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Educational Policy and the Australian Rural Economy

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As in the past, the 1990s Australian economy continues to be shaped by external pressures: now, as part of the globalisation of international industry, trade, and finance. Intensified by global recession, trade wars, and poor commodity prices, this process has contributed to a prolonged crisis in Australian agriculture and rural communities. The Australian government has adopted policies of rationalisation, deregulation, and privatisation in relation to both rural industries and the provision of education and training. The new education and training agenda has implications for rural people. While government policy for education in rural areas in the past has included both generic and targetted policy initiatives, these have recently converged: "Rural" policies increasingly reflect the new agenda. The new approach may not fully benefit rural people, however, as it is based on urban models that may neglect the specific needs and constraints of rural areas.

The articles in this issue of *JRRE* provide a comprehensive overview of the key issues affecting the education of rural Australians. We can point to some of the more pressing policy areas. These include: the staffing of rural and remote schools; the challenges posed by geographic and social isolation; the inequalities of educational provision and outcomes (especially school retention rates); the specific challenges of Aboriginal disadvantage and educational provision; the content of rural curricula; the problems of educational provision for special groups; the relationship between rural and generic education; the particular problems of technical and further education; and the intricate connections between education, employment, income support, housing, and transport. (For recent discussions of these and related issues, see Boylan & Alston, 1993; Quixley, 1992.)

Federal and state governments in Australia have responded in diverse ways, and with varying levels of efficacy, to these challenges. The diversity of programs established by the eight state and territory governments would require considerable space to discuss; here, we confine our examination to national (federal) initiatives.

To understand the nature of educational policy and provision in rural Australia, it is necessary to appreciate the historical development of the rural economy, particularly as it has taken place within the global food and fibre producing regimes. We first sketch out key aspects of this global context. We then examine the ways in which the realities of Australia's economic development and current position have been reflected in particular national educational policies. We examine some specifically "rural" initiatives and then turn our attention to overarching national policies that will impact on rural people. We conclude that the current national agenda for education and training holds out some serious worries—as well as opportunities—for rural people and rural educators.

Australia in the Global Order

Australia's economic development has been moulded through interaction with global economic powers—Britain, the United States, and Japan, in

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particular. Throughout its white history, Australia has been predominantly an exporter of commodity staples (pastoral, agricultural, and mineral) and services (penal services, tourism). Export income has supported import replacement industries behind tariff barriers and has been used to develop the limited domestic market (White, 1992). Until recently, there has been little reliance on the export of manufactured goods. The Australian economy has always been integrated with—and dependent upon—the vitality of the global trading economy (McMichael, 1984).

There have been variations within this economic framework. Both the source of imported products and capital and the destination of Australia's exports have changed considerably (Dyster & Meredith, 1990). The initial tie to Britain was gradually replaced during this century by a closer link with the United States. Since the early 1970s, Japan has emerged as the pre-eminent economic partner, although investment in Australia from the United States, Britain, and other advanced economies remains significant.

Though the dominant export sector has been based on "rural" primary products, from the earliest days of white settlement the population has concentrated in the cities of the eastern coastal fringe. As a result, there has been a constant preoccupation with "population" in Australian political and popular discourse, in particular a concern about the "empty lands" vulnerable to attack from the countries to the north. The entertainment of close alliances with major military and economic powers in the region has been one response to these fears; another has been to strive for a broader spatial distribution of economic and social development within the country, especially through increased rural settlement (Powell, 1988). Australia remains, despite these concerns, an overwhelmingly suburban nation.

In the post-1945 period, Australia shared in the prosperity of the so-called "second long boom" (Daly, 1993): A rapidly expanding consumer market was funded by the high commodity prices engendered by the Korean and Vietnam wars (in which Australia was a close ally of the United States). The rapidly developing Australian economy attracted many immigrants from Britain and Europe. Though some rural areas developed significant immigrant populations (e.g., Griffith in New South Wales; Myrtleford in Victoria), the majority of arrivals remained in the coastal cities, where they found employment in the domestic manufacturing industries, construction, and services. They were expected to assimilate rapidly into the "Australian way of life," which remained relentlessly Anglocentric until at least the mid-1970s (de Lepervanche, 1984).

This dominant cultural ethos obscured the significant economic changes taking place in the 1960s and 1970s. While everyday life in Australia continued to reflect British and American social trends, the economic relationships with the countries of south-east Asia became increasingly important. Despite its important symbolic value, Britain's entry into the European communities in 1973 had surprisingly little economic impact on Australia: The economy was already oriented towards its neighbours in the Asian region—principally Japan, but also Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan (Dyster & Meredith, 1990).

Since the early 1970s, there has been a sustained attempt to reconstruct the Australian economy in line with global economic and political trends (Fagan & Bryan, 1991). Domestic industry—including agriculture—has been exposed to international competition as protective tariffs have been significantly reduced. In tandem there has been radical deregulation of exchange controls and the financial sector. During the 1980s, Australia had its share of property and paper speculators, and the savings and loan crashes of the U.S. were mirrored in the failure of some major Australia financial institutions. Surges in consumption, particularly of imports, have left a legacy in the 1990s of private and public indebtedness: While in the 1980s gross debt stood at 11% of GDP, it had reached 44% by 1991 (Daly, 1993). Foreign debt is now recognised as a national issue.

As Australia had shared in earlier prosperity, so has it joined the west in the recession of the 1980s and 1990s. High interest rates, an overvalued currency, and a global slump in commodity prices have combined to deal a harsh blow to the export sector of the Australian economy, particularly agriculture (David & Wheelwright, 1989; National Farmers' Federation, 1993). The slump has been accentuated by government policies that have aimed to dampen demand and aid industrial restructuring. Despite an increase in the number of jobs, unemployment rates have risen sharply—to over 11% by 1993—and persistent and seemingly irresolvable problems of youth and long-term unemployment have emerged. Changes in production technologies have eliminated many non- or low-skilled jobs while casual jobs in the service

sector have been filled predominantly by women re-entering the workforce and by secondary- and tertiary-level students (Robinson, 1992).

Restructuring has been paralleled by the rise of an economic rationalist discourse urging deregulation of the economy (Pusey, 1991), enhanced targeting of welfare services, and the withdrawal of government involvement from key economic sectors. A contraction of public service provision has combined with increasing inequality of income distribution and declining real wages to put a brake on further enhancement of standards of living for the bulk of the population. Rural areas particularly have been exposed to public and private policies of contraction, centralisation, and rationalisation which, in many instances, combined with climatic disasters and commodity price slumps to produce what many have termed a "rural crisis." We now turn to some of the contours of such a crisis.

Agriculture and Rural Society

During the 1950s and 1960s, Australian farmers responded to declining terms of trade—the ratio between costs and income—through farm expansion and increased labour productivity (Gruen, 1990; Lawrence, 1990). While Australian farm productivity remains high, it is not high enough to cope with the corruption of the global commodity market. Australian farmers, who in most commodity areas are now comparatively unsubsidised (National Farmers' Federation, 1993), face an export market dominated by the continuing trade struggles between the U.S. and the European communities. American policies, such as the Export Enhancement Program, have threatened Australian export markets at the same time as the increasing self-sufficiency of importer nations (e.g., India and Saudi Arabia) has made those markets increasingly precarious.

Australian governments, at federal and state levels, have long supported agriculture through a variety of measures, including tariffs, bounties, infrastructure development, scientific research, extension services, market management, and straight-out subsidies (Williams, 1990). Deregulation has seen the removal of much of this support, a shift actively supported by the farmers' own political representatives (the conservative National and Liberal parties) and peak organisations (in particular, the National Farmers' Federation). All political parties and most farm organisations place their faith in the recent General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) outcome. It is argued that, in a genuinely free trade environment, Australian agriculture—and by extension, all rural people—will benefit greatly. It remains to be seen whether the long-sought GATT agreement "delivers the goods" to Australian farmers.

Meanwhile, much of Australian agriculture continues to face severe economic problems. Net farm income declined by an estimated 36% (to $4.6 billion) between 1989 and 1993. The average broadacre wheat, sheep, or beef farm will have received in 1993 an annual gross income of $36,300, which, after costs, translates into a net farm *loss* of $11,300. This is the third year in a row that farmers in these sectors have received no profit from farming (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 1993). A significant number of farmers are overgeared and face considerable difficulties in servicing loans. It is expected that about one third of Australia's 130,000 commercial farmers will be forced to leave farming during the 1990s.

Though agriculture employs only a minority of the total rural population, its problems have reverberated through many country communities. Particularly affected are inland rural towns whose economies are not linked to new developments in tourism, recreation, or retirement. Recent studies have shown that the quality of life of farm dwellers is declining and that rural residents face conditions that compare unfavourably with those in urban areas (Australian National Opinion Polls, 1991; Gray, Lawrence, & Dunn, 1993; Salt, 1992). In most areas of non-metropolitan Australia, unemployment, poverty, and morbidity are higher than in the cities (Lawrence & Williams, 1990). Rural people—particularly women and young people—have been shown to face special problems regarding lack of services in outlying areas, poor transportation links with regional centres, declining job opportunities, and racial and other forms of discrimination (Quixley, 1992). These problems are accentuated by the contraction of human service provision and the withdrawal of government and private services: Hospitals, government business offices, and schools are closed; railways, telephone exchanges, post offices, and courthouses are withdrawn. This often sets in motion a "dynamics of decline" (Lawrence & Williams, 1990): Economic failure leads to population decline and so to a loss of community power and political influence, which leads to further economic contraction.

The contraction of economic activity in rural towns is directly related to the historical trend of capital intensification in agriculture and other industries. The majority of rural communities are dependent on single industries and are highly vulnerable to changes in commodity prices or investment policies over which local residents have no control. Many formerly protected industries, particularly in the textiles, clothing, and footwear sector, are shifting operations off-shore to the lower wage economies of Asia or New Zealand. Retail, distribution, and service industries are centralising operations into larger regional centres or capital cities (Share, Campbell, & Lawrence, 1991). Recent shifts in government policy away from intervention in agricultural production and marketing have accentuated the process of decline. Australian governments are no longer prepared to give priority to rural and regional development. In many ways, country Australia, like those urban areas dependent on protected manufacturing industries, has been a victim of the current emphasis in western economies—including Australia—on free trade and deregulation.

Recent Rural Policy: Aims and Impacts

The Australian federal government views agricultural production and processing as a key to future rural and national prosperity. It envisages a modern and highly productive agricultural industry shaped by the activities of transnational agribusiness. The key markets are to be within the Asia-Pacific region, which already contains Australia's main trading partners (Egan, 1991; Newton, 1993; Primary and Allied Industries Council, 1989). Orientation towards this market will require some restructuring of rural industry, with an emphasis on "self reliance and risk management" (Newton, 1993, p. 7). This signals a withdrawal of the state from areas like marketing, drought relief, and agricultural research and development. It is argued that the quest for improved productivity will deliver the best outcomes for both agricultural competitiveness *and* a sustainable system of farming (Healy, 1991; Newton, 1993). A number of programs, of which the Rural Adjustment Scheme is the most important, aim to support the restructuring process by easing unviable producers out of the industry, thereby assisting "successful" farmers to expand their operations. The government has also targeted assistance at non-agricultural rural people through a variety of programs, focusing on business and community development. These are aimed at "helping rural communities to help themselves" (Newton, 1993, p. 12).

These programs reflect an extension into rural policy of the discourses of efficiency, accountability, non-intervention, rationalisation, and managerialism that have come to dominate Australian public policy making (Collingridge, 1991; Pusey, 1992). There have been two approaches. First, *rural* policies have targeted rural social issues and have sought to identify specifically "rural" problems. These are approaches that emphasise *difference*. For example, the communications and information needs of isolated rural and remote populations have led to the establishment—at considerable expense—of the "Countrylink" government information service. There have been a number of other innovative and effective responses to rural people's needs (Sjostedt, 1993). Later, we describe some of the initiatives that have targetted the specific educational needs of rural dwellers.

Second, *national* policies formulated at the federal level generally embody the assumption that the social needs and situations of rural Australians mirror those of urbanites. These approaches emphasise *similarity*. They often have led to the unquestioning application of generic policies and programs without acknowledgment of local particularities. They can be readily used to justify strategies of centralisation and rationalisation (Collingridge, 1991). At the same time, a commitment to equality of outcomes has ensured that rural and remote populations, with the marked exception of Aboriginal populations, have received a level of service commensurate with non-rural people. Such a philosophy, for example, has driven the nationwide provision of high quality communication services (AUSTEL, 1992) and, as indicated below, has also shaped much educational policy and provision.

