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**SHARDS OF TEACHER AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT  
IN FOUR NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines teacher and curriculum development in the period of intense curriculum policy reform of the mid-1990s. It is based largely on interviews conducted with teachers in four New Zealand secondary schools. It documents and analyses the thinking and strategising that informed their attempts as teachers and curriculum leaders to develop their individual and collective practice and respond to external demands for change. The accounts are contextualised within the history, politics and culture of New Zealand secondary schooling since the Thomas Report on *The Post-Primary School Curriculum* in 1943, and parallel developments in secondary schooling in other anglophone countries.

The study attempts to understand the workgroup, organisational and systemic constraints within which secondary school teachers conduct their work and how they seek to exercise their individual and collective agency in order to gain more control and knowledge of their occupational circumstances. The study links contemporary dilemmas of practice to longer standing, embedded tensions of curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment. It identifies continuities and discontinuities of secondary schooling practice in the decades since the 1940s and shows how contemporary policy options and proposed solutions are simply the latest staging post in a protracted sequence of political efforts to solve 'problems' of curriculum and credentialling.

In some respects, the official policy texts introduced in the 1990s spoke directly to teachers' own pragmatic concerns and aspirations. Thus, in this study, teachers and curriculum leaders engaged creatively and energetically with the challenges posed by school-based Unit Standards trials because they appeared to offer the opportunity to end secondary teachers' long search for meaningful alternatives to examination dominated schemes of work, assessments and credentials. However, curriculum innovation always took place alongside other day-to-day routines and seasonal patterns of work. For curriculum leaders in this study, these multiple demands meant that any potential benefits of voluntary curriculum innovation had constantly to be weighed against its costs in terms of other workgroup priorities, the energies and dispositions of fellow workgroup members and their personal health and well-being.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This individual study was developed and written among a talented, committed community of policy scholars whose work has informed and enriched my own. I hope it meets their demanding standards and serves as recompense for the intellectual and collegial debt I owe to John Clark, Marian Court, Richard Harker, Anne-Marie O'Neill, Roy Nash, Roger Openshaw and Ivan Snook. I am especially grateful to Graham Collins for the many discussions we have had about the history of schooling, politics and educational policy development in New Zealand; and the patient manner in which he has filled some of the many gaps in my recent immigrant's knowledge.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of contents	v
List of illustrations and tables	vii
1 Introduction	1
2 Management, curriculum and teaching in secondary schools	9
3 Secondary schooling, curriculum and teaching in New Zealand	59
4 Representing the experience of secondary school teaching and curriculum leadership	113
5 Secondary school teachers' routine work	157
6 Curriculum leadership responsibilities	187
7 Development priorities	219
8 'At risk' students at Kauri	235
9 Assessment, pedagogy and teacher development at Totara	257
10 Supporting staff at Rimu	279
11 Four heads of department at work	301
12 Stress, politics and curriculum innovation	339
13 Secondary school teaching in context	353
14 Conclusion	403
Appendices	413
Bibliography	431



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

Figure 3.1	Modernisation or confrontation?	65
Table 3.1	A chronology of secondary school curriculum and assessment debate, 1969-1994	87
Figure 4.1	Cartoon for St Anne, Leonardo da Vinci	142
Figure 4.2	Study for Les Poseuses, Model from Behind, Georges Seurat	152



## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Thinking your mind was my own in a dream  
What would you wonder and how would  
it seem?  
Living in castles a bit at a time  
The King started laughing and talking  
in rhyme.  
Singing Words – Words between the lines of  
Age.

from Words, Neil Young, 1972

This study attempts to provide some understanding of the social practice of secondary school teaching and its development in a context of rapid educational policy reform. The study is based largely on interviews conducted with a small number of teachers from four New Zealand secondary schools during 1996 and 1997. It seeks to understand the practice of teaching and curriculum leadership through their analyses of their individual and collective day-to-day practice. In this introductory chapter, I provide a brief overview of the approach taken to the research and of the structure of the thesis.

### **STUDYING SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PRACTICE**

The ubiquitous description of 'teaching'<sup>7</sup> is of isolated, solitary work. However, this is accurate only in so far as the modal teacher<sup>1</sup> works, alone, for several hours each day in the confines of her egg-crate<sup>2</sup> classroom. Yet, teachers interact daily with students in the classroom, and with colleagues outside of it. They are members of workgroups and schools that are located within idiosyncratic local communities. They operate within the opportunities and constraints provided by curricular forms and traditions<sup>3</sup> in school systems that have been shaped historically by political, bureaucratic, professional, academic and lay demands and aspirations.

Although teaching itself is full of 'regularities' and, arguably, at one level lacking in intellectual stimulation,<sup>4</sup> it is by no means a completely static, predictable or unchanging form

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<sup>1</sup> Sarason, S. *The culture of the school and the problem of change*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Lortie, D. *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Helsby, G. *Changing teachers' work*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Sarason, op. cit., 1971, pp. 161-169.

of work; nor, indeed, does it lack emotional engagement.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, teachers, some more than others, are mobile from school to school through their careers and many women are likely to have at least one break in service for child-bearing. Within any given school, one's colleagues and students come and go, curriculum and other policies outlive their usefulness or relevance, the status of individual subjects waxes and wanes,<sup>6</sup> educational vogues succeed one another and individual teachers themselves age and become more experienced through their classroom and occupational careers.<sup>7</sup> In addition, public and private aspects of teachers' lives are closely interwoven and, particularly for women, inseparable.<sup>8</sup> Teaching is, in short, a fluid and complex social activity.<sup>9</sup> Equally, its study, I would argue, should aim to acknowledge and capture this complexity.

This research project began in 1995<sup>10</sup> as a discussion of the faddish notion of (secondary) schools as 'learning organisations'.<sup>11</sup> In particular, I wanted to examine "the ways in which the development of teacher expertise is encouraged, supported or inhibited by curriculum managers within schools".<sup>12</sup> My intention was to focus quite narrowly and simply, as I then thought, on (i) improving teaching practice; and (ii) the ways in which this was facilitated, mostly by Heads of Department. At the time, the proposed study seemed to afford a ready opportunity to combine my existing knowledge of management development in education<sup>13</sup> with the straightforward study of how teachers learn to become better teachers in secondary school settings.

Quite rapidly, however, in response to further reading in the fields of teachers' learning and the social construction of knowledge and schooling, early interview data gathered in the schools in the study, my growing familiarity with the recent history and politics of the New Zealand educational system and discussions with immediate academic colleagues (variously: educational philosophers, sociologists, historians, and feminist and policy scholars), I became

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<sup>5</sup> Hargreaves, A. The emotions of teaching and educational change. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan and D. Hopkins (Eds.). *International handbook of educational change*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998, pp. 558-570.

<sup>6</sup> Ball, S. *The micropolitics of the school. Towards a sociology of school organization*. London: Routledge, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Huberman, M. *The lives of teachers*. London: Cassell, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Nias, J. *Primary teachers talking. A study of teaching as work*. London: Routledge, 1989, pp. 150-152; Goodson, I. (Ed.). *Studying teachers' lives*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Olson, J. *Understanding teaching. Beyond expertise*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> O'Neill, J. Developing teacher expertise—the role of the curriculum manager. Unpublished paper, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Fullan, M. The school as a learning organisation: distant dreams. *Theory into Practice*, 1995, 34(4), 230-235; Morley, L. and Rassool, N. *School effectiveness: fracturing the discourse*. London: Falmer, 1999, pp. 82-85.

<sup>12</sup> O'Neill, op. cit., 1995, Mss., p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> O'Neill, J. *Management development. A comparative study of practices in private and public sector organisations*. Unpublished MSc thesis. Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, 1991.

more sensitive to and aware of the multi-layered 'embedded contexts'<sup>14</sup> within which my small self-selecting sample of secondary school teachers worked. To help develop a richer, more complete understanding of what I was hearing and observing in the schools in the study, my reading took different and unexpected directions from those originally envisaged. I became increasingly enthusiastic as real teachers' words, concepts, positions, values and priorities affirmed or challenged what I was reading in textbooks, papers and research reports. This, in turn, generated novel trains of thought and reading for me to pursue further.

The relationship between the literature base and my data gathering, reflection and analysis was, then, both iterative and heuristic. While the original focus on 'teacher expertise' and 'curriculum managers' remained consistent throughout, the terms themselves, the concepts they carried and their mutual relationship all became subject to considerable question and critique (in the sense that they "needed deconstructing and moving beyond")<sup>15</sup> in the course of the six years the study took to complete.

### **A FOCUS FOR THE STUDY**

This thesis addressed three questions, to which I returned time and again during the study:

- What are the characteristics of contemporary secondary school teaching?
- How do secondary school teachers learn to develop their practice?
- What part do curriculum managers play in helping colleagues to develop their practice?

The way in which the questions were addressed evolved over the course of the study. I began the research project within a year of my arrival in New Zealand from the UK, in December 1994. Initially, secondary school teaching and its organisation at the level of the school seemed to me to be enacted in quite similar fashion in both countries. However, discussions with my graduate students and academic colleagues in the Faculty of Education (most of whom were themselves former schoolteachers) alerted me to some subtle idiosyncrasies in the ways that educationists in New Zealand talked about and sought to practise their work.

In particular, they set very great store by norms of egalitarianism: consensus, collaboration, empathy, conflict-avoidance and the rejection of overtly hierarchical relationships and decision-making processes. This came through strongly also in the early interviews I undertook with teachers, curriculum leaders and principals. I began to ask myself where these norms had come from and how deeply embedded were they. As I studied the broader education policy context in New Zealand and its history of universal compulsory post-primary education from the 1940s to the 1990s, it became evident that norms of consensus and collaborative work

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<sup>14</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. The contexts in question: the secondary school workplace. In M. McLaughlin, J. Talbert and N. Bascia (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1990, 1-14.

were inter-generational. In other words they were part of the traditions of secondary schooling in this country. There were and are many other local characteristics of practice, but my experience with the concepts of collaboration and consensus, in particular, reinforced three important points for me that I carried throughout the study.

#### *Tracing The History Of Contemporary Schooling Practice*

First, contemporary forms of teaching and curriculum leadership derive from longer-standing historical and cultural traditions. Thus, to appreciate how and why contemporary teachers seek to exercise their agency we need to understand the historical practices that generate the possibilities and expectations for acting in particular ways. In this regard, it seemed to me that I was following a comparable path, albeit within a much shorter frame of time and space, to Hamilton in his study of the origins of schooling, of the relationship between schooling and society and of that between educational practices and broader social and economic theories.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, Hamilton argues that in the evolution of pedagogy, the practices of teachers in any historical period reflect underlying societal conceptions of what he calls "social efficiency" and, as such, change over time.<sup>17</sup> As I worked my way through reports and discussion documents from reviews of secondary education undertaken in New Zealand in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, it seemed that the conceptions of the ideal teacher they contained were derived from these broader conceptions of "social efficiency" of their respective decades and were, in part, a response to economic, social and political agendas of the time.

Equally, Hamilton's theory that teachers' institutionalised practices or "pedagogic forms" contain the possibility of development and change as teachers work towards their own pedagogic goals seemed of relevance to this study. So too did the notion that real pedagogic practices and the normative terminology used to describe them, "for example in pedagogic manifestos", may or may not be the same at any time.<sup>18</sup> Thus it was possible in this study to discern differences between the models of pedagogy that were advocated by their various proponents through the decades since the 1940s and those that were reportedly practised in schools.

#### *Teaching and Leadership As Discursive Practices*

Second, it appeared obvious that the language used, both by the teachers in the study and that which appeared in contemporary and historical policy documents since the 1940s, carried concepts, beliefs, assumptions and values that shaped and, indeed, were fully intended to shape,

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Davies, B. *Shards of glass*. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993, p. 8.

Hamilton, D. *Towards a theory of schooling*. Lewes, UK: Falmer, 1989, chapter one.

Kliebard makes similar points with regard to the development of the American curriculum. See chapter two.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

teaching and curriculum leadership practice. There were, consequently, tangible linkages between language use and social practice. In this sense, the study became directly concerned with discourse analysis where, as Codd argues,

*Discourse* refers not only to the meaning of language, but also to the real effects of language-use, to the materiality of language. A discourse is a domain of language-use and therefore a domain of social practice.<sup>19</sup>

Codd elaborates Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse to distinguish between discourse as an instance of written or spoken language (text), as the processes through which these texts are produced, distributed and consumed (discursive practices), and as broader social practice.<sup>20</sup> In this study a major area of interest was the particular forms of language (or texts) that teachers and curriculum leaders used (or did not use) to describe, analyse and guide their work, and the origins and effects of these. (The relevance of discourse theory to this study is discussed at greater length in chapter four.)

#### *Producing A Less "Readerly" Text*

Third, I was torn between my socialised assumption that in writing a doctoral thesis one should aim for the production of a synthesised, authoritative and unambiguously theorised analysis of, in this case, teachers' practice, and my desire to create something that reflected the plurality of these teachers' individual circumstances and aspirations in a way that would privilege their own analyses of their experiences.

In writing this text I attempted to avoid the reduction of these teachers' experiences to a "single structure" within an "in-different science" of evaluation.<sup>21</sup> Instead, I aimed for a mode of presentation and analysis that acknowledged the "difference" of individual working context and focused on the ways in which teachers engaged with the demands of their particular circumstances. In order to give appropriate weight to these teachers' own analyses of what they were attempting to do and why, I tried to use as much of their own words, concepts and reasoning as was possible in constructing my representation of their work.

This made for a considerably longer text than is conventional in projects of this kind. However, the approach reassured me both that these teachers' voices, experiences and analyses were being placed in the public domain (itself a political act) and that my authorial analysis of their work would thereby also be open to immediate scrutiny and challenge by the reader. In that sense, my analysis of the data in this study consciously provides only one possible reading

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<sup>19</sup> Codd, J. Educational reform and the contradictory discourses of evaluation. *Evaluation and research in Education*. 1994, 8(1&2), p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> Barthes, R. *S/Z*. Trans. R. Miller. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p. 3. On the notion of teaching as readerly or writerly text, see Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Re-making teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 88-89.

of the teachers' experiences and events reported here; those of the teachers in the study and of each reader of the text, other possible interpretations and analyses.

I wanted to avoid what Barthes calls a text in which the reader "is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text".<sup>22</sup> For Barthes, "readerly" texts reduce the reader to the role of "consumer". In contrast, "writerly" texts invite the reader to participate in the text's creation. In constructing this text as it has been, the reader is invited to use the data to herself make sense of these teachers' experiences and to draw her own conclusions.<sup>23</sup> Thus each reader may decide, on the basis both of the evidence presented and the knowledge that they bring to the reading and re-reading of that evidence, the extent to which they agree with my analysis.

Barthes argues that in readerly texts "everything holds together" by "attaching narrated events together with a kind of logical 'paste' " and seeking to avoid "the scandal of some illogicality".<sup>24</sup> In this study, I have attempted quite explicitly to allow the difference and illogicality of narrated events to emerge and to allow for other readings of the reported events and actions. Moreover, these teachers' and curriculum leaders' practice was both complex and messy, particularly in terms of responding to the demands and effects of centralised curriculum and assessment policy reform. The presentation and analysis tries throughout to capture that messiness<sup>25</sup> and represent the at times very hesitant strategising of these teachers and curriculum leaders as they struggled to gain greater control over their immediate circumstances.

Having explained some of the reasoning behind the focus of the research and the construction of the thesis, I want now to illustrate the internal logic of the thesis structure by describing briefly the content of each chapter.

## **THE LOGIC AND CONTENT OF THE CHAPTERS**

The order and structure of chapters is conventional. The text attempts to develop theoretical depth as the analysis proceeds on the basis of evidence presented in preceding chapters. I wanted to avoid the production of an exclusive text that, in effect, requires the reader to present his or her intellectual passport and language credentials for approval by the author at the point of entry.

Chapter two examines some of the anglophone literature related to the contemporary management and practice of secondary school teachers' work and is organised under three main

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<sup>22</sup> Barthes, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16 & 160; Wiseman, M. *The ecstasies of Roland Barthes*. London: Routledge, 1989, chapter four.

<sup>24</sup> Barthes, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 156.

<sup>25</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994, pp. 18-19.

headings: management, curriculum and teaching. The approach taken is broad-brush in order to elaborate rather than constrain a range of possibilities for the analysis of policy and practice in the chapters that follow.

In chapter three, the focus shifts to the New Zealand context. The preparation and fieldwork for this study took place between 1995 and 1997. The chapter begins with an analysis of popular and professional print media coverage of secondary schooling issues during these years in order to provide a backdrop to the events that took place in the four schools themselves. In order to locate contemporary events within their historical context, the development of secondary schooling, curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) and curriculum leadership since the 1940s in New Zealand is examined in detail in this chapter also.

Chapter four considers in greater depth the methodological issues discussed in my introductory comments above and provides a justification for the approach taken in this study. Particular attention is given to the relationship between the experiences reported by the teachers in the study and the broader social and educational policy context that shaped their work. Equally, the approach taken to the presentation and analysis of interview data is closely theorised.

In chapters five to twelve I present these teachers' descriptions of their routine work, together with my commentary and analysis. The chapters are organised to focus on discrete aspects of teaching and curriculum leadership practice in each. Chapter five provides a description in their own words of the routines of these secondary teachers' work and their explanation of the development of their identities as teachers. Chapter six describes the variety and range of curriculum leadership responsibilities held by these practitioners. Chapter seven discusses the particular development priorities with which they were engaged during the 1996 school year in terms of their principal focus: students, curriculum or staff. Chapters eight, nine and ten describe and analyse in greater detail the ways in which these focus priorities were addressed during the course of the 1996 school year.

Chapters eleven and twelve are concerned with the work of four heads of department during the 1997 school year. Chapter eleven examines the patterns and routines of curriculum leadership as these unfolded over the four school terms. A particular focus here is the continual tension between workgroup 'nourishment'<sup>7</sup> and curriculum innovation. In chapter twelve, the analysis is concerned with the personal and professional costs of workgroup and curriculum development for the four practitioners concerned and with the wider politics of curriculum leadership in a period of intense curriculum reform.

In chapter thirteen, I attempt to draw together the evidence from the previous data chapters and to integrate the emerging understanding of contemporary teachers' work and agency we have gained from these within the broader analytical framework offered by the review of the literature in chapters two and three. Finally, in chapter fourteen, I revisit the

criteria of inquiry that informed the approach taken in the study as a whole and attempt to assess the extent to which the study has added to our understanding of contemporary secondary school teachers' work.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MANAGEMENT, CURRICULUM AND TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This chapter examines the literature related to the contemporary management and practice of secondary school teachers' work. The review is organised under three major headings: management, curriculum and teaching. In 'management', I discuss (a) the linkage between government education management strategy and broader social and economic crises; (b) the tensions between bureaucratic control and teacher empowerment in today's secondary schools; (c) the management of teachers' work; and (d) the management of school improvement. In 'curriculum' I appraise (a) international post-war trends in central government curriculum policy and assessment development; (b) the recent dominance of the 'New Right' in curriculum reform; (c) the social organisation of the secondary school curriculum; and (d) the enduring importance of subject departments and subject traditions. Finally, in 'teaching' I consider (a) the social organisation of secondary school teaching; and (b) the epistemology and politics of teachers' work. Together, these themes provide a discursive analysis of selected British, North American and Australasian literature on secondary school teaching. This provides a theoretical and empirical backdrop against which the New Zealand experience may be examined in the chapter three.

#### INTRODUCTION

This study developed from three related questions:

1. What are the characteristics of contemporary secondary school teaching?
2. How do secondary school teachers learn to develop their practice?
3. What part do curriculum managers play in helping colleagues to develop their practice?

Secondary school teaching takes place in "multiple embedded contexts".<sup>1</sup> Contemporary contexts of practice include the classroom, workgroup, school, local community, and the schooling system. Secondary schooling also takes place within broader educational, economic, cultural and political contexts. Moreover, it is a historical form of practice, thus we need to look beyond the immediate and observable and uncover the embedded traditions that have helped to produce and sustain the teachers' work we see in today's classrooms, staffrooms and workrooms.

In order to locate and consider the three questions in a relevant context of social practice, the literature is reviewed thematically under three headings, namely, (1) 'management', (2) 'curriculum', and (3) 'teaching'. These have been and remain predominant motifs among the discourses of secondary schooling in both New Zealand and other anglophone countries. The three are mutually dependent aspects of secondary schooling. The social practice we see being enacted daily by teachers in schools occurs at their nexus. By considering the extent to which these three discursive themes are manifested in the domain of contemporary school practice, we are, in effect, asking

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<sup>1</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. The contexts in question. The secondary school workplace. In M. McLaughlin, J. Talbert and N. Bascia (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1990, 1-4.

ourselves how curriculum and management reform influence the actual (i.e. real) practices and self-perceptions of teachers.

## MANAGEMENT

Compulsory schooling in many national and state education systems has undergone widespread changes in administration, governance, curriculum and accountability in recent decades.<sup>2</sup> The changes, variously referred to as 'reform', 'restructuring' or the educational manifestation of an economic 'structural adjustment' or 'globalisation' programme, have been characterised by a marked shift from central to local administration of resources and greater school-level accountability for the implementation of centrally determined education policy. The geographic, demographic, political and historical contexts within which the education reforms have been enacted vary quite markedly across systems. Yet, even so, there is a remarkable degree of consistency of approach by governments.<sup>3</sup>

In this part of the chapter, I discuss (a) how government strategy for the management of public education is linked to broader social and economic crises; (b) the tensions between bureaucratic control and teacher empowerment in today's secondary schools; (c) the management of teachers' work; and (d) the management of school improvement.

### *The Management Of Governmental Crisis*

Just as classroom teaching is one of many social activities or processes that take place within the structures and 'kinship' patterns of the school community, education is one of many social processes that takes place within the structures of state and civil society as a whole. Educational reform is firmly embedded in broader discursive practices of government attempts to ensure national economic well-being and social cohesion and to balance the enduring tensions between the two. Thus, "as the state becomes under increasing attack because of a lack of public confidence in its ability to respond to wider structural, economic and social dislocations within Western capitalism generally, schooling and education are focused upon as being simultaneously the cause and the means of remedying the situation".<sup>4</sup> Strong leadership and efficient management are articulated as the most appropriate, if not

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<sup>2</sup> Skilbeck, M. A changing social and educational context. In. B. Moon, P. Murphy and J. Raynor (Eds.). *Policies for the curriculum*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989, 3-28; Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994; Whitty, G., Power, S. and Halpin, T. *Devolution and choice in education. The school, the state and the market*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1998, 15-30. Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London: Falmer, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Whitty, Power and Halpin, op. cit., 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Smyth, J. Preface. In J. Smyth (Ed.). *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. London: Falmer, 1989a, 1-8.

the only, means to secure the improvements in educational attainments or standards that are needed to avert the educational 'crisis' and promote economic and social renewal.

Basing his analysis on the state 'crisis' framework of Jurgen Habermas,<sup>5</sup> Smyth argues that such 'managerialist' or 'technicist' solutions to perceived educational incompetence are superficial and misleading responses to wider economic and social legitimisation crises. Economic crises tend to become displaced into a crisis of rationality in which 'scientific' or 'technological' approaches are proposed as efficient and cost-effective solutions to economic, social and educational problems. The failure of these solutions produces in turn a 'crisis of legitimacy' and, finally, a 'crisis of motivation' as individuals and communities sense a loss of control, alienation and an unravelling of the familiar social fabric:

Not only does this produce a loss of meaning, identity and purpose, but more importantly it is accompanied by the imposition of forms of language and discourse that further reinforce and bolster the orientation towards measurement, technocracy and managerialism.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of how this affects the organisation of public schooling, it is important to recognise that, although more visible and measurable forms of bureaucratic control over educational inputs, processes and outcomes have been pursued with relentless vigour by those in charge of many education systems in the 1980s and 1990s, and while this has led to the emergence at school level of a smaller, specialised professional management cadre, the effects of such "technologized solutions"<sup>7</sup> to administrative and curricular reform on ordinary classroom teachers' work and relationships, have been just as pervasive. Moreover, contemporary constructions of school management and leadership are claimed to be strongly gendered in terms of their obsessive focus on authority, rationality and entrepreneurialism at the expense of interpersonal relationships, collaborative decision-making, and the ethic of caring that characterises classroom teachers' work.'

Traditionally masculine values such as efficiency, objectivity and instrumentality are consistently encouraged in the 'new educational management order', where the preferred role of the headteacher is that of hierarchical leader, charged with developing a strong corporate culture and applying business solutions to educational problems whilst securing the compliance of school staff. The centrally advocated processes of school development planning tend to encourage systems-based approaches and, despite the appearance of collegiality and teacher involvement, to

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<sup>5</sup> Habermas, J. *Legitimation crisis*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Smyth, op. cit., 1989a, pp. 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Blackmore, J. Breaking out from a masculinist politics of education. In: B. Limerick and B. Lingard (Eds). *Gender and changing educational management*. Rydalmere, NSW: Hodder, 1995, 44-56; Ozga, J. and Walker, L. Women in educational management: theory and practice. In Limerick and Lingard, op. cit., 1995, 34-43; Mac an Ghaill, M. *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994; Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994; Freeman, S.

reinforce the decision-making authority of the headteacher (Grundy and Bonser 1997). School development planning also generates texts which provide codified accounts of teachers' work practices, thereby facilitating surveillance and potentially devaluing and deskilling the people involved (Giddens 1991). Finally, it forces both teachers and managers to link educational planning directly with financial and resource management in a context of shrinking budgets.<sup>9</sup>

Such technocratic, patriarchal approaches have been shown variously to constrain, disadvantage, marginalise or exclude women from seeking or fulfilling senior management roles in schools.<sup>10</sup>

There is, in addition, some evidence from early theorising about gendered management that the concerns and practices of women administrators as a group differ from those of men as a group,<sup>11</sup> although this dichotomy (i.e. "the widely held hypothesis that women-as-women have particularly appropriate 'soft' leadership styles")<sup>12</sup> has been challenged on the grounds that an essentialised male-female leadership style distinction ignores the actual experiences of individual women (and men), women of colour, women from non-Western cultures, and the relationships between professional and non-professional women, and between women 'teacher leaders'<sup>7</sup> and women classroom teachers, in the same institution.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Management As Control Versus Management As Empowerment*

In terms of changes to teachers' work, Helsby<sup>14</sup> notes that, "the decentralization of educational administration, a strengthening of accountability mechanisms, the development or refinement of national curricula and an increasing focus upon quantifying and measuring the outcomes of schooling are all key features of the reforms, as national governments look increasingly towards their education systems to solve economic problems created by globalization". This 'decentralisation' model is often (misleadingly) referred to as the 'self-managing school' phenomenon after the title of one of the most influential educational

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Teaching, gender and curriculum. In L. Beyer and M. Apple (Eds). *The curriculum. Problems, politics and possibilities*, second edn. New York: State University of New York Press, 1998, 230-244.

<sup>9</sup> Helsby, G. *Changing teachers' work*. Buckingham, UK; Open University Press, 1999, p. 134.

<sup>10</sup> Al Khalifa, 1989. In Weiner, G. A question of style or value? Contrasting perceptions of women as educational leaders. In Limerick and Lingard, op. cit., 1995, p. 26; Blackmore, J. "In the shadow of men". The historical construction of administration as a "masculinist enterprise". In J. Blackmore and J. Kenway (Eds.). *Gender matters in educational administration and policy*. London: Falmer, 1993, 27-48; Shakeshaft, C. *Women in educational administration*. New York: Sage, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Shakeshaft, C. Gendered leadership styles in educational organisations. In Limerick and Lingard, op. cit., 1995, 12-22.

<sup>12</sup> Weiner, op. cit., 1995, p.31.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; Tripconey, P. Barely scratching the surface: an indigenous experience of education administration. In Limerick and Lingard, op. cit., 1995, 121-134; Mac an Ghail, op. cit., 1994; Troen, V. and Boles, K. Leadership from the classroom: women teachers as a key to school reform. In D. Dunlap and P. Schmuck (Eds.) *Women leading in education*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995, 358-379.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., 1999, p. ix

management texts in the field.<sup>15</sup> In the 'self-managing school', the emphasis is on normative, rational approaches to planning, budget, programme and evaluation cycles often using management theory loosely adapted from non-education sectors and applied uncritically to the processes of mass compulsory schooling. As Ball acidly comments,

By idealising management as self-management, books like Caldwell and Spinks' (1988) *Self-Managing School*, create a professionally acceptable, but unreal, value-free world of consensus, collaboration and self control ... collegial relations, collaboration and participation are colonised by management discourse and purpose ... In this Mary Poppins world of self-management (a spoonful of sugar ...) the task of budgeting is simply a matter of costing policies. Thus planning is clean and professional, unruddied by the ethical dilemmas of image-making, self-presentation and market-led planning.<sup>16</sup>

In his wide-ranging analysis of contemporary society's uncomfortable and uncertain transition from modern to postmodern modes of accumulation, production and consumption, Hargreaves considers at some length the impact of educational reform on teachers' patterns of work and relationships. Hargreaves argues<sup>17</sup> that many aspects of the restructuring, such as site level management; technological innovation; the questioning of established organisational and professional norms; and changing patterns of curriculum delivery, assessment and accreditation, should all be seen as promising means to the achievement of more meaningful and equitable educational ends. The danger is that the managerial or bureaucratic means may, and, indeed, according to Hargreaves, have become ends in themselves while the educational ends they are supposed to serve lie fragmented, forgotten or lost. In the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, Helsby notes that the "potential disempowerment" of teachers through policy and legislative change has been accompanied by "a number of other measures which appeared to increase the authority of school managers".<sup>18</sup> These managerial or bureaucratic forms of control in education are inimical to what Hargreaves calls 'professional empowerment'. Thus he identifies:

... a fundamental choice between restructuring as bureaucratic control, where teachers are controlled and regulated to implement the mandate of others, and restructuring as professional empowerment, where teachers are supported, encouraged and provided with newly structured opportunities to make improvements of their own, in partnership with principals, parents and students.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Caldwell, B. and Spinks, J. *The self-managing school*. London: Falmer, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> Ball, S. Policy, power relations and teachers' work. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 1993, 41(2), 106-121. However, Bottery rejects simplistic, technocratic definitions of management and points to the non-profit sector as a potential source of ideas for school management practice. Bottery, M. *Lessons for schools? A comparison of business and educational management*. London: Cassell, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Op. cit., 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Op. cit., 1999, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Op.cit., 1994, p. 248.

On this analysis, the processes of educational reform in many countries have been overly concerned with and deliberately structured to facilitate the mechanics of control, regulation and local implementation of central mandates. This has not happened, however, in the bifurcated fashion that Hargreaves' 'fundamental choice' might imply. On the contrary, the combination of liberalisation (via the creation of school markets and the devolution of funding to site level) and centralisation (through the close specification of curricula and accountability criteria) in many educational systems has allowed the state to exercise its control of schooling in more subtle ways:

[T]he point about both management and the market is that they are 'no hands' forms of control as far as the relationship between education and the state is concerned. They provide, in Kickert's (1991) terms, 'steering at a distance' – a new paradigm of public governance (p. 21). Steering at a distance is an alternative to coercive/prescriptive control. Constraints are replaced by incentives. Prescription is replaced by ex-post accountability based upon quality or outcome assessments. Coercion is replaced by self-steering – the appearance of autonomy. Opposition or resistance are side-stepped or displaced.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, in practice, and within the structures of secondary schools in particular, such 'self steering' forms of management control have proved fragmentary in important respects. For example, those with management responsibilities in secondary schools increasingly do different work from their classroom colleagues, leading to "a pattern of workloads differentiated according to the salary position of the teachers and the responsibilities associated with the salary positions".<sup>21</sup> At its most pronounced, this separation of work is reflected in the proliferation of senior management teams (SMT) whose loyalties and responsibilities are oriented towards the principal and the SMT, not the staff as a whole,<sup>22</sup> and who are provided with higher levels of central support and professional development than heads of department and classroom teachers.<sup>23</sup> In this regard, the management reforms do not appear to have greatly challenged the traditional, bureaucratic and hierarchical norms of secondary school organisation. Indeed, the differences between teachers and managers may well have become considerably more polarised.

The analysis of Smyth and colleagues also militates against a simple notion of bureaucratic control. They suggest that a "control regime" for teachers' work operates

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<sup>20</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1993, p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell, J. and Neill, S. *Secondary teachers at work*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Wallace, M. and Hall, V. *Inside the SMT. Teamwork in the secondary school*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1994; Harrison, B., Dobell, T. and Higgins, C. Managing to make things happen. Critical issues in team management. In J. Bell and B. Harrison (Eds). *Vision and values in managing education. Successful leadership principles and practice*. London: David Fulton, 1995, 44-59; Gillborn, D. Talking heads. Reflections on secondary headship at a time of rapid educational change. *School Organisation*, 1989, 9(1), 65-83.

<sup>23</sup> Helsby, op. cit., 1999, p. 136.

through three mechanisms: defining the curriculum; supervising and evaluating teachers; and engineering compliance and consent.<sup>24</sup> A control regime is "made up of a hybrid of control systems and strategies", each of which may be operant to a greater or lesser extent. They identify six of these.<sup>25</sup> Briefly, *regulated market control*, as the term suggests, controls schools and teachers through the disciplines of the marketplace (e.g. open enrolment, league tables of results, publication of inspection reports etc.). *Technical control* operates through, for example, the use of pre-specified, 'teacher-proof' curriculum materials and assessment, associated management systems, and even the design of school buildings and the spread of computer technology. *Bureaucratic control* is "embedded in the social and organizational structure" of schools and "institutionalizes hierarchical power" through the "specification of job categories, work rules, promotion procedures, discipline, wage differentials, definitions of responsibilities, and so on". *Corporate control* emphasises the needs of the economy (national and global) and constructs the school principal as chief executive whose role is to ensure that centrally mandated curriculum and administration policies are implemented while the school competes with other school 'business' enterprises.

Unlike the first four, *ideological control* operates indirectly rather than directly and attempts to "organize teacher consent to the values embedded in the prevailing educational settlement". Smyth and colleagues liken this to Gramsci's<sup>26</sup> concept of hegemonic control that operates through persuasion not coercion on the part of dominant social groups. Ideological or hegemonic control seeks to construct and implement, for example, conceptions of management, curriculum and teaching by controlling the parameters of debate. Thus, consultation processes on issues such as curriculum and assessment reform or the appraisal of teachers' work may appear to encourage participation in the discussion by teachers, but in reality, the process is tightly controlled. Finally, they draw on the work of Foucault<sup>27</sup> in describing *disciplinary control*. This operates by working to set "standards and norms of behaviour, which become embodied in a specific set of institutional practices", for example, curriculum, assessment and reporting protocols, teacher competencies or school development plans. The point of this form of control is to "work on and through individuals to impart a sense of ever present surveillance" so that teachers as 'subjects' discipline or regulate themselves and colleagues to comply with norms of behaviour determined by others (the case study of the science department at Totara in chapter nine is an excellent example of both ideological and disciplinary controls being attempted by NZQA).

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<sup>24</sup> Op. cit., 2000, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-46.

<sup>26</sup> Gramsci, A. *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

<sup>27</sup> The most relevant work for this study is, Foucault, M. *Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison*. Trans. A. Sheridan (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). New York: Vintage Books, 1977/1995.

In the 1990s, in England, secondary school teachers' loyalties and primary affiliations were still to the classroom, workgroup and individual subject domain (and the controls these exercised), not the whole school, the community or the market.<sup>28</sup> Attempts by 'senior managers' to secure consistent curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practice across the school as a whole were, therefore, prone to frustration by the enduring, conservative subject department 'grammar' of secondary schooling.<sup>29</sup> Prior to the reforms of the late 1980s, heads of subject departments were shown to have difficulty shifting their affiliation and perspective from workgroup to whole school level and were expected by workgroup colleagues actively to compete with other subject areas for resources and status.<sup>30</sup> There is now consistent evidence that schools continue to function as loosely-coupled<sup>31</sup> subject departments and, consequently, that there are arguably as many differences within schools as there are between them.<sup>32</sup> Equally, there is evidence that school managers, subject groupings and individual teachers read and implement mandated policy texts quite differently from the intentions of their authors.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the global push by governments towards more 'efficient' and homogeneous forms of school management has undoubtedly occurred, and has done so at the expense of less easily understood or controlled intra-professional and professional-community relationships that encourage locally developed and focused educational initiatives. As we shall see, this is precisely the ideological path taken by the reforms in New Zealand. Here, however, I simply want to emphasise the origins and effects of an approach, or group of approaches, to educational reform that privileges 'control' over 'empowerment'.

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<sup>28</sup> Ball, S. and Bowe, R. Subject departments and the 'implementation' of National Curriculum policy: an overview of the issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1992, 24(2), 97-115; Siskin, L. Departments as different worlds: subject subcultures in secondary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 1991, 27(2), 134-160; Siskin, L. *Realms of knowledge. Academic subjects in secondary schools*. London: Falmer, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Paechter, C. *Crossing subject boundaries. The micropolitics of curriculum innovation*. London: HMSO, 1995; Goodson, I. and Marsh, C. *Studying school subjects. A guide*. London: Falmer, 1996; Holt, M. Managing curriculum change in a comprehensive school: conflict, compromise and deliberation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1990, 22(2), 137-148.

<sup>30</sup> Earley, P. and Fletcher-Campbell, F. *The time to manage? Department and faculty heads at work*. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson, 1989; Torrington, D. and Weightman, J. *The reality of school management*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989; Ball, S. *The micropolitics of the school. Towards a sociology of school organisation*. London: Routledge, 1987.

<sup>31</sup> Weick, K. Educational organisations as loosely-coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1976, 21(1), 1-9.

<sup>32</sup> Ball and Bowe, op. cit., 1992; Sammons, P., Thomas, S. and Mortimore, P. *Forging links. Effective schools and effective departments*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1997.

<sup>33</sup> Beattie, N. The wider context: are curricula manageable? In T. Brighouse and B. Moon (Eds.). *Managing the national curriculum: some critical perspectives*. Harlow, UK: Longman, 1990, 27-41; Ball and Bowe, op. cit., 1992; Leggett, B. Pressures of managerialism and its implications: perspectives from the centre and the secondary school. *Australian Journal of Education*, 1997, 41(3), 276-288.

### *The Management Of Teachers' Work*

Smyth argued in 1989, even before many of the current wave of global curriculum and administrative reforms had been fully draughted or operationalised, that, “[b]ecause some groups in schools have historically come to exercise power over others, there is now a widespread and largely uncontested view that the basis of the separation is substantive”.<sup>34</sup> Since then, the denouement of reforms in New Zealand and other countries would suggest that, in practice, many of these reformulated power relationships in, for example, policy setting, school administration, governance, curriculum, pedagogy and teachers' conditions of service have all been hotly contested at various historical junctures - teachers, even those who are well disposed to change, do resist and rework management, curriculum and teaching impositions with which they disagree.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, in broad-brush terms, the explicit linkage by various state and national governments of the means and ends of compulsory, public schooling with both economic regeneration and the arrest of societal fragmentation has indeed led to greater (direct and indirect) forms of political intervention in schooling. Thus, in their summary of the findings of two transnational NGO reports<sup>36</sup> on the changing nature of teachers' work, Campbell and Neill highlighted increased demands such as:

... designing and implementing curriculum reforms, introducing new forms of assessment and engaging in in-service training for up-dating of skills. More broadly, teachers were being expected to impart understanding of, and positive attitudes towards, the world of work and other countries. New technology and new teaching methods were also required, and special programmes for multi-culturalism, integration of children of migrant workers and mainstreaming children with special educational needs were tasks facing most contemporary teachers. There was an accelerating trend for moral and social responsibilities previously exercised by parents, churches and local communities to be transferred to schools, with consequent changes in the teacher's role.<sup>37</sup>

Campbell and Neill argued that these international studies demonstrated “the twofold pressures upon teachers arising from trends in the larger society: a diffusing of the role expectations so as to reduce the proportion of working time spent teaching, and intensification of demands arising from bolt-on approaches to educational policy making”.<sup>38</sup> The existence and incremental growth of such pressures raise important questions about the extent to which teachers, as autonomous moral agents, feel in control

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<sup>34</sup> Smyth, J. A 'pedagogical' and 'educative' view of leadership. In J. Smyth, op. cit., 1989b, p. 191.

<sup>35</sup> Whiteside, T. *The sociology of educational innovation*. London: Methuen, 1978, p. 70.

<sup>36</sup> International Labour Office. *Teachers: challenges of the 1990s: second joint meeting on conditions of work of teachers (1991)*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1991; OECD. *The teacher today, tasks, conditions, policies*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Campbell and Neill, op. cit., 1994, p. 137.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

of their work and able to cope with its many demands; demands which produce very real personal, interpersonal, pedagogical, cognitive, moral and ethical dilemmas.

In terms of this 'management' theme we might briefly consider whether, at the end of the 1990s there was any broad indication of the effects of 'role diffusion' and 'intensification of demands' identified a decade earlier in the two NGO reports reviewed by Campbell and Neill above. Helsby argues that, in the British context, "imposed structural changes to the education system" have led to "a transformation of teachers' work and a mutation of their role from semi-autonomous professional to managed and expendable employee"<sup>39</sup> Synthesising the results of several empirical studies conducted between 1983 and 1997, Helsby attributes the 'transformation'<sup>7</sup> to the combined effects on teachers' work of a range of interdependent curriculum, accountability, workload and professional autonomy issues:

As their discretion to take curricular decisions in the best interests of their students is curtailed by central prescription, codification and surveillance, the bases of their claims to special expertise are undermined and their tasks are redefined away from the exercise of professional judgment and towards the routine application of standardized procedures. The combined forces of marketization and managerialism place further pressures on them to conform to external requirements whilst their new terms and conditions of service and increased accountability create a more directed and insecure workforce. Finally, the intensification of their work and the diminished opportunities available for professional development reduce not only the time available for adopting a more proactive approach to the reforms but also the skills, capacities and confidence to do so.<sup>40</sup>

Later, we shall return to these interrelated issues in the narrower context of secondary school teaching. I want to end this section of the review, however, by referring briefly to three further dimensions of contemporary school 'management' discourses, namely the school 'change',<sup>41</sup> 'effectiveness',<sup>42</sup> and 'improvement'<sup>43</sup> movements.

### *The Management Of School Improvement*

By the 1990s, each of these three was firmly entrenched as a global educational research and intervention tradition in its own right, while the boundaries between the three areas have considerably blurred in recent years as researchers and professional 'change agents' try to marry and apply in practical settings the lessons from each in order to "help educators

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<sup>39</sup> Op. cit., 1999, p. 172.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> For a recent retrospective overview, see Fullan, M. The meaning of educational change. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan and D. Hopkins (Eds.). *International handbook of educational change*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998a, 214-228.

<sup>42</sup> In the same volume, Mortimore, P. The vital hours: reflecting on research on schools and their effects, 1998, 85-99.

understand and deal effectively with the immensely complex change problems that are customary today".<sup>44</sup> Thus, although the pedigree of each movement derives in great part from scholarly, empirical investigation conducted by academics employed in 'independent' research institutions, the work itself has most often involved the study of the implementation of government sponsored or mandated change initiatives. An equally important historical distinction may be made between, for example, the "climate" of school-based curriculum and teacher development initiatives of the sixties, seventies and early 1980s in Britain which "provided possibilities for self-defined change" and "enabled teachers in some schools to engage as cultural workers" in a process of "locally defined change and development";<sup>45</sup> and the "new school improvement paradigm" which has emerged as a mechanism for further increasing centralised control to accompany the restructuring of schooling instituted by the 1988 Education Reform Act:

Driven by the need for excellence in schools, organizational change and development is now circumscribed by national educational policy, and regulated by a diverse range of centralized, and devolved, regulatory mechanisms. Thus validated, the new school effectiveness/school improvement discourse consolidates a normative representation of schools and schooling. In this teachers feature as functionaries in a linear input-output school process which relies predominantly on the acquisition and maintenance of procedural skills and techniques.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, the future credibility and survival of such research arguably lie in what Labaree might term the widespread 'professionalisation'<sup>47</sup> of school improvement work. In contemporary, fiscally constrained, policy oriented<sup>48\*</sup> and contestable public sector research funding markets, these research traditions will flourish only to the extent that they are able to demonstrate their substantive contribution to the improvement of public schooling (particularly 'failing schools'),<sup>49</sup> and thereby confirm the utilitarian value of such work in the eyes of practitioners and policy makers.

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<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Hopkins, D. Tensions in and prospects for school improvement, 1998, 1035-1058.

<sup>44</sup> Hargreaves, A. et al. Introduction. In A Hargreaves et al, op. cit., 1998b, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Morley, L and Rassool, N. School effectiveness. *Fracturing the discourse*. London: Falmer, 1999, p. 79.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92.

<sup>47</sup> Labaree, D. Power, knowledge and the rationalization of teaching: a genealogy of the movement to professionalize teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1992, 62(2), 123-154.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Ivor Goodson's discussion of the 'lost discourse' of educational research which accompanied the demise of the Social Science Research Council in Britain. Goodson, I. Critical introduction: understanding/undermining hierarchy and hegemony. In A. Hargreaves. *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989, 1-14. In the same volume, Hargreaves laments the critique of educational change which has disappeared as a result of "the decline of 'basic', independently funded educational research and the emergence, in its place, of more cursory and politically tied evaluations of particular initiatives" (p. 101).

<sup>49</sup> Gray, J., Jesson, J. and Reynolds, J. The challenges of school improvement: preparing for the long haul. In J. Gray, D. Reynolds, C. Fitz-Gibbon and D. Jesson (Eds.). *Merging traditions: the future of research on school effectiveness and school improvement*. London: Cassell, 1996, 165-184.

The size, complexity, popularity and status of the field may be gauged by browsing through the six page Table of Contents in the recently published *International Handbook of Educational Change*. This work runs to two volumes, 1366 pages, 62 chapters, four sections and five editorial introductions, collectively contributed by 84 researchers based in North America, Western and Northern Europe and Australasia many of whom have reportedly been "investigating, helping initiate and implementing educational change, for most or all of their lengthy careers",<sup>50</sup> careers which straddle some four decades of research and intervention in schooling. Notwithstanding the substance and academic credibility of the three related fields, it is important for the purposes of our present discussion on the 'management' of compulsory schooling to acknowledge that even the most well-intentioned attempts to 'improve' education are far from 'value neutral.'" Indeed, by virtue of their major sources of funding and increasingly applied focus they are subject to active political capture. The ambiguity is well captured by Fink and Stoll:

Perhaps the central criticism of the school improvement literature is its relative neutrality on the purposes of school improvement. As governments attempt to change schools through technicist approaches which drive change through top-down mandates such as centralized curricula and standardized testing and site-based management, critics have suggested that collegiality as developed through 'site based' management and school development plans is just another way to cajole teachers into accepting external mandates.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Smyth has rather cuttingly observed that "conventional wisdom has it that if we can get school principals to take heed of the research on 'school effectiveness', and act as the visionary custodians they are supposed to be, then schools will emerge from the crisis of competence, educational standards will rise, school discipline problems will dissipate, and schools will once again become the means of effecting social economic and military recovery".<sup>53</sup> As the pace of educational reform has intensified, administrations have sought more effective ways to overcome traditional professional resistance to centrally imposed change and their attention has focused on the educational change literature. Put crudely, why else would governments across the world devote as much funding as they do to 'change', 'effectiveness' and improvement' research? However, the danger, it seems reasonable to conclude, is that the lessons from these diverse initiatives may be used instrumentally to secure more efficient 'control' of central policy implementation, rather than empathetically to promote a closer understanding of the ways

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<sup>50</sup> Hargreaves et al, op. cit., 1998b, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> For comprehensive, critical reviews of these movements see Morley and Rassool, 1999, op. cit; Thrupp, M. *Schools making a difference – lets be realistic*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999.

<sup>52</sup> Fink, D. and Stoll, L. Educational change: easier said than done. In Hargreaves et al, op. cit., 1998a, 297-321.

<sup>53</sup> Smyth, op. cit, 1989a, p. 2.

in which the 'empowerment' of teachers might secure more lasting and meaningful educational change.

For example, in Britain, the focus of attention in secondary schools has shifted recently from the whole school and its principal to the subject department and its head on the basis that departments and their effects have been demonstrated (usually on the criterion of 'value added' external examination results) to vary considerably both within and across schools.<sup>54</sup> If, before 1996 when these findings were first published, the literature base on the roles and tasks of HoDs was "fragmentary",<sup>55</sup> since then it has positively burgeoned: the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has published *National Standards for Subject Leaders* against which the performance and training of these individuals might be planned and assessed.<sup>56</sup> Further research has been commissioned by the ESRC (the agency that distributes government research funding to tertiary institutions in England and Wales) on their role and work within existing 'improvement' and 'effectiveness' paradigms,<sup>57</sup> and by the Teacher Training Agency on what forms of 'training' might be provided for them.<sup>58</sup> The role of heads of department or subject leaders has in addition caught the attention of English and Welsh school inspectorates,<sup>59</sup> while a steady stream of academic papers on the topic has also begun to appear.<sup>60</sup>

Having examined the context for the reform of 'management' within which contemporary policy, practice and research are conducted, I want to turn now to consider how the secondary school curriculum has been shaped in recent decades, for, as Skilbeck states, "the curriculum and its attendant pedagogy are the principal means whereby the school pursues its educational purposes and organises and structures learning".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Sammons, Thomas, and Mortimore, op. cit., 1997; Harris, A., Jamieson, I. and Russ, J. A study of 'effective' departments in secondary schools. *School Organisation*, 1996, 15(3), 283-299; Harris, A. Improving ineffective departments in secondary schools. *Strategies for change and development. Educational Management and Administration*, 1998, 26(3), 269-278; Turner, C. A preliminary discussion of the methods used by heads of subject departments to promote more effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Wales. *Welsh Journal of Education*, 1998, 7(1), 80-94; Brown, M. and Rutherford, D. Changing roles and raising standards: new challenges for heads of department. *School Leadership and Management*, 1998, 18(1), 75-88.

<sup>55</sup> Turner, C. The roles and tasks of a subject head of department in secondary schools in England and Wales: a neglected area of research. *School Organisation*, 1996, 16(2), 203-217. However, the literature reviewed is limited to English and Welsh material and is predominantly that written within a particular 'educational management' discourse.

<sup>56</sup> Teacher Training Agency. *National standards for subject leaders*. London: HMSO, 1998.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Turner, C. and Bolam, R. Analysing the role of the subject head of department in secondary schools in England and Wales: towards a theoretical framework. *School Leadership and Management*, 1998, 18(3), 373-388.

<sup>58</sup> Harris, A., Busher, H. and Wise, C. Effective training for subject leaders. *Management in Education*, 2000, 14(3), 26-27.

<sup>59</sup> Turner, C. A critical review of research on subject leaders in secondary schools in the period 1995-2000. Paper presented to the sixth international research conference of the British Educational Management and Administration Society. Robinson College, Cambridge, 2000, 29-31 March.

<sup>60</sup> E.g. Bennett, N. Middle management in secondary schools: introduction. *School Leadership and Management*, 1999, 19(3), 289-292 (special issue on middle management in secondary schools).

<sup>61</sup> Skilbeck, op. cit, 1989, p. 1.

## CURRICULUM

The term curriculum has many meanings and uses. For the purposes of this discussion, I want to draw on and modify slightly Bernstein's early conceptual work on knowledge codes<sup>62</sup> in order to provide a working definition of 'curriculum'. Bernstein argued that educational knowledge was produced and reproduced in schooling through two basic codes, 'collection'<sup>7</sup> and 'integrated', which could be differentiated in terms of the way each constituted curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (see below). More recently, the formal school 'curriculum' has been a site of intense, protracted ideological, political and professional struggle<sup>63</sup> in educational reform through the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, in order to reflect the curriculum's centrality to the politics of schooling, it seems appropriate to tinker with Bernstein's formulation and to define, in order to analyse, the contemporary curriculum in terms of its constituent elements: content, pedagogy and **assessment**.<sup>64</sup>

In this part of the chapter, I appraise (a) international post-war trends in central government curriculum policy and assessment development; (b) the recent dominance of the 'New Right' in curriculum reform; (c) the social organisation of the secondary school curriculum; and (d) the enduring importance of subject departments and subject traditions.

In the analysis of 'teaching'<sup>7</sup> in the final part of the chapter, I focus on departmental organisation and politics, as opposed to subject traditions and their related departmental divisions. I then consider the knowledge base or epistemology of secondary school teaching, contemporary workloads and the organisation and control of teachers' collective work.

### *Trends In Curriculum And Assessment Development*

Just as approaches to the management of schools are located in the history and polity of education, so too curricula develop over time in order to accommodate changing social, ideological and economic priorities. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Hargreaves,<sup>65</sup> like Smyth above, should draw on a Habermasian framework to tease out the connections between society, politics and particular curriculum and assessment forms (both policy and practice) in post-war Britain up to the end of the 1980s. Briefly, Hargreaves argues that the chronology of successive government initiatives in the field of secondary school curriculum and related forms of assessment and credentialling comprises a sequence of educational policy responses to broader social and economic crises over a number of decades. Efforts to address these crises led, first, to policies of expansion of access to reorganised forms of

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<sup>62</sup> Bernstein, B. On the classification and framing of educational knowledge. In M. Young (Ed.) *Knowledge and control*. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971, 47-69.

<sup>63</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996; Helsby, op. cit., 1999.

<sup>64</sup> More recently, Helsby, (op. cit., 1999, p. 48) makes the distinction between curriculum content (specifications of what should be taught); curriculum form (its organisation and delivery); curriculum method (pedagogy); and curriculum assessment (what aspects are formally tested and valued).

<sup>65</sup> Op. cit., 1989.

education at all ages and in the 1960s, in particular, to the attempted *comprehensivisation*<sup>66</sup> of secondary schooling.

When this system-wide reorganisation failed to stem the growing social and economic problems of the nation (i.e. a crisis of rationality), the search for educational 'solutions' turned in the 1970s and early 1980s toward the development of a common, broad and balanced curriculum entitlement for all students. However, the hegemony of the subject-dominated curriculum, designed to prepare a limited number of 'deserving' students for high status terminal examinations was to prove largely intractable, and the hoped for curriculum innovations failed to eventuate (a crisis of legitimation). Policy efforts turned more energetically in the mid 1980s to the wider introduction of novel, non-examination based forms of assessment and alternative curriculum programmes in an attempt to address the alienation of large numbers of students who left their decade of compulsory schooling without useable credentials (a crisis of motivation). Throughout these shifts, however, the relative impermeability to change of the traditional curriculum content (subjects) and assessment (examination) forms of the secondary school was plain. In any event, as Hargreaves demonstrates, the introduction of new curriculum content, continuous assessment and student profiles was additional and ran parallel to what Connell, in the Australian context, has called the hegemonic, competitive academic curriculum.<sup>67</sup>

Content, assessment and credentialling, then, on Hargreaves' analysis are closely linked components not only of the secondary school curriculum generally, but also of the specific educational strategies through which governments attempt to resolve social and economic crises and, as such, are closely interwoven with policies on teaching and management. Hargreaves' analysis was located specifically in the context of post war British education. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the current wave of global curriculum reform, focused as it is on both content (e.g. 'National' curricula) and evaluation (e.g. credentialing, system-wide testing), is but the latest phase in an ongoing struggle. For example, in his review of OECD nations' curriculum-related policy documents, Skilbeck comments that:

What is clear is that since the 1950s many member (OECD) countries have experienced a succession of significant impulses in educational reform, which have varied widely in range and intensity. They have occurred in school reorganisation and development, new approaches to curriculum and scope and content, innovatory

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<sup>66</sup> As Ball (1981, p. 2) shows, however, the term 'comprehensive' itself is "essentially without analytical meaning" and, in practice, encompasses a wide range of ideological, organisational and curriculum forms. Ball, S. *Beachside comprehensive. A case study of secondary schooling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. In the case of Beachside, success "is measured in terms of examination passes, the size of the sixth form and the size and type of university entrance" (p. 21).

<sup>67</sup> Connell, R. *Teachers work*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985.

practices in teaching and learning and the expansion and enlargement of teacher education.<sup>68</sup>

Skilbeck organises his analysis around issues of demography, economics and politics; the control of educational decision-making; and, the relationship between education and national self-image. He identifies ten broad trends in global education policy that will act as a useful framework for analysing historical developments in New Zealand secondary education (see chapter thirteen).

- (1) School structures and systems have with popular consent been restructured to promote wider access and opportunity in more comprehensive systems which rely less on progressive "selection by examination at various stages of schooling".
- (2) Public and political discourses attend increasingly to issues of accountability for educational quality, curriculum content, learning outcomes and responsiveness by professionals to "student, parent and community needs".
- (3) Tensions exist between the desire to cater to individual student needs via special programmes and the wish to provide a common core curriculum for all, and in the secondary school, between general and vocational forms of mass compulsory education.
- (4) An interest in school effectiveness studies and the evaluation of improvement interventions; and in the dissemination of best practice often through educational inspectorates.
- (5) Profound disagreements over time "between system managers, policy makers and politicians on the one hand, and leading professional figures and groups on the other" regarding the fundamental purposes of education and its consequent development and organisation.
- (6) The search for some consensus on priorities for a common core curriculum. General education gradually gives way to education for employment, skills development and citizenship and, latterly, an emphasis on learning for life.
- (7) A trend towards increasing central government intervention through fiscal policy, regulation and accountability mechanisms.
- (8) The tensions between educational provision which seeks to accommodate "changing student values and lifestyles" and that which seems to "treat the students more as the objects of policies designed to achieve goals of national renewal and development than as human participants and partners in the educative process".
- (9) Pressures for curriculum and pedagogical change from outside the education profession are often manifested as power struggles rather than concerted drives.

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<sup>68</sup> Skilbeck, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 4.

(10)The numerous professional educational responses to identified criticisms or shortcomings of the system have not always been drawn to the attention of critics and the community yet their continuing support for change and innovation is essential.<sup>69</sup>

*The Dominance Of The 'New Right' And Curriculum Reform*

What we have noted thus far in terms of the secondary curriculum is the increasing use by governments of organisational, programme and assessment strategies in order to address the reported failure of education to mitigate and ameliorate the effects of economic and social 'problems' and tensions. In a number of administrations in OECD countries, these tensions have been played out through policies designed variously to increase access to education, to lever up levels of attainment and the quality of teaching, to provide a balanced education for both democracy, citizenship and employment, and to reinforce government control of publicly funded education via increased accountability for outcomes and the use of resources. This overview, however, fails to highlight the reality that, at different historical junctures, these various policy initiatives reflect the ideological dispositions of particular groups of politicians and administrators. Kliebard, for example, has shown how constant ideological struggles have seen different curriculum traditions dominate at one time or another through modern American history. Such struggles take place as professional, lay and political groups attempt to gain ascendancy by promoting and establishing particular values, theoretical positions and practical orientations to curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment. The key point here is that although new curriculum traditions may emerge over time, they often co-exist with others and achieve only temporary dominance:

What emerges as a dominant strain in the curriculum is not a function of the force of a particular proposal alone but the due interaction of curriculum ideas and sympathetic or antagonistic social conditions. Therefore, over the course of time, one would expect that first one current then another should assume prominence and that, to some extent, they should all exist side by side.<sup>70</sup>

It would appear from much of the literature that in the 1990s, one curriculum 'current' in particular had achieved prominence, namely that of the political right or what has come to be known as the 'New Right'. Beyer and Apple encapsulate much of the venom which has been directed at this current in their observation that:

... public education is under a concerted attack from right-wing forces that wish to substitute an ethic of private gain and an accountant's profit-and-loss sheet for the public good ... The language of efficiency, standards, competency, assessment, cost

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-27.

