

3. Educational Attainment

The research on educational attainment (educational levels) and the labour market is unequivocal. High levels of educational attainment are consistently linked with well-paying occupations that provide individuals with status and financial security. Recent studies indicate that the relationship between education and earnings is positive, strong and persistent for both young graduates and older workers. High educational attainment is also one of the strongest predictors of an individual's ability to access employment opportunities offering authority and autonomy in the workplace such as supervisory and management positions.

According to the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, between 1992 and 1996 44,700 net jobs have been discontinued for Atlantic Canadians with a high school education or less. Over that same period, 71,000 net jobs have been created for Atlantic Canadians with educational levels above high school graduation.

The closure of the ground fishery has no doubt influenced this development, but the same trend is occurring across Canada. During those four years of economic growth in the Canadian economy as a whole, employment among Canadians with a high school diploma or less is down almost seven percent. In contrast, employment creation for workers with more than a high school diploma has increased by 18.2%.

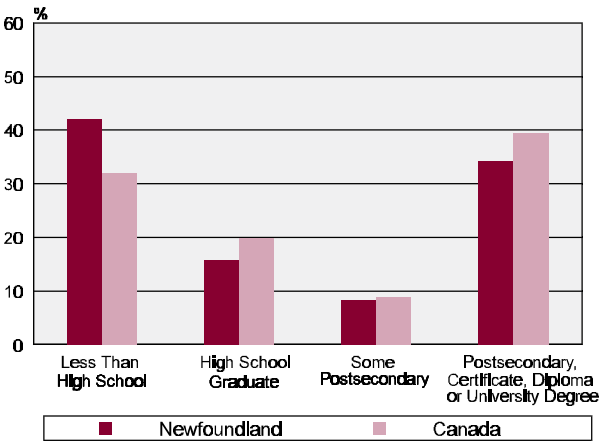
This chapter focuses on educational attainment within the population of Newfoundland and Labrador. It profiles educational levels over time and compares improvements in this province with those of the Country generally. It also examines gender differences in educational attainment levels and the relationships among education, employment and dependence on government support benefits.

The sources for educational attainment data are the Canadian Census, Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey and School Leavers Follow-up Survey as well as the databases of the Provincial Departments of Education and Human Resources and Employment and the Federal Department of Human Resources Development.

3.1 What is the profile of educational attainment in Newfoundland?

In the past, reports of the low educational attainment levels in the population of Newfoundland have portrayed the Province less favourably than other provinces in Canada. It has been widely reported that the general level of schooling in this province continues to be lower than the national average. Estimates of educational attainment from the Canadian census, studies of literacy and numeracy, and until recently, graduation rates from secondary school have all indicated lower levels of education among the citizens of this province when compared to our Canadian counterparts. To a large extent this situation continues to exist despite substantial improvements in the provision of educational infrastructure and opportunities

Figure 3.1.1: Educational Attainment Rate of the Population,¹ Newfoundland and Canada, 1996



Source: 1996 Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada
1. Population aged 15 and over.

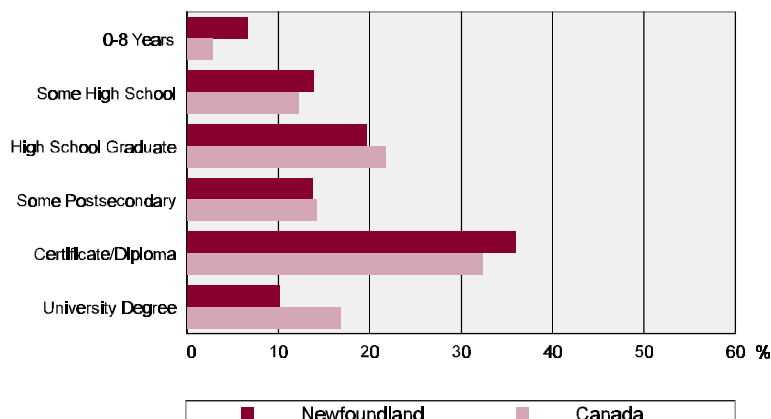
since confederation and particularly within the last 30 years.

In this document, the educational attainment of adults is described in terms of the number of years of schooling attained or the acquisition of a certificate, diploma or degree.

Figure 3.1.1 presents a 1996 educational attainment profile for Newfoundland and Canada based on data from Statistics Canada's 1996 Labour Force Survey. When compared to the national average, the chart clearly shows that a lower percentage of the adult population (defined as the population aged 15 and over) in Newfoundland (34.2%) had attained a postsecondary certificate, degree or diploma than the national average (39.4%). Similarly, a higher proportion of the Province's adult population had less than a high school education - 42.0% compared to 31.9% nationally.

When the data are examined at a lower level of aggregation and for individuals in the 20-34 year-old age group (Figure 3.1.2), some interesting results emerge. For example, the proportion of the Newfoundland population with a postsecondary certificate or diploma exceeds the national average for this segment of the population and there is no substantial difference between the Province and the Country with respect to the group of individuals with some postsecondary education. Nevertheless, compared to Canada, as a whole, the Province continues to have relatively fewer people with a university degree and a relatively greater number with less than high school completion in this 20-34 year-old age group.

Figure 3.1.2: Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 20 to 34, Newfoundland and Canada, 1996

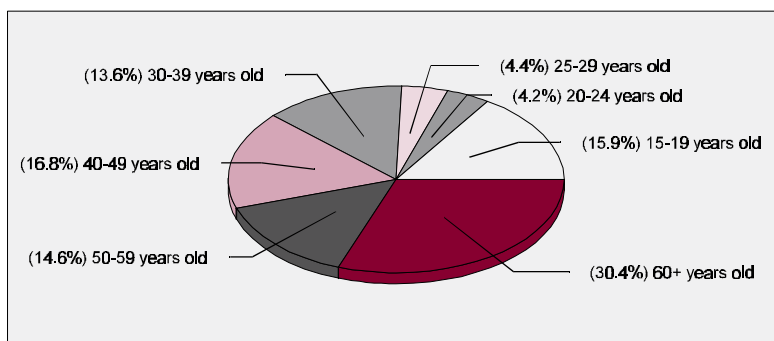


Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada 1996

Although high levels of out-migration among younger educated Newfoundlanders is slowing the rate at which the Province can reach national attainment levels, it is clear that the Province will soon close the gap. Figures 3.1.3 presents a pie chart which shows a breakdown of the proportion of the Newfoundland population aged 15 and over with "less than high school" and Figure

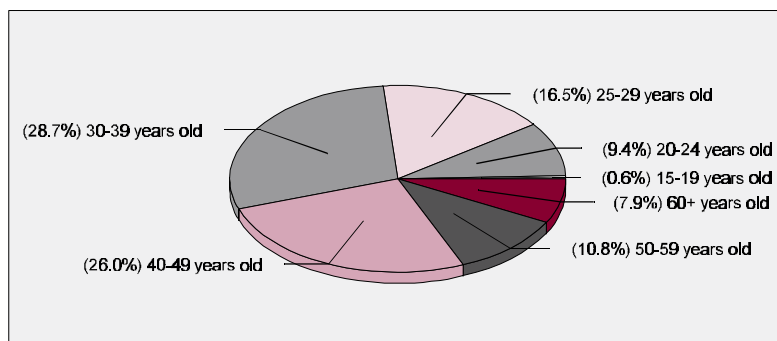
3.1.4 presents a similar chart for those "with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree". Among those in the Province with "less than high school" 46.3% were 50 years of age or older. Only 8.6% were in the 20-29 year old age group. Similarly, of those with a "certificate, diploma or degree" 81.3% were younger than 50 years of age.

Figure 3.1.3: Proportion of the Population with less than High School by Age Category, Newfoundland, 1996



Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada 1996

Figure 3.1.4: Proportion of the Population with a Postsecondary Certificate, Diploma or University Degree by Age Category, Newfoundland, 1996



Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada 1996

These indicators show that the Province continues to experience lower than average educational attainment levels in its general population, but this is largely a result of extremely low attainment among older adults, particularly those older than fifty. They also show strong attainment among younger population groups within the Province, especially in the proportion with a postsecondary certificate or diploma. It is anticipated that as the population ages, the percentage of people with less than high school will decrease relative to the national average and the percentage with higher attainment levels will increase. Other indicators such as the high school graduation rate, ABE and GED activity, and postsecondary participation measures tend to support these assertions.

3.2 How has the level of educational attainment changed?

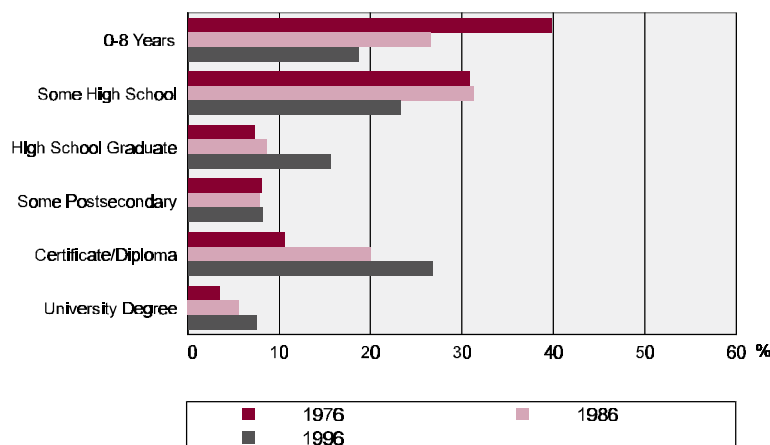
What must be considered in any current comparison of education

levels between Newfoundland and the Country generally is the educational profile of this province, historically. Just 20 years ago more than 70% of the people in this province had not completed high school. Newfoundland has had to move a very great distance to reach Canadian standards in educational attainment. While educational

attainment levels in Newfoundland remain lower than the levels for Canada as a whole, it is clear that this province has made some remarkable gains in educational attainment over the 20-year period between 1976 and 1996. The rate of improvement has been significant.

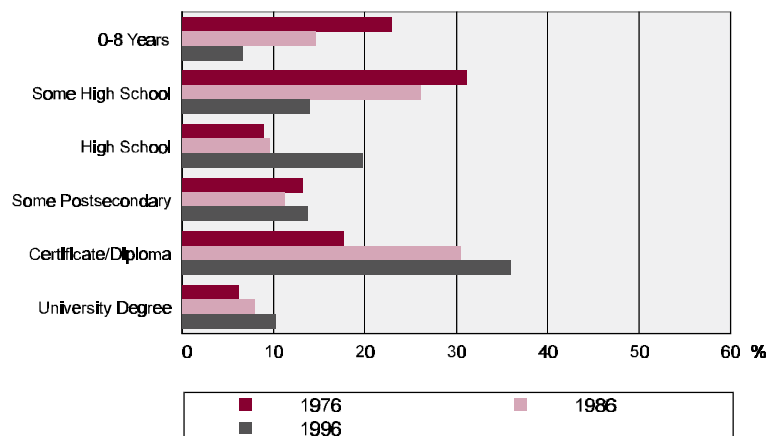
Figure 3.2.1 provides educational attainment levels by attainment category for the population aged 15 and over for the years 1976, 1986 and 1996. In 1976, approximately 40% of the adult population in this province had not attained even a Grade 9 education. By 1986 this percentage had decreased to 26.6% and in 1996 stood at 18.7%. This represents a real decrease of more than 100% over the twenty-year period. Similarly increases in attainment were seen at the higher education levels. For example, the proportion of adults aged 15 and over with high school graduation and above increased from 29.4% in 1976 to 58.1% in 1996, a 98% increase. The most significant gain, however, was in the proportion of

Figure 3.2.1: Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 15 and Over, Newfoundland, 1976, 1986 and 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 92-827, 1976; 93-110, 1986 and 1996 Labour Force Survey

Figure 3.2.2: Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 20 to 34, Newfoundland, 1976, 1986 and 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 92-827, 1976; 93-110, 1986 and 1996 Labour Force Survey

the population with a certificate or diploma rising from 10.6% to 26.7% over the period.

When the same 20 year comparisons described above are examined for the population aged 20-34 (Figure 3.2.2) improvements in the educational profile of this group, in some cases, are even

more pronounced. Whereas in 1976 over half the population of 20-34 year-olds (54%) had not completed high school, by 1996 this percentage had decreased to 20.5%. Similar improvements were seen in high school attainment levels and in the numbers of people who had completed postsecondary education. The proportion of 20-34

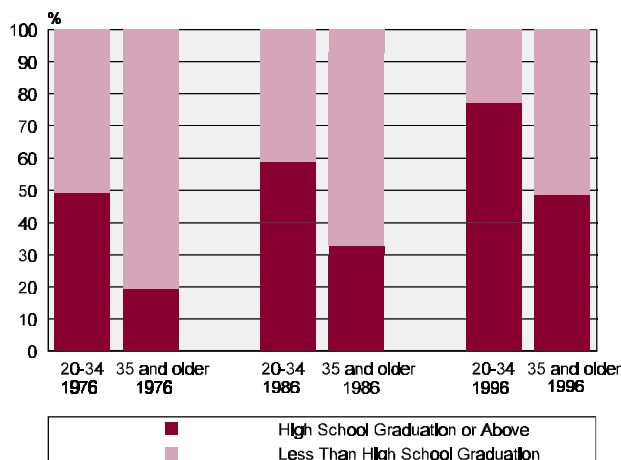
year-olds with university degrees, for example, increased by 67% over the four census periods.

Figure 3.2.3 provides a comparison of the educational attainment levels of younger and older age groups for the years 1976, 1986 and 1996. The stacked bar graph shows the proportion of the population with high school graduation or above and the proportion with less than high school for the 20-34 year-old age group and for the 35 and older age group. The chart shows the Province has made considerable gains over the period and that those with less than a high school education are mainly older adults. More than three-quarters of the 20-34 year-olds have completed secondary school. However, the data show that there are still a significant number of older adults in the population who do not have a high school education or the equivalent.

Was the magnitude of the improvements seen in the educational attainment of the Newfoundland population characteristic of the Canadian population? In a word, no. While educational levels among Canadians, as a whole, did increase substantially, the gain was highest in Newfoundland. For example, between 1976 and 1996, levels of college and university attainment in this province increased at a greater rate than the national average. Over the 20 year period, the proportion of this province's population with a college certificate or diploma or a university degree or diploma increased by 143% compared to the Canadian average increase of 119%.

Over the same period, and for the same population group, the

Figure 3.2.3: Proportion of the Population with High School Graduation or Above, Aged 20-34 versus Aged 35 and Older, Newfoundland, 1976, 1986 and 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 92-827, 1976; 93-110, 1986 and 1996 Labour Force Survey

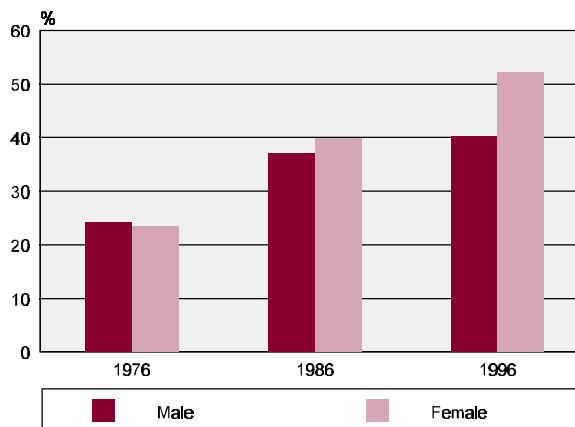
proportion of those with less than high school decreased by 47% for the Country as a whole compared to a decrease of 41% for this province.

These indicators describe a province that is still behind the Canadian average in terms of general levels of educational attainment, but one that is rapidly catching up to national levels. With the Province's escalating high school graduation rates, relatively low dropout rates and the substantial gains made in postsecondary participation, it is expected that educational attainment levels will continue to move closer to the national level and eventually close the attainment gap. There is, however, the concern that some of these gains are being offset by high levels of out-migration on the part of our younger, more highly educated population.

3.3 What gender differences exist in educational attainment?

Educational attainment levels of females have improved significantly over the 20 year period from 1976 to 1996. Census data were combined with the results of the 1996 Labour Force Survey to derive a picture of educational attainment by gender presented in Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. The population group under study in these charts are younger adults, 20-34 years of age. Compared to 1976 when the percentage of males with a certificate, diploma or degree, at 24.2% was slightly higher than the 23.2% of females at this level, postsecondary attainment of females in 1986 exceeded that of males. This gender difference increased since 1986 and the most

Figure 3.3.1: Proportion of the Population Aged 20-34 with Postsecondary Certificate, Diploma or Degree by Gender, Newfoundland, 1976, 1986 and 1996



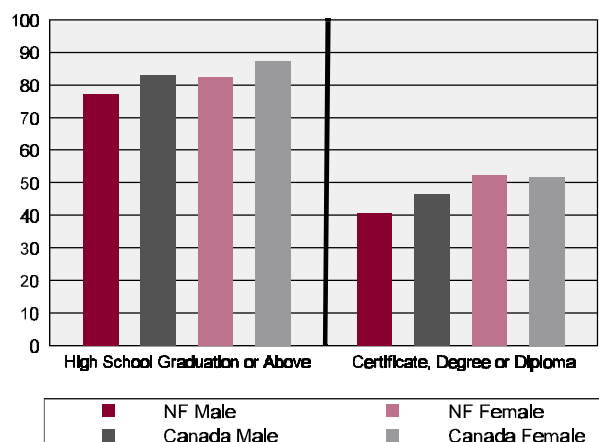
Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 92-827, 1976; 93-110, 1986 and 1996 Labour Force Survey

current figures for 1996 show female postsecondary attainment of a certificate, diploma or degree to be approximately 12 percentage points above that of males.

Figure 3.3.2 compares 1996 educational attainment levels by gender for this province with those

of Canada as a whole. The data confirm gender differences in high school attainment levels described earlier in this chapter based on a time series of high school graduation rates. Among 20-34 year-olds, 82.2% of females had attained a high school education, considerably less than the

Figure 3.3.2: Percentage of the Population Aged 20-34 with Different Educational Attainment Levels by Gender, Newfoundland and Canada, 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Labour Force Survey

Canadian average for females which was 87.1% in 1996. This compares to 77% for males in this province and 82.9% for Canadian males generally.

Gender differences are apparent also at the postsecondary level. The percentage of females in the Province with a postsecondary designation at the certificate, diploma or degree level was greater than the percentage of males both provincially and nationally. Postsecondary attainment of females in Newfoundland within this age group was also slightly above the national average for females. Compared to the female rate of 52.1%, only 40.3% of males provincially and 46.5% nationally had attained a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.

In conclusion, the indicators of attainment show that the proportion of females with a certificate, diploma or degree increased by 122% over a 20-year period. However, male attainment levels have not increased at the same rate so that there currently exists a substantial gender difference in favour of females. This difference exists both nationally and provincially. Fewer younger males than females in Canada have at least a high school certificate and fewer have attained a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. The data further suggest that for Newfoundland this difference has increased markedly over the past ten years.

3.4 How does the proportion of young adults with high school graduation compare nationally?

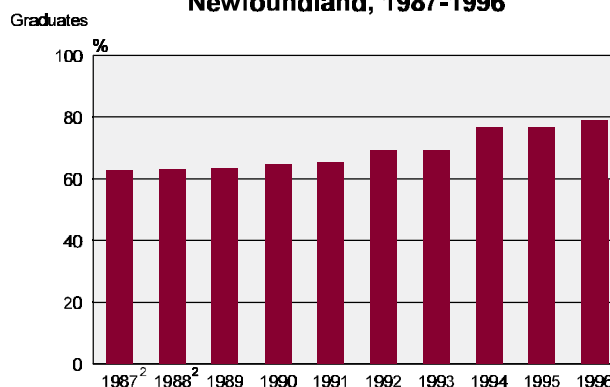
Graduation from high school is valued in our society. It is the minimum requirement for entry into most postsecondary education programs and for some low level occupations in the labour force. Because recent secondary school graduates constitute the largest component of the population of new entrants into postsecondary institutions, their success in graduating from the school system is included in this compendium of postsecondary indicators.

