and community what **most people** think about the school. These groups include students, teachers, school administrators, other school workers, school board members, and parents or other members of the community.

The survey has a number of statements that describe situations found in many schools. Most of these statements will fit your school, but for those that do not, mark the "don't know" answer.

Please mark your answers on the separate answer sheet. Use only a No. 2 pencil. Before you begin the survey, you will be asked to fill in the following information on the answer sheet about yourself and your school:

1. *Individual I.D. Number.* Your I.D. number at school (students) or Social Security number (teachers, parents, and community members).
2. *School Code.* (This number will be given to you.)
3. *Grade.* (If you are a student.) 6 = 6th grade; 7 = 7th grade; 8 = 8th grade; 9 = 9th grade; 10 = 10th grade; 11 = 11th grade; 12 = 12th grade
4. *Role.* 1 = Student; 2 = Teacher; 3 = School Staff other than Teacher or Administrator; 4 = School Administrator; 5 = Parent; 6 = Community Member other than Parent.
5. *Class Code.* (This number will be given to you if used.)
6. *Sex.* 1 = Female; 2 = Male
7. *Race.* 1 = American Indian; 2 = Asian American; 3 = Black; 4 = Hispanic; 5 = White; 6 = Other
8. *Special Codes.* (If needed, this information will be given to you.)

Do *not* mark in this booklet or write your name on the answer sheet (your answers are confidential). Mark only one answer for each statement. Choose the answer that you think **most people** in your school and community would pick. Use the following scale for your answers.

- 1 = Most people would *strongly disagree* with this statement.
- 2 = Most people would *disagree* with this statement.
- 3 = Most people would *neither agree nor disagree* with this statement.
- 4 = Most people would *agree* with this statement.
- 5 = Most people would *strongly agree* with this statement.
- 6 = I *don't know* what most people think about this statement, or I *don't know* whether this statement fits the school.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS



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- 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
- 2 = DISAGREE
- 3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- 4 = AGREE
- 5 = STRONGLY AGREE
- 6 = DON'T KNOW

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- 1. Teachers in this school like their students.
- 2. Teachers in this school are on the side of their students.
- 3. Teachers give students the grades they deserve.
- 4. Teachers help students to be friendly and kind to each other.
- 5. Teachers treat each student as an individual.
- 6. Teachers are willing to help students.
- 7. Teachers are patient when a student has trouble learning.
- 8. Teachers make extra efforts to help students.
- 9. Teachers understand and meet the needs of each student.
- 10. Teachers praise students more often than they scold them.
- 11. Teachers are fair to students.
- 12. Teachers explain carefully so that students can get their work done.

SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE

- 13. Students usually feel safe in the school building.
- 14. Teachers and other workers feel safe in the building before and after school.
- 15. People are not afraid to come to school for meetings and programs in the evening.
- 16. Classrooms are usually clean and neat.
- 17. The school building is kept clean and neat.
- 18. The school building is kept in good repair.
- 19. The school grounds are neat and attractive.

ADMINISTRATION (Principal, Assistant Principal, etc.)

- 20. The administrators in this school listen to student ideas.
- 21. The administrators in this school talk often with teachers and parents.
- 22. The administrators in this school set high standards and let teachers, students, and parents know what these standards are.
- 23. Administrators set a good example by working hard themselves.
- 24. The administrators in this school are willing to hear student complaints and opinions.
- 25. Teachers and students help to decide what happens in this school.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ORIENTATION

- 26. Students here understand why they are in school.
- 27. In this school, students are interested in learning new things.
- 28. Students in this school have fun but also work hard on their studies.
- 29. Students work hard to complete their school assignments.

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

KEY: *MOST PEOPLE*

- 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
- 2 = DISAGREE
- 3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- 4 = AGREE
- 5 = STRONGLY AGREE
- 6 = DON'T KNOW

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STUDENT BEHAVIORAL VALUES

- 30. If one student makes fun of someone, other students do not join in.
- 31. Students in this school are well-behaved even when the teachers are not watching them.
- 32. Most students would do their work even if the teacher stepped out of the classroom.

GUIDANCE

- 33. Teachers or counselors encourage students to think about their future.
- 34. Teachers or counselors help students plan for future classes and for future jobs.
- 35. Teachers or counselors help students with personal problems.
- 36. Students in this school can get help and advice from teachers or counselors.

STUDENT-PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- 37. Students care about each other.
- 38. Students respect each other.
- 39. Students want to be friends with one another.
- 40. Students have a sense of belonging in this school.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

- 41. Parents and members of the community attend school meetings and other activities.
- 42. Most people in the community help the school in one way or another.
- 43. Community attendance at school meetings and programs is good.
- 44. Community groups honor student achievement in learning, music, drama, and sports.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

- 45. There is a clear set of rules for students to follow in this school.
- 46. Taking attendance and other tasks do not interfere with classroom teaching.
- 47. Teachers spend almost all classroom time in learning activities.
- 48. Students in this school usually have assigned schoolwork to do.
- 49. Most classroom time is spent talking about classwork or assignments.
- 50. Teachers use class time to help students learn assigned work.
- 51. Outside interruptions of the classroom are few.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- 52. Students are able to take part in school activities in which they are interested.
- 53. Students can be in sports, music, and plays even if they are not very talented.
- 54. Students are comfortable staying after school for activities such as sports and music.
- 55. Students can take part in sports and other school activities even if their families cannot afford it.

END OF THE SURVEY

APPENDIX D. Interviews

Teacher Interviews:

School:

Refusal

No Contact

Gender:

How many years have you taught in this school?

How many years have you taught altogether?

How good of an education do you think students are getting in your school?

What makes you think that way?

If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

How important is a quality high school education to you?

How do students define a quality education in your school?

How do you think other teachers define a quality education in your school?

How do you define a quality education?

Additional comments:

Student Interviews:

School:

Refusal

No Contact

Gender:

Grade:

What courses did you take last year?

Do you work

At what?

How many hours per week?

How good of an education do you think you are getting in your school?

What makes you think that way?

If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

How important is a quality high school education to you?

How do other students define a quality education in your school?

How do you think teachers define a quality education in your school?

How do you define a quality education?

Additional comments: