

## **THOMAS A. WILSON**

Principal Partner  
Catalpa. Ltd.  
873 Warwick Avenue  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888  
(401) 467-5645

### **SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE**

Over thirty-five years of experience in public schools designing and utilizing information systems to support improvement in teaching practice and at the same time provide public accountability for public schools.

The first 25 years: co-founder of a new high school in downtown Chicago for the Chicago Public Schools; principal investigator of a national (\$5 million) study on the nature of information that supports productive change in urban schools; and Director of Development for establishing the Coalition of Essential Schools as an organization to promote a national school reform strategy.

In 1992 designed and carried out a year-long, intensive field-study of how English school inspectors come to know whether learning is happening in school classrooms and how they make public judgments about how well a school is performing. Designed and led a companion study of the American school accreditation process, with a focus on the evaluation visit.

Since 1996, as Principal Consultant for School Accountability for the Rhode Island Department of Education, designed with senior staff and Rhode Island teachers the organizational framework for a new comprehensive accountability system, SALT. SALT has gained local notice for being effective and a national reputation for including both accountability and support elements.

Architect of Practice-based inquiry®, a rigorous methodological approach to the professional school visit. The SALT school visit is based on Practice-Based Inquiry®. SALT visit teams, led by practicing teachers, have visited and written reports on 235 Rhode Island public schools in the last seven years.

Expert on the nature and function of professional judgment in evaluation, in local school accountability and intervention initiatives and in the formation of good public policy in education and conservation. Designed and helped establish different visit protocols for education accreditation associations, state departments of education, school districts and schools.

**POSITIONS HELD****CATALPA LTD.**

1997-Present

President, Principal Partner

Principal Consultant for SALT at the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Other consultancies include: Chicago Schools Alliance, Illinois Board of Education; School departments in Providence, Narraganset, Ponaganset, Pawtucket, West Warwick, and Lincoln, Rhode Island, and in Minneapolis, Minnesota., Coalition for Improved Education in South Shore (Chicago); the Annenberg Institute for School Reform; the Panasonic Foundation, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, SchoolWorks, charter schools, Chicago Public Education Fund, and the General Teaching Council (London, England).

**LAB AT BROWN**

1997-2000

Senior Research Associate

Principal researcher for a two-year project studying the accreditation process of the Commission for Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. With a special emphasis on the school Visit, this project sought to understand how accreditation works and made recommendations for improving it.

Consultant to the Boston Cluster # 7 Project.

Consultancy to RIDE, also supported in part by the LAB.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

1993-2005

Brown University

Research Fellow

Wrote *Reaching for a Better Standard: English School Inspection and the Dilemma of Accountability for American Public Schools* (Teachers' College Press, 1996) Worked with several groups on the implications of the inspection study for American practice including: The Rhode Island Department of Education, the California Department of Education, the Illinois State Board of Education, groups and individuals in Chicago, New York and Providence.

**CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF TESTING, EVALUATION  
AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

1992—1993

Boston College

Senior Research Fellow

Study Director for The School Inspection Study. Developed proposal and carried out field work in England on a study of new assessment methods for public schools.

## COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

1987-1992

Brown University

Special Assistant to the Chairman

Director of Development

Lecturer in Education

Managed fund raising, totaling over \$20 million. Superintended special projects, e.g., planning for the national evaluation of the Coalition and start-up work on new initiatives. Represented the Chairman, including testifying before Congress. Mentored Brown students interested in school reform.

## BROWN UNIVERSITY

Development Office

1984-1987

Director, Funding Computing in Higher Education

Special Assistant to the Vice President for Development

Acting Associate Director of Institute for Research in Information and Scholarship

Planned and implemented special projects for the Development Office and the University. Coordinated the preparation of a University mission statement on future directions in Brown's computing program. Managed successful campaign to raise \$40 million for new university computing facility. Coordinated the successful accreditation of the University's teacher preparation programs using experimental national standards.

## CAMBIUM, INC.

1979-1984

Chicago, Illinois

President

Consulted with more than 15 community agencies and schools serving Chicago youth. Provided consulting help for the following tasks: articulating the organization's mission; transforming its organizational structure; designing and carrying out assessment of its activities; designing and setting new program initiatives in place; planning for effective coping with change; fund raising (over \$1 million raised) and providing counsel for executive leaders.