The commonly accepted method of determining graduation rates in the school system involves a calculation of age-specific ratios of graduates to the population. The ratios for each age are then added to arrive at an estimate of graduates. Section 3.2 described significant improvements in the high school

graduation rates in recent years. This improvement is illustrated in Figure 3.4.1. Over the ten-year period 1987 to 1996 the graduation rate increased by 31% from 62.7% to 82.2%. Of course the actual number of graduates, as described in Section 1.4, is decreasing and is expected to continue to decrease until well into the next century.

More females than males are graduating in this province, a phenomenon identified in Newfoundland a number of years ago, but one that is not unique to this province. Over the past several years differences of about 12 percentage points between male and female graduation rates in Newfoundland have not been uncommon. It does seem, however, that the discrepancy between male and female performance, while substantial, is not increasing any further. It is likely there will continue to be more female high school graduates entering the postsecondary system for the foreseeable future, but that the gap

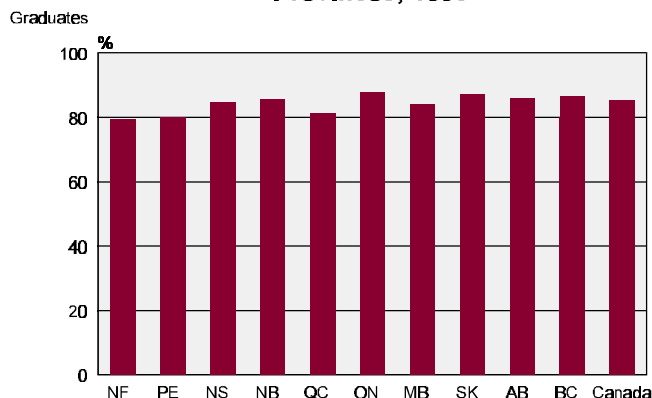
Figure 3.4.1: High School Graduation Rate,¹ Newfoundland, 1987-1996



Source: Department of Education

1. Fictitious cohort method compares the number of graduates for a given age group to the total population for that same age group. The graduation rate is calculated by taking the sum of age-specific ratios ([number of graduates aged 15 divided by the population aged 15] + [number of graduates aged 16 divided by the population aged 16]... + [number of graduates aged 19 divided by the population aged 19]).
2. Proportion of graduates to population aged 18 method.

Figure 3.4.2: Percentage of High School Graduates in the Population Aged 22-24, Newfoundland, Canada and Provinces, 1995



Source: Statistics Canada, School Leavers Follow-up Survey, 1995

between males and females will lessen as the graduation rate for females reaches its ceiling earlier than the rate for males.

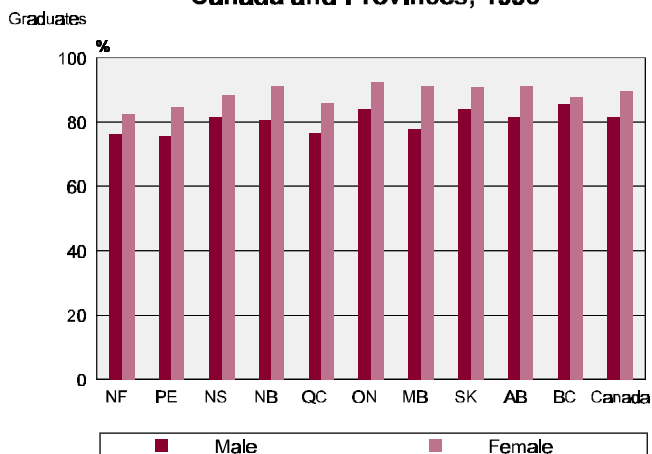
Despite the marked increase in graduation levels seen in Figure 3.4.1, information from Statistics Canada's 1995 School Leavers Follow-up Survey and other sources

indicate Newfoundland still has the lowest proportion of young adults with high school graduation among Canadian provinces. Figures 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 show the percentage of high school graduates in the population aged 22-24 by province and by gender and province. Although Newfoundland trails the other provinces on this measure, it

is clear that differences among provinces are very small, ranging from 79.3% in this province to 88% in Ontario. The difference between this province and the national average is slightly less than six percentage points. The gender difference described above is evident in the data derived from the Statistics Canada study. The percentage of female high school graduates in the 22-24 year old population exceeds that for males in every Canadian province and correspondingly, for the Country as a whole.

The overall increase in the proportion of high school graduates in this province may be a result of several factors. It is likely that more students are seeing the value of completing their education and are staying in school to graduation. In addition, current economic and employment conditions and the decrease in the availability of low skill occupations have severely curtailed the opportunities for students to leave school early to gain employment. It is believed that a combination of these and other factors, including a host of federal and provincial initiatives aimed at keeping students in school are contributors to the gains seen for this indicator.

Figure 3.4.3: Percentage of High School Graduates in the Population Aged 22-24 by Gender, Newfoundland, Canada and Provinces, 1995

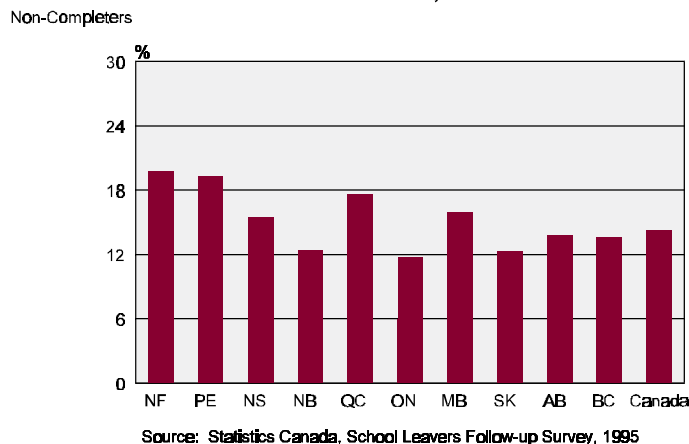


Source: Statistics Canada, School Leavers Follow-up Survey, 1995

3.5 How does the number of high school non-completers in the population of young adults compare nationally?

The complement of the indicators presented in Section 3.4 is the percentage of young adults aged 22-24 who have not completed secondary school (Figure 3.5.1). The 1995 School Leavers Follow-up Survey conducted by Statistics Canada estimates this province's

Figure 3.5.1: Percentage of High School Non-Completers in the Population Aged 22-24, Newfoundland, Canada and Provinces, 1995



non-completion rate for this age group at 19.7%, the highest level in the Country. High school non-completion is also high in Prince Edward Island and Quebec at 19.2% and 17.2%, respectively. Reasons why the proportion of non-completers within 22-24 year-olds is so high in this province are believed to be twofold. Firstly,

those individuals in the survey would have graduated from secondary school approximately between 1987 and 1991. Graduation rates during this period were still relatively low - between 63% and 65%. Secondly, out-migration among educated young adults has been particularly high in recent years, as discussed

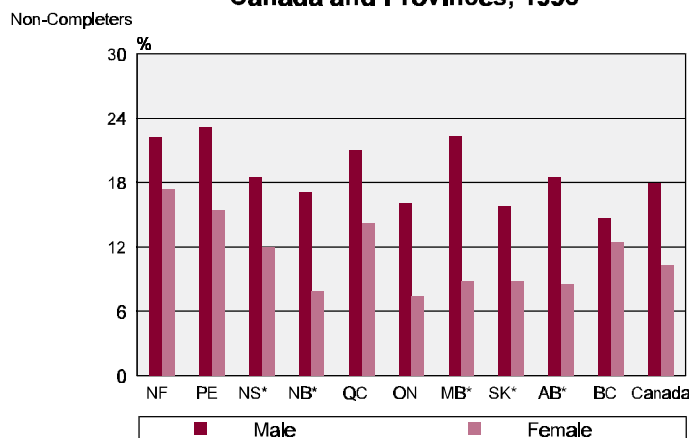
in Section 1.7 of this report. In fact, in 1995, the year of the School Leavers Follow-up Survey, 31% (approximately 2,500) of out-migrants were in the 20-24 year old age group and most of these individuals are likely to have completed at least high school.

Gender differences observed in the proportion of those with high school non-completion are the reverse of those for high school graduation. Figure 3.5.2 shows that significantly more males than females do not complete secondary school and this is common to all provinces. The difference between the genders appears most acute in New Brunswick, Ontario and the Western Provinces. This is somewhat surprising since gender differences in high school graduation rates are believed to be greater in the Atlantic region than elsewhere in Canada.

3.6 How is employment related to educational attainment?

Data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey provide an estimate of the educational attainment levels of unemployed persons provincially and for Canada, generally. Figure 3.6.1 presents the unemployment rate by level of educational attainment for Newfoundland and Canada in 1995, the most current year for which data are available. Unemployment is defined as the number of people unemployed with a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the labour force with the same level of education. The chart shows a clear relationship between education and unemployment. Those individuals with higher levels of educational

Figure 3.5.2: Percentage of High School Non-Completers in the Population Aged 22-24 by Gender, Newfoundland, Canada and Provinces, 1995



attainment are less likely to be without a job.

In Newfoundland, compared to an unemployment rate of 11.1% for those with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree, 27.2% of those with less than high school were unemployed in 1995. Among the high school graduates and those with some postsecondary education in the labour force, 15.9% and 15.0% respectively, were unemployed. The same trend seen for the Province applies nationally. Lower education levels mean higher unemployment levels, although the extent of unemployment is higher for all attainment categories in Newfoundland, a reflection of higher unemployment generally. Employment opportunities for those with less than a high school education are particularly poor in Newfoundland.

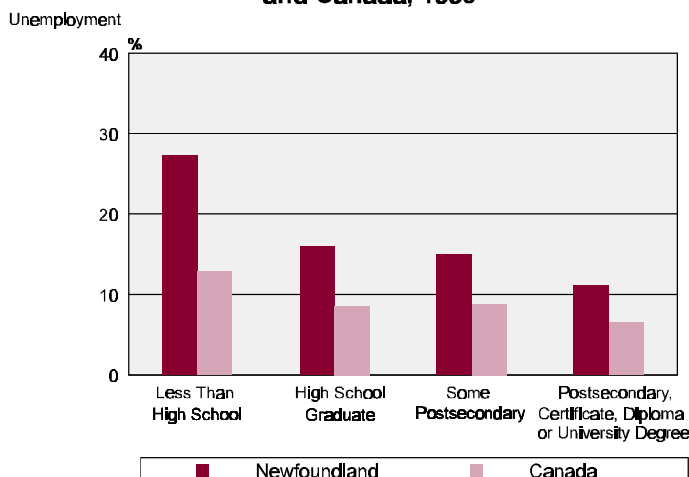
A second source providing information on employment success by education level comes from the Department of Education's

Postsecondary Graduate Follow-up Survey. This survey has been administered to graduates from postsecondary institutions in Newfoundland for a number of years. Figure 3.6.2 provides data from the survey of 1995 graduates. The surveys are completed

approximately 16 months after graduation.

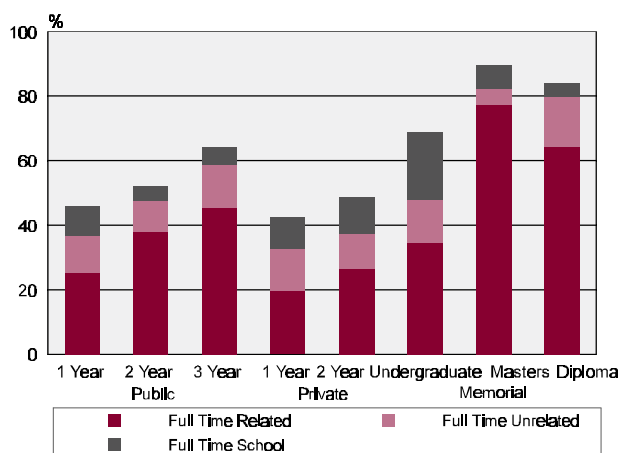
The chart illustrates the average percentage of graduates with full-time employment related to and unrelated to the graduates' training over the 16 month period following graduation. The chart also shows the average percentage of graduates in each category who were engaged in full-time training. It is evident that postsecondary graduates completing programs of longer duration had greater success in finding full-time work and full-time work related to their training. For the college sector, the percentage of recent graduates employed in a training related activity ranged from 19.4% for one-year private programs to 45.4% for three-year public programs. For Memorial University graduates, an average of 34.3% with undergraduate degrees, 77.5% with Masters degrees and 64.1% with diplomas were engaged in training-related activities over the 16 month study period. It should be noted that a significant 20.8% of

Figure 3.6.1: Unemployment Rate of the Population Aged 25 and Over by Level of Educational Attainment, Newfoundland and Canada, 1995



Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-003-XPB, Vol. 3, no. 4

Figure 3.6.2: Success¹ of 1995 Graduates² in Finding Employment by Sector and Program Length, Newfoundland



1. Average percentage of 1995 graduates in each employment category over a 16 month period, July 1995 to October 1996.
2. Based on 4,410 responses (63%) to graduate follow-up survey, with n = 7,018.

graduates with undergraduate degrees were engaged in full-time school and that many of the Memorial graduates from diploma programs already had at least an undergraduate degree prior to the completion of their diploma program.