The tension between the need for specific services and the desire for access to generic services is a difficult one to resolve, but is central to debates around rural human service provision. A similar dichotomy underlies the provision of education to rural Australians. It is to a review of some of these issues that we now turn.

Policies That Focus Specifically on Rural Education

Since the early 1970s, federal governments have shaped educational policy and provision through linking financial grants to the states to

the fulfilment of social justice and equity objectives. The first such program to focus on *rural* Australia was the Disadvantaged Country Areas Program launched in 1977. The program sought to improve access to education for rural students through improved educational materials and curricula, enhanced quality and relevance of educational delivery, and the establishment of measures designed to redress geographical, social, and cultural isolation.

The program, now called the Country Areas Program, has encouraged innovative strategies that have demonstrated positive effects on student development, rural educational provision, access, participation, and retention rates (Bluer & La'roque, 1990). The program has been well received and supported by rural communities (Mason & Randell, 1992). Indeed, urban schools may now adopt typically "rural" solutions to problems, as in the use of advanced communications technologies (telematics) to offer subjects between schools, or in the implementation of vertical groupings or composite classes to sustain or increase curriculum diversity.

A number of specifically "rural" initiatives have been taken within the context of the developing education and training agenda (described in more detail below). The report, *In the national interest: Secondary education and youth policy in Australia* (Curriculum Development Council, 1987), drew attention to the inequitable educational outcomes facing rural young people. As a consequence, a further report, *Schooling in rural Australia* (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1988), was commissioned by the federal government and was the first to focus on the educational needs of rural Australians. It recommended expansion of the Country Areas Program; increased use of information technology to provide a comprehensive curriculum in small, rural secondary schools; steps to improve access to education for indigenous students in remote rural locations; and an increase in financial support to families and students required to live away from home.

Many of these recommendations were incorporated into subsequent federal policy statements on education such as *Strengthening Australia's schools* (Dawkins, 1988) and *A fair go* (Dawkins & Kerin, 1989). These re-affirmed social justice and equity principles and the resolve of the federal government to provide rural Australians with a high quality, relevant education and training system. State and territory governments responded by accepting, in principle, much of the federal policy on education and training. This acceptance has allowed the states and territories access to additional federal funding, particularly for programs aimed at increasing secondary level participation and retention.

In 1991, the federal government's education and training advisory body, the National Board of Education, Employment, and Training (NBEET), released the report, *Toward a national education and training strategy for rural Australians* (NBEET, 1991). This provided a timely overview of the provision of education and training to rural Australians. It recognised access to these services as an important social justice issue and established a series of education and training objectives. These included full participation by rural young people in the equivalent of 12 years of structured education and/or training; participation in higher and technical education to levels comparable with metropolitan areas by 1995; and, by 2001, adequate participation by non-metropolitan adult workers in skills training and re-training to levels necessary to satisfy economic, social, environmental, individual, and community needs.

Notwithstanding the policy rhetoric, significant barriers to the education and training of rural Australians remain. The NBEET report indicated substantial *inequality* between urban and rural people regarding access and the appropriateness and quality of services. Despite some progress, recent initiatives "had been largely ad hoc, sectorally, or institutionally based, undertaken by one level of government only and/or lacking a secure funding base" (Waddell, 1993, p. 3). The report revealed significant unevenness in provision, a variety of different unmet needs in different areas, and a consequent need for greater flexibility and coordination. Retention and participation rates for rural, and particularly remote, young people remained a key concern. For example, the Year 12 completion rate for remote young people was 52%, compared with an urban rate of 70%; 20-24 year olds in rural areas participated in higher education at *half* the rate of their urban counterparts (NBEET, 1991).

Subsequent research commissioned by NBEET (reported in Waddell, 1993) has revealed the difficulty of integrating rural and remote areas into the national programs of education and training. It demonstrates the great diversity of non-metropolitan communities and the lack of any unitary criteria for establishing their needs. As a consequence it is admitted that rural people will ultimately lose out: "It is not possible to provide for

all people in non-metropolitan Australia the same ease, depth, and breadth of access to post-compulsory education and training as is available to metropolitan people" (Waddell, 1993, p. 5). Provision of services must be "realistically" balanced against "broad policy decisions" and the "provisions individuals can reasonably be expected to seek outside (their own) location" (NBEET, reported in Waddell, 1993, p. 5).