## CENTER FOR NEW SCHOOLS

1971-1979

Chicago, Illinois

President

The Center's work focused on reforming urban public education through supporting efforts to start new schools or redesign existing ones. Co-founded and provided leadership to the Center, which grew to a national staff of more than fifty. Secured private, state and federal funding of more than \$6 million. Worked with co-principals on school reform design for Illinois State Board of Education. Directed several assessment and technical-assistance projects, including Documentation and Technical Assistance, a multi-million dollar contract with the National Institute of Education

URBAN RESEARCH CORPORATION

1969-1970

Chicago, Illinois

Director, Education Division

Under contract to the Chicago Board of Education, with support from the Chicago business community, we designed and established the Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies (Metro). This nationally acclaimed school-without-walls gave particular attention to its relationship to parents and community. Developed a comprehensive assessment program for studying Metro's establishment, which received support from the University of Illinois, the Carnegie Corporation and the National Institute of Education.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

1966-1969

Teaching Fellow

Research Assistant

Special Consultant for Evaluation -- Upward Bound

Designed and taught undergraduate courses on urban school change; interviewed and observed black and white students in newly integrated classes; designed and piloted over two years an intense and formative evaluation of Harvard's Project Upward Bound.

CARDOZO HIGH SCHOOL

1963-1965

District of Columbia Public Schools

English Teacher

Intern, Cardozo Pilot Project in Urban Teaching

Contributed to the development of the Pilot Project in Urban Teaching that won national acclaim for its work on new pedagogical methods, new curriculum and new approaches to teacher training for urban classrooms. Followed the intern year with a full year as a classroom teacher to further develop the new approaches.

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER -- THE PHILIPPINES

1961-1963

Educational Aide in Science, English and Community Development

## EDUCATION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY Ed.D., 1970

Field: Human Development.

Specialties: Human growth and education in a cross-cultural context. Theory and practice of program evaluation. Student competence, race and integration. Federal policy and school improvement.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY M.A.T., 1965

Field: Teaching English in the urban secondary school.

Specialties: Teaching American literature to black urban high school students. Apprenticeship models for teacher training. The role of curriculum development in the improvement of school practice.

EARLHAM COLLEGE B.A., 1961

Field: English.

Specialties: American Literature. Theater. Editor of student literary magazine. Chairman of board responsible for all campus publications and radio station.

### ADDITIONAL STUDY:

College Cevenol, Chambon-Sur-Lignon, France

Malabar College, Kerala, India

St. Nicholas School of the Theater Arts, Chicago

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mill Cove Conservancy (A grassroots land trust)	2001-present
Director	2005-present
Founder and Chair	2001-2005
<i>Save the Bay's</i> Allison's Award for Outstanding Environmental Advocacy	2005
Member, Board of Directors, School One. Vice President 1990-92.	1989-Present
Member AERA.	1969-present
Member International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI)	2000-present
Member, Rhode Island Skills Commission.	1990--1992
Member, Education Council of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce.	1990-1992
Certified Member, National Society of Fund Raising Executives (now "retired").	1983-present
Consultant to school systems, including Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Worcester, Massachusetts; Newton, Iowa; and Washington, DC.	1970-1984
Member, American Educational Research Association. Presentations at AERA professional meetings on alternative evaluations, technical assistance strategies and school problem solving.	1969-1979
Elected member, Executive Council of the Harvard Graduate School of Education Alumni Council.	1970-1974

Directed Carnegie Conference on Educational Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for New Schools.	1974
Member, Task Force of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools which prepared regulations for the accreditation of alternative schools.	1973
Community representative, EDUCOM, a Chicago-wide-planning process that reviewed and proposed priorities for Chicago Public Schools.	1970
Member, Editorial Board of the <u>Harvard Educational Review</u> .	1968-1969

### Practice-Based Inquiry® **REPORTS ON SCHOOLS and PROGRAMS**

- Big Picture @ Williams High School. 2006
- North Lawndale College Prep High School. 2006
- Al Raby School for Community and Environment. 2005
- Perspectives Charter School. 2005
- The AUSL Study: An evaluation study of the Academy for Urban School Leadership's Cohort Program to Improve the Quality of Teaching in Chicago Public Schools. With Stephen Ross. 2005.
- Strengthening National Board Certification in Chicago Public Schools. Chicago Public Education Fund. 2005.
- The Academy of Communications and Technology Charter School. 2003.

### **PUBLICATIONS and PRESENTATIONS**

- The Fundamentals and Foundations of Practice-Based Inquiry®*. Catalpa Ltd. 2006.
- Practice-Based Inquiry®: Answers to Basic Questions*. Catalpa Ltd. 2006.
- The Value of Rhode Island's SALT School Visit: A survey study of the perceptions of SALT visit team members*. With Mark W. Andrews. Catalpa Ltd. 2005.
- Can You Trust the Findings of a SALT School Visit Report?--The Legitimacy of Practice-Based Inquiry® as a Research Methodology*. In preparation.
- Peer Review Practice in the New Framework for English School Accountability*. General Teaching Council for England. January 2004.
- Power and Evidence in Rhode Island*. An Op Ed Commentary. Providence Journal, January 25, 2003.
- Phase One Report to RIDE and SALT Leadership*. SALT 360 Feedback and Evaluation Study. Prepared as Principal Investigator with the SALT Study Research Team. Rhode Island Department of Education, September 2001.
- Prospectus for the Center on Practice-Based Accountability*. Catalpa Ltd. January 2001.
- Legitimizing Practitioner Knowledge: Key to Effective Accountability and School Improvement*. Presented to 14<sup>th</sup> International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement. Toronto, January 2001.

*Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit: About the School Visit and Principles and Guidance.* Catalpa Ltd. and Rhode Island Department of Education, September 2000.

*Visiting Accreditation: Strengthening the Regional Accreditation Process.* March 1999. The LAB at Brown.

*Accreditation Standards and School Improvement: Putting Methodology in its Proper Place.* Chapter in *Designing Standards that Work for Professional Development Schools.* 1998. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Various SALT Handbooks related to the SALT visit.

*Foundations of the Catalpa School Visit.* 1999. Catalpa Ltd.

*SALT: A Blueprint for School Accountability for Learning and Teaching.* Rhode Island School Accountability Team. Rhode Island Department of Education, July 1996. (Served as Principal Consultant and writer for the Accountability Team.)

“On Knowing the Secret of Schools: Lessons from the British on Judging Schools with their Complexities in Mind,” *Education Week*, January 17, 1996, p. 44.

*Reaching for a Better Standard: English School Inspection and the Dilemma of Accountability for American Public Schools.* New York, Teachers College Press, 1996.

“Notes on the American fascination with the English tradition of school inspection.” *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1995, 25(1), 89-96.

*Blueprint for Teacher Education 1988-1993: Meeting New Standards.* Brown University. Education Department. 1988.

*National Leadership for the Information Society.* Brown University. 1985. An in-depth case statement to win federal support for Brown's advanced academic computing program.

*Putting the Local School Pattern Together: A Desegregation Operations Manual for School Site Leadership.* A Cambium publication for the Chicago Board of Education, 1983.

*A Place to Come To.* Englewood Health Services, 1982. A case statement for this community-based school for children with learning difficulties, which supported successful fund-raising.

*Definition and Development: An Evaluation Study of Revisions in the NAES College Degree.* NAES College, July 1981. A reflective study on the meaning of the degree for this four-year Native American college, prepared as part of the college's self-study for initial accreditation.

*The DTA Final Report: Vision, Action and Commitment: Some Limits.* Center for New Schools, 1979. An analysis of the assumptions behind a \$5 million federal research project on urban school change.

Selection on evaluation in *Beyond the Numbers Game: A Reader in Educational Evaluation.* Macmillan Education Ltd., 1977.

*It Works this Way for Some: Case Studies of Fifteen Schools,* May 1973. Prepared for the Illinois Network of School Development, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield, Illinois.

*Research for New School Programs: A Guide for Program Planners.* Center for New Schools, July 1973.

In collaboration with other Center for New Schools staff was responsible for the development and writing of over fifty Center for New Schools publications, including "Strengthening Alternative Schools," *Harvard Educational Review* 42(3), August 1972. (List available upon request.)

*The Metro School: A Report on the Progress of Chicago's Experimental School Without Walls.* Chicago, Urban Research Corporation, 1971 (With Donald R. Moore and Richard Johnson).

Editor, Community and Schools, *Harvard Educational Review*, 1969.

*A Problem of Goals: An Attempt at Formative Evaluation for Harvard's Project Upward Bound or Panning for Goals in a Rocky Brook.* Harvard Upward Bound, February 1968. A 2-year intense effort to apply new methods of program formative evaluation.

Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1970. Carried out under the tutelage of Dr. Robert Rosenthal.

References available upon request.

October, 2006.