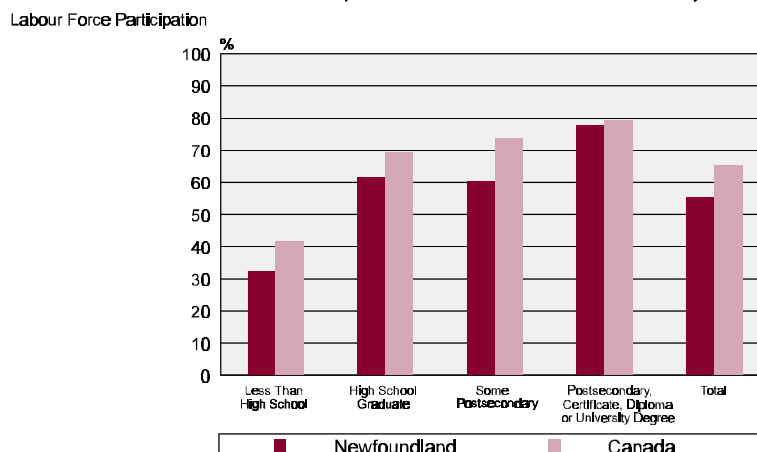
Overall, the data from both sources support the conclusion that successful employment is closely related to educational attainment. The higher the level of education the greater the likelihood of employment. In addition, the data support the assertion that higher levels of postsecondary attainment increase the likelihood of employment in a training-related area.

3.7 How is participation in the labour force related to educational attainment?

In Section 3.6 the relationship between education and unemployment was examined. It is known that those with low levels of education are more likely to be unemployed. Educational attainment is also related, in a similar way, to participation in the labour force; that is those with low levels of education are less likely to be a part of the labour force.

The labour force refers to those members of the civilian population of a particular age group who are either employed or are unemployed and seeking work or available for work. The labour force participation rate describes the labour force expressed as a percentage of the population of a given age category. Participation in the labour force means essentially that a person is working or ready and willing to work.

Figure 3.7.1: Labour Force Participation Rate of the Population Aged 25 and Over by Level of Educational Attainment, Newfoundland and Canada, 1995



Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-003-XPB, Vol. 3, no. 4

Figure 3.7.1 provides data derived from Statistics Canada's 1995 Labour Force Survey. Very few poorly educated adults have employment on a regular basis. In this province less than one-third of those aged 25 or older without a high school education were actually in the labour force. When the unemployment rate for this group at 27.2% is considered, it is obvious that fewer than one-quarter of those without a high school education in the population are actually working. The situation nationally is slightly better with 41.9% of those in this age category without a high school education participating in the labour force and unemployment at 12.8%. Comparatively, in 1995 among those with a certificate, diploma or degree, the labour force participation rate approached 80% both provincially and nationally and unemployment is lowest among these postsecondary graduates.

Overall, the data for both Newfoundland and Canada generally, confirm that as

educational attainment levels increase, participation in the labour force increases and unemployment decreases.

3.8 What is the level of educational attainment of those receiving government support benefits?

The link between educational attainment and employment is well documented and is discussed at length in this report. The 1986 Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment held one basic assumption with respect to the employability of the Province's people, "that the population of the Province, in rural as well as urban areas, in the fishery as well as service industries, be well educated." The commission was clear in its view that education provided people the means to exploit a wide variety of employment opportunities, whether they be in rural communities, in larger towns and cities within the Province, or

outside of Newfoundland. It seems obvious now that many of those with the appropriate educational background chose to pursue opportunities abroad. For many, however, without a strong education reliance on social assistance is a significant likelihood.

Educational attainment levels of adults who received social assistance payments in 1996 were compared with similar data for 1991. In 1996 there were approximately 65,000 adults between the ages of 18 and 65 who received at least one social assistance payment during the year. About 50,000 of these were "heads of households". The head of a household is generally defined as the contact person in the client household and does not necessarily refer to any particular gender. On a month-by-month basis there are normally about 36,000 cases at any given time with a flow rate of approximately 3,000. In other words there are 3,000 new cases every month and 3,000 cases are discontinued. Whenever there is a new applicant for social assistance the highest level of educational attainment is recorded. As a result the information provided here reflects educational attainment at the point of entry and does not reflect any upgrading that may have been completed during the period individuals are receiving benefits.

Figure 3.8.1 depicts the educational attainment levels of social assistance benefits recipients compared to the general adult population in this province for 1996. Educational levels are significantly lower for social assistance recipients. In fact, compared to 42% for the general population, the data show that in more than 70% of

cases, social assistance clients had not completed high school. Only 8.5% of those who received benefits in 1996 had continued beyond high school and into some form of postsecondary education. This compares to 42.4% of adults generally.

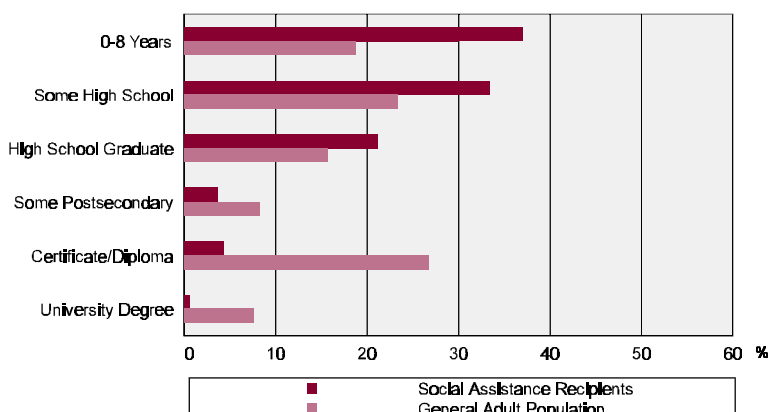
An examination of the situation in 1996 as compared to 1991 shows that educational attainment levels for social assistance clients have improved, but only marginally. Figure 3.8.2 shows that over the five-year period the percentage of clients aged 18-65 with less than high school completion decreased from 75.4% to 70.4%. Similarly, the proportion of those clients with greater than a high school education increased from 5% in 1991 to 8.5% in 1996.