Such findings, while reflecting the reality for many rural Australians, must be viewed with a certain degree of apprehension. Consultation with rural dwellers has shown that provision of adequate education and training is seen to be crucial to the survival of rural young people and their communities (Quixley, 1992). There is a strong interconnectedness between employment, education, income support, housing, and transport (Croce, 1994). If education and training policies fail to respond to the needs of particular rural communities, it is unlikely that young people will be able to remain in them, and the communities will suffer accordingly. The federal and state governments, in a time when there are many competing demands on scarce resources, will have to decide whether they are prepared to make the investments necessary for the survival of rural communities.

Education Policy: National Approaches

Education in Australia has been shaped by the relationship between state and federal governments. Following federation in 1901, the states transferred certain taxation rights to the Commonwealth in return for funds disbursed according to a formula based primarily on population density. School and technical/further education remain the administrative responsibility of the states, though it is increasingly dependent on federal funding and subject to federal control. University education is fully financed by the federal government. Free public education has been provided in Australia since the 19th century and is supplemented by a private, though largely state financed, Catholic system and a small but increasingly influential number of elite private schools (both religious and secular).

Each state and territory department of education was established with, and operated under, a strongly centralised administration. For rural schools, the key outcome of these administrative structures was *equality of provision*. This was manifested in a number of ways, including a mandatory state-wide curriculum; an inspectorial system to monitor and assess teachers and to recommend promotional appointments; a centralised staffing operation to ensure that every school was adequately staffed, regardless of location; and uniformity in design of school buildings and fittings, even to the extent of the colour of wall paint. This focus on equality of provision has generally benefited rural communities, but it has also meant that education in country areas has been shaped by policies conceived and enacted in the metropole (Boylan, 1993).

Educational policy in Australia has, for the last decade, been shaped by economic restructuring and fiscal crisis, aspects of which we described above. The educational policy agenda has been determined by the corporatist alliance of the Federal Labor Government, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and big business representatives (e.g., the Business Council of Australia). The economic restructuring process described earlier has been accompanied by the rhetoric of "building the Clever Country." The main concern has been to respond to the changing nature of the labor market through the development of high-technology industries in manufacturing (including the processing of rural products) and services (especially tourism and information services).

The blueprints for the education system designed to produce "the Clever Country" are enshrined in a troika of highly influential government reports: the so-called Finn (1991), Mayer (1992), and Carmichael (1992) reports. The policy directions and practices outlined in these reports raise concerns for rural Australians. Their overall approach represents the most systematic and profound attempt by the Australian government to restructure education. It is a strategy determined by the agendas of economic and social restructuring, and by the demands of economic rationalism, fiscal crisis, globalisation of the economy, and the unemployment crisis (Porter, Rizvi, Knight, & Lingard, 1992). A brief summary of each report follows.

Young peoples' participation in post-compulsory education and training (Finn, 1991). Finn reviews the future of post-compulsory education and training, with a view to increasing participation and retention levels. He suggests that by 2001, 95% of 19 year-olds should have completed 12 years of school, have an initial post-school qualification, or be participating in education and training. Education is linked to work-related "competencies," to be developed by all young people through a range

of possible education and/or training "pathways."

Employment-related key competencies: A proposal for consultation (Mayer, 1992). Mayer further develops the concept of generic "key competencies." These "apply to work generally rather then being specific to work in particular occupations or industries" (Mayer, 1992, p. 5). Seven work-related key competencies are proposed, each with three levels of performance: (a) collecting, analysing, and organising ideas and information; (b) expressing ideas and information; (c) planning and organising activities; (d) working with others and in teams; (e) using mathematical ideas and techniques; (f) solving problems; and (g) using technology.

The Australian vocational certificate training system (Carmichael, 1992) Carmichael proposes an integrated competency-based national system of vocational education and training. He provides a further integration of the processes outlined in the earlier reports. The ultimate aim is to provide flexible pathways in education and training for workers throughout their working lives.

It is clear that the vision of education and training embodied in these three reports is something new. It integrates academic education, vocational education and training, and the recognition of work-based skills over one's working life. The link between education and economic development is made obvious in an unprecedented way and has come to dominate discussions of schooling, training, and employment creation. If Australia is to develop as an advanced industrial nation into the next century, education—and, more specifically, a well-trained workforce—is the key.