Among younger social assistance clients (Figure 3.8.3), there was a greater improvement in their educational profile. Fewer had less than a high school education and there were more with some

postsecondary education. Overall, in 1996 there were more clients receiving assistance in the 18-24 year-old age group than in 1991 and this is a concern. The increase is greatest among those with a high school education although more young adults with postsecondary education or training also required social assistance in 1996 than five years earlier, likely a result of a sluggish economy in 1996.

The comparison with 1991 indicates a slight shift in the educational profile of social assistance recipients over the five-year period. It is clear, however that attainment levels of social assistance dependents are significantly different from those of the general population. The segment of the adult population receiving social assistance continues to be composed of poorly educated individuals, most of whom would stand little chance of obtaining gainful employment, even in a period of economic upswing. The recommendation of this report

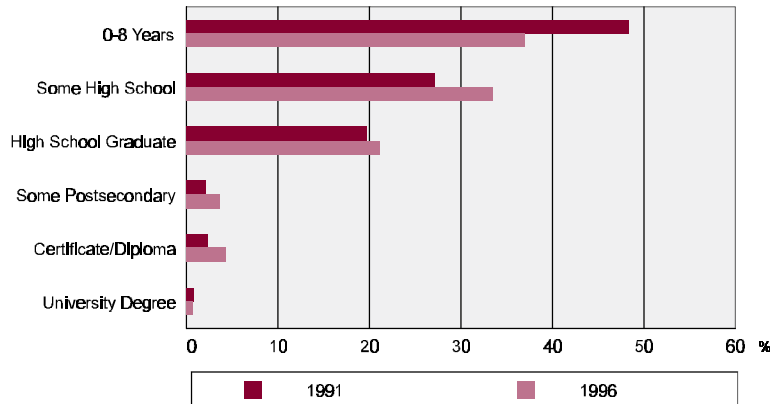
Figure 3.8.1: Educational Attainment Levels of Social Assistance Recipients¹ versus General Adult Population,² Newfoundland, 1996



Source: Department of Human Resources and Employment and Statistics Canada 1996 Labour Force Survey

1. Social Assistance Recipient population 18 years and over.
2. General Adult Population 15 years and over.

Figure 3.8.2: Educational Attainment Levels of Social Assistance Recipients 18 Years and Over, Newfoundland, 1991 and 1996



Source: Department of Human Resources and Employment

echoes those of previous researchers. In order to prepare social assistance clients for opportunities to re-enter the labour force in a meaningful way, their education levels need to be upgraded. It is unreasonable to believe that the 70% of dependents with less than a high school

education would be qualified to get jobs at even the lowest level, given their educational backgrounds. This is of particular concern for the younger dependents who have the potential to become reliant on government assistance for the rest of their lives. Virtually any expenditure that sees the majority of

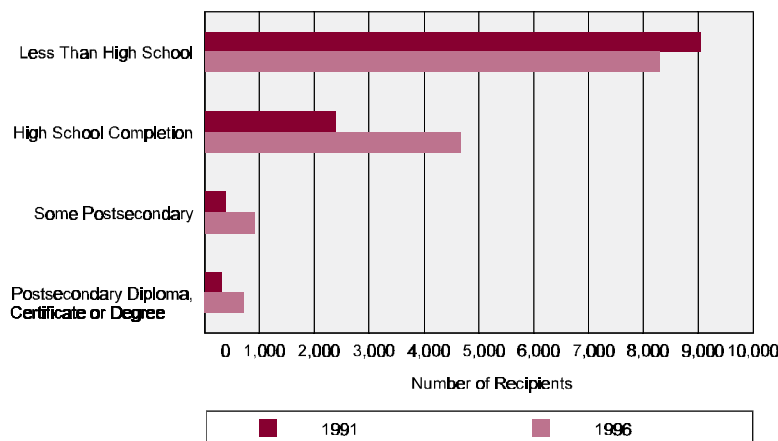
recipients reach a level of education that would allow them to enter the workforce or enter some form of postsecondary training would likely pay dividends in reducing the amount government spends on social assistance.

However, further improvement in the graduation rates for young people will not address the problem of low educational attainment among the current adult population, and in particular, among social assistance recipients. This is a major social and economic concern which requires the development of a consensus among social and government agencies about the appropriate strategies to give these individuals the prerequisite education and training to find or develop employment opportunities in this or another province.

3.9 What is the level of educational attainment of those involved in the TAGS program?

In July 1992, the Federal Government made a decision to close the northern cod fishery, the culmination of a series of events that had an unprecedented effect on the fishing and processing sector and the network of fishery support industries. By May 1994, with no indication that groundfish stocks were recovering and with stocks in other areas of the northeast Atlantic on the decline, Government declared ground fisheries in the Atlantic and Quebec regions closed. The fishery moratorium effectively displaced about 40,000 harvesting and processing workers, 70 percent of whom were residents of Newfoundland. To respond to the crisis the federal Department of

Figure 3.8.3: Educational Attainment Levels of 18-24 Year-Old Social Assistance Recipients, 1991 versus 1996



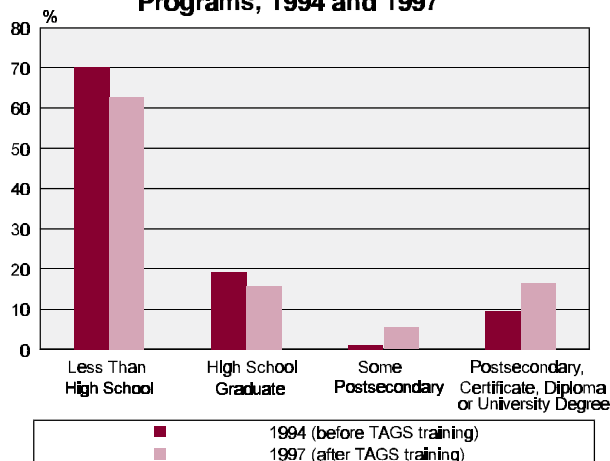
Source: Department of Human Resources and Employment

Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) established the Northern Cod Adjustment and Retraining Program (NCARP) and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS). The total budget for TAGS was \$1.9 billion.

TAGS was designed as an income support measure to address the financial need of those whose earnings would be severely limited or eliminated altogether as a result of the moratorium. TAGS also included an educational component under the “active programming” segment of the program. It soon became clear that the fishery of the future would be considerably different from the fishery prior to 1992. There would be fewer licenses to harvest groundfish, fewer processing plants and, in general, fewer employment opportunities in the fishery. In fact, one of the stated goals of the TAGS program was “to have 50% of clients eligible for TAGS adjusted out by the end of the strategy”. The TAGS funding provided opportunities for fisheries workers to seek alternatives outside the groundfishery through training and a variety of other programs including license buy-back and early retirement provisions.

Given the reality that a significant number of those employed in the fishery prior to the moratorium would need to seek employment in other sectors and the relationship between employment success and educational attainment, the education levels of TAGS recipients are explored in this report. It should be noted that the training component of TAGS was curtailed in August 1996. While no new training was approved beyond that

Figure 3.9.1: Educational Attainment Level of TAGS Clients before and after TAGS-Sponsored Education and Training Programs, 1994 and 1997



Source: Department of Education based on HRDC databases
Notes: (see notes for Table 3.9.1)

point, HRDC did continue to support TAGS clients who entered programs prior to the cancellation of the training component. Table 3.9.1 and Figure 3.9.1 provide the educational attainment levels of TAGS recipients at the beginning of the program and as of July 1997, some three years after the initial availability of training under TAGS.

In total, 27,922 individuals were registered for the TAGS program in this province. Sixty-five percent of these were male. At the beginning of TAGS, in 1994, 70.2% had less than a high school education. Another 19.2% had completed high school. Only 9.6% of TAGS recipients had completed a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree program. Over the approximately two years during which education and training programs were available just over 55% of TAGS recipients took some form of sponsored training. Some people were involved in more than one program. As of July 1997, 1,750 were still enrolled in an educational

course or program. Some of this training, if successfully completed, would lead to an increase in educational attainment. For example, approximately one-third of training was Adult Basic Education. Other forms of training consisted of personal development courses which may have been beneficial to the individual, but did not result in an increased level of educational attainment. Still other training could be classified as skills training which, in some cases, would have resulted in a certificate, diploma or degree but in many situations would have meant no change in the formal educational level of the learner, as defined by the standard attainment categories of Statistics Canada. Many of these skills training programs, such as courses in computer literacy, would undoubtedly aid individuals in finding alternative employment. Other types of skills training were directly related to the fishery itself and while doing little to assist people to find work outside the

fishery, would assist those who would be remaining in the industry.

The analysis of current educational attainment levels of TAGS clients conducted by the Department of Education for this report used the TAGS training data base of HRDC as of July 1997. At that point most of the training under the active programming component of the

funding was complete. As noted, however, there were still some TAGS clients - approximately six percent - involved in some form of education or training. It should be noted that current educational attainment levels reported in this document are based on a determination on an individual basis of whether completion of the program of study would raise

education levels (see footnotes to Table 3.9.1).

Following TAGS-sponsored training, there were modest improvements in the educational attainment levels of clients. Compared to 70.1% of clients who had not completed high school at the beginning of the moratorium, 62.6% were still in this category after the TAGS training.

Table 3.9.1: Educational Attainment Levels of TAGS Clients before and after TAGS-Sponsored Education and Training Programs

Educational Attainment Category	Upon Entry to TAGS Program		Following Completion of TAGS- Sponsored Training (July 1997)	
	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
University Degree	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Postsecondary Diploma	1.8	2.0	4.3	4.5
Postsecondary Certificate	7.7	9.7	12.0	16.5
Some Postsecondary	1.0	10.7	5.4	21.9
High School Completion	19.2	29.9	15.5	37.4
Some Secondary	29.0	58.9	25.9	63.3
0-8 Years	41.1	100	36.7	100

1. All ABE training of all time durations was allocated based on the course description. There was no indication of the level of ABE training in approximately half of the ABE records in the training database. Those ABE records with the level unknown were allocated as "Some Secondary".

2. All courses of fewer than 50 calendar days in duration were allocated as having not improved the educational attainment of the recipient with the exception of ABE as noted above.

3. All MUN, FFAW and Hospital Training was allocated one record at a time in the Training database based on the duration of the course in calendar days and the course description and course title. See the footnote below regarding the Fishing Trades.

4. All Marine, Public College and Private College Courses and those which were from unknown institutions were roughly allocated by the duration of the program. Those programs which were 50 days to 149 calendar days were generally allocated as "Some Postsecondary". Those programs which were 150 days to 399 calendar days were generally allocated as "Certificate". Those programs which were 400 days to 2,200 calendar days were generally allocated as "Diploma". However, the course description field and the title field were examined in the case of each record, which resulted in many exceptions being made. The exceptions worked in both directions. Some longer programs were deemed to add nothing to a student's educational level. In contrast, some short duration programs were deemed to have a more significant effect on the student's educational attainment.

5. The educational attainment allocated based on fishing trades programs taken at all institutions, and specifically at the FFAW and Marine Institute, were allocated as indicated. Watchkeeping Mate - Some Postsecondary, Fishing Masters IV - Some Postsecondary, Fishing Masters III - Certificate, Fishing Masters II - Diploma and Fishing Masters I - Diploma.

6. As of July 1997, 1,750 clients were still involved in some form of TAGS-sponsored education or training.

7. 493 records with unknown educational attainment levels were proportionally allocated to other categories.

Many of those who were already high school graduates advanced their education by completing postsecondary programs. The percentage of those with only a high school certificate decreased by almost 20% to 15.5% while the percentage of those with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree increased from 9.7% to 16.5% a rise of 70% over 1994 levels. Overall the percentage of TAGS clients with high school completion or greater increased from 29.9% before TAGS training to 37.4% following TAGS training, a 25.0% increase.

Whether the educational opportunities provided by the TAGS-sponsored training resulted in educational improvements that were significant enough to meet the program's goals is not a question to be addressed in this report. Some gains were made in the educational attainment levels of a segment of the population with traditionally low

levels of education and this represents an important step forward. Many people in the fish harvesting and processing sectors are now better prepared to move into other occupations in the labour force than they were three years ago. However, the fact that almost two-thirds of those involved in the fishery do not have a high school education, even after TAGS training, remains a serious concern.

It should be noted, however, that while many of the programs completed under the TAGS active programming option did not result in an increase in educational attainment, they were, nevertheless beneficial to the recipient and would have value to employment seekers or to those who will remain in the fishery. For example, a number of these programs focused on the small boat operation as a business, safety and navigation, marine emergency duties and so on.

The value of returning to a formal educational setting also has intrinsic value. It may be the impetus for many to enrol in other courses or educational programs which may lead to increases in attainment or the development of other skills beneficial in gaining or maintaining employment.

In addition, the benefit to children who observe their parents or adult siblings engaged in learning cannot be estimated, but is likely to be positive. Parents who have been engaged in academic programs provide positive role models to children, particularly in family or community settings where there has been a history of low academic achievement. In short, the educational opportunities provided under TAGS can only be viewed as positive.