The National Approach: Implications for Rural Australia

The vision of Finn, Mayer, and Carmichael is meant to embrace the futures of all Australians, but how will it apply in rural areas? As we have seen, rural Australia is undergoing a process of economic restructuring. Employment in agriculture is static and is rapidly declining in many other "traditional" areas (e.g., textiles, food processing, retailing). The main areas of growth are in the service sector, particularly in tourism which is predicted to become Australia's largest and fastest growing industry by the end of the century (Grey, Edelmann, & Dwyer, 1991). Employment opportunities in the service sector may promise little to rural people. Recent studies of ski-related tourism development in New Zealand may give pointers to the Australian experience (e.g., see Bone, Cheers, & Hill, 1993). Phillips and Campbell (1993) found that the majority of jobs went to people from outside the locality and that local employment was of a menial and/or casual nature (e.g., part-time cleaning, waitressing). In addition, investment funds were sourced from outside the community and profits were largely repatriated, often to overseas interests.

An education system wholly related to work may make little sense in communities in which unemployment and underemployment are endemic. In these situations, the most suitable education may be that which assists rural young people to leave the community or to survive within it (Quixley, 1992; Scott, 1993). At the same time, rural communities may have greater potential to mobilise the community-education-employment connections and resources that are a necessary part of the new educational strategies. Cumming's (1992) analysis of school-work programs suggests that they may operate more favourably in non-metropolitan areas. A number of rural schools and communities have been very successful in building such school-community-work links, for example in the expanding areas of horticulture, recycling, environmental management, and the hospitality industries.

There are a number of specific concerns that apply to the federal government's vision for education. The first relates to *access*: Young people in rural and remote areas are less likely to gain access to the educational and training facilities and opportunities required to enable them to compete in the labour market (Croce, 1994). The concept of "flexible pathways" makes little sense in a situation of no choice. The delivery of the full range of education and training options to all Australians, regardless of where they live, may never be a reality. As a result, they may well get left behind in the developing information economy (d'Plesse, 1993).

Second, there is a danger that the development and definition of "competencies"—the core of the new system—will be based on non-rural models and experiences. There is evidence (e.g., in the development of competency standards for the youth services sector) that rural experience *can* be taken into account, but this is a lengthy, complex, and expensive process that requires extensive research and consultation. It is likely that urban-based industry and educational groups will fail to reflect the experiences of rural people and work situations.

Third, notwithstanding the social justice agenda espoused by the federal government, there is a danger that the real problems posed by rural disadvantage and isolation will fail to be adequately recognised in the development of the new education and training systems. In a competition where those disadvantaged by gender, racism, poverty, disability, or age are also seeking special recognition, it is likely that the concerns of rural people, who have diminishing political influence, will be overlooked.

Fourth, these blueprints were developed with little representation or consultation with teachers. As a result, many teachers and their unions are wary of the restructuring process proposed in the Finn, Mayer, and Carmichael reports. Foggo and Martin (1992) argue that "the agenda has not arisen from within the teaching profession, and is not necessarily the one teachers would choose" (p. 39). This clearly has serious implications for the implementation of the new agenda.

Conclusions

We have attempted to show how the restructuring of rural and remote Australia places particular constraints on the provision of education in country areas. It is clear that, in many significant ways, rural Australia is changing. Demographic change is reflected in the population decline of many inland areas, while regional centres, the urban fringe, tourist resorts, and many coastal settlements are coming to terms with sometimes dramatic population growth. The economic basis of rural life is also changing: The continued capital intensification of agriculture may help to ensure its economic health, but its place as a significant employer or support of meaning is undergoing profound alteration. Similar trends are occuring in the food and fibre processing industries. At the same time, new avenues of livelihood are developing in the service and information industries, though the social implications and distributional outcomes of these new developments remain unclear.

Into this uncertain future rural educators are having to adjust to a radically new educational agenda, based on universal school retention, the development of competency-based education and training, and the concept of life-long learning. Underpinning these are sometimes contradictory notions of access, equity, and social justice. There may be real dangers for rural people in these developments. Unless a conscious and consistent effort is applied to ensure their inclusion in new initiatives, they face the danger of double or treble disadvantage. We endeavored to show how attempts have been made to bring rural education into the developing national picture. The challenge for all involved in rural education is to keep it there.

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