<sup>70</sup> Kliebard, H. The effort to reconstruct the modern American curriculum. In Beyer and Apple, op. cit., 1998, p. 32.

effectiveness, and so on impoverishes our imagination and limits our educational and political vision.<sup>71</sup>

To be fair, the authors' analysis of the causes and effects of this 'concerted' attack, and the questions they ask of social and educational practices, are considerably more complex than this extract would suggest. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the 'New Right' is not a monolithic or homogeneous entity but, rather, an "amalgum of ... philosophies"<sup>72</sup> and practices that are at the one time both conservative and liberal in orientation and consequently, prone to "internal contradictions" that will manifest themselves idiosyncratically in particular political contexts. Thus, in his complex analysis of the political lobbying, positioning and strategising which took place in the period prior to the introduction of a national curriculum and testing regime in England and Wales, Quicke begins by explaining that, although neo-liberals and neo-conservatives both promote the ideal of a free economy, for the former this is achieved through the operation of the market established by the state, for the latter, in contrast, the role of the market is to secure a strong state and civil institutions "like the family and schools".<sup>73</sup>

The restoration of 'traditional values' is also central to that part of the 'New Right' project that seeks to buttress the power of the state. Taken together, then, the objectives of the 'New Right' are a puzzling mixture of market, state and tradition oriented philosophies that, moreover, are articulated within the polity as a whole both by individuals, a variety of interest groups, the media and political parties. In order to advance these objectives in the sphere of state education in the 1980s, Quicke suggests that it was necessary to mould the pre-election curriculum debate. Thus elements of the 'New Right' variously needed to (a) ally with advocates of a general, liberal education; (b) demonstrate that existing forms of liberal education had been captured by the radical left; (c) advocate for individual freedom and choice in a consumer marketplace; and (d) call for the assurance of the quality of learning through the introduction of a national curriculum and national testing:

Their strategy involves appeals to populist critiques of curriculum reform, professionalism and bureaucracy and attempts to establish alliances with liberals around a 'new consensus'.<sup>74</sup>

Similar arguments are made by Apple with regard to the attempted "conservative restoration" in America.<sup>75</sup> In Quicke's analysis, the neo-conservatives took the lead in promoting this new consensus based around a return to a traditional subject-oriented,

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<sup>71</sup> Beyer, L. and Apple, M. Values and politics in the curriculum. In Beyer and Apple, op. cit., 1998, pp. 4&7.

<sup>72</sup> Quicke, J. The 'New Right' and education. In Moon, Murphy and Raynor, op.cit, 1989, p. 77.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>75</sup> Apple, M. Justifying the conservative restoration: morals, genes and educational policy. Educational Policy, 1997, 11(2), 167-182.

examination-based curriculum. Their justification for this was twofold; first, only a return to a traditional curriculum could provide the requisite skills and knowledge for individuals to become truly autonomous or 'free' participants in society; and, second, the existing curriculum had become irredeemably "politicised" by leftist curriculum offerings such as "anti-racist and anti-sexist education, peace studies, world studies and other 'newer' subjects".<sup>76</sup> Of course, there was no admission that the agenda of the 'New Right' might be similarly 'politicised' and ideological! And in this sense, Quicke argues that their agenda to establish a new consensus was part of a broader "hegemonic project".<sup>77</sup> In effect, a restoration of the traditional curriculum and associated assessment regimes was essential if the ideals of traditional values, individual autonomy and free market economics were, through mass compulsory education, to come to be seen as the natural and taken for granted ways to order the whole of state and civil society.

Although 'New Right' alliances have demonstrably been able to influence the development of a national curriculum policy in most of Britain, and other countries, in the last two decades,<sup>78</sup> the larger point I want to make here is that the secondary school curriculum is continually subject to contestation in terms of its content, assessment and credentialling. Moreover, while in Quicke's example, these attempts to secure curriculum influence had been advanced through private 'think tanks' closely linked to a particular, right wing political party, similar tactics are routinely employed across the political spectrum by, for example, business interests,<sup>79</sup> teacher unions,<sup>80</sup> subject associations,<sup>81</sup> mainstream<sup>82</sup> and even "fundamentalist pressure groups".<sup>83</sup> In this regard, Kliebard's concluding remarks on the development of the modern American curriculum may well apply equally to recent national curriculum development programmes in other anglophone administrations:

Each doctrine had an appeal and a constituency. And, rather than make a particular ideological choice among apparently contradictory curriculum directions, it was perhaps more politically expedient on the part of practical school administrators to

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<sup>76</sup> Quicke, op.cit, 1989, p. 78.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of the ideologies of the new right in America, see Apple, 1997, op. cit.; Beyer, L. Schooling for democracy; what kind? In Beyer and Apple, op. cit., 1998, 245-263.

<sup>79</sup> Apple, M. *Teachers and texts. A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. New York: Routledge, 1986; Noble, D. The regime of technology in education. In Beyer and Apple, op. cit., 1998, pp. 267-283.

<sup>80</sup> Grace, G. Teachers and the state in Britain: a changing relation. In Lawn, M. and Grace, G. (Eds.). *Teachers: the culture and politics of work*. London: Falmer, 1987, 193-228; Bascia, N. Teacher unions and educational reform. In Hargreaves, et al, op. cit., 1998a, 895-915; Barber, M. *The National Curriculum. A study in policy*. Keele, UK: Keele University Press, 1996.

<sup>81</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996, pp. 33-53.

<sup>82</sup> Moon, B. Who's in control? Pressure group politics and curriculum change. In. Moon, Murphy and Raynor, op. cit., 1989, 220-227.

<sup>83</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996, pp. 131-147; Apple, op. cit., 1997.

make a potpourri of all of them. This, in fact, is what the American curriculum has become.<sup>84</sup>

### *The Social Organisation Of The Secondary School Curriculum*

If the state and national government mechanisms used to articulate the "curriculum as prescription"<sup>85</sup> may be said to oscillate over time between liberal and conservative poles, and to draw on "populist critiques" in each, the same is not true of its basic organisational structure at school level which, notably, has been dominated in many countries for much of this century by immutable subject traditions. The organisation of the secondary school curriculum around clearly demarcated subject domains has two principal effects on the practices of secondary schooling. First it serves to produce and reproduce a hierarchy of isolated, mutually exclusive workgroups comprising teachers whose primary loyalties and affiliations are to the workgroup, not the school as a whole.<sup>86</sup> Second, it serves to produce and reproduce discrete curriculum programmes which are defined, taught and evaluated by like-minded teachers with their own epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies and related pedagogies whose loyalties and affiliations, similarly, are to the "abstract, formal and scholarly" subject tradition, not the school curriculum as a whole.<sup>87</sup> In both cases, affiliations and loyalties are highly resistant to change. Here again, Bernstein's initial theory of educational knowledge codes provides a useful point from which to tease out some detail of these causes and effects.

According to Bernstein<sup>88</sup> educational knowledge (curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation) falls into two basic types or codes: collection and integrated. In the former, content is typically specialised and the classification or boundary between it and other areas is relatively impermeable. A collection code would routinely be delivered in discrete timetabled units, the number of which would indicate the relative status of the subject. Conversely, in an integrated code the classification or boundary between subject areas is weak. Integrated codes are given coherence and meaning by the overarching principles that hold them together. Because the curriculum content is less specialised and controlled, integrated codes "call for greater homogeneity in pedagogy and evaluation and therefore reduce differences between teachers in the form of transmission and assessment of knowledge".<sup>89</sup> In other words, if the curriculum content is fluid and diverse, the coherence is provided by teachers agreeing to teach and evaluate in common ways.

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<sup>84</sup> Kliebard, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 32.

<sup>85</sup> Goodson, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 111

<sup>86</sup> Siskin, *op. cit.*, 1994; Ball, *op. cit.*, 1987, pp. 212-246; Holt, *op. cit.*, 1990.

<sup>87</sup> Goodson, I. with Dowbiggin, I. Curriculum history, professionalization and the social organization of knowledge. In I. Goodson. *Studying curriculum*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989, 40-50.

<sup>88</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1971.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

Similarly, according to **Bernstein**, framing can be weak or strong. Framing refers to "the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical **relationship**".<sup>90</sup> Framing also refers to the strength of the boundary between everyday, common sense knowledge and official or academic knowledge. Strong classification reduces teacher and school discretion over what may be taught and what counts as knowledge. Strong framing reduces teacher and student control of the "pedagogical relationship". Conversely, weak classification and framing allow for diversity and pluralism, for the incorporation of personal everyday experiences in learning and for greater control by students in the selection, pacing and evaluation of knowledge.

Again, it is worth drawing on the English experience here as, in some respects, it quite closely parallels the structures and organisation of secondary schooling in New Zealand that we shall examine in the next chapter. In England, the 'competitive academic curriculum' has dominated secondary schooling for much, but not all, of the post-war period and was characterised for most of this time by strong classification and framing. In this medium, as Ball's example at Beachside comprehensive from the 1970s aptly demonstrates, "for the most part, teaching methods were traditional and didactic and all curriculum subjects were timetabled and taught separately" with the exception of "internally designed and assessed" courses for many 'less able' students aged fifteen and sixteen.<sup>91</sup> At Beachside, a policy of mixed ability teaching was introduced with variable support from subject departments. As Ball shows, even where there was departmental consensus at a philosophical level on the benefits of this innovation, in the classroom, individual teachers most frequently retained strong control over the selection, pacing and evaluation of knowledge and were concerned that academic standards should not slip. Thus despite a "symbolic", "organisational" commitment to mixed ability teaching, classification and framing remained comparatively strong in "the interactional **framework**" of lessons.<sup>92</sup>

The independence (at least from active central government intervention) and hegemony of the competitive academic curriculum came under threat in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s as more 'integrated', student-centred, curriculum programmes and assessment regimes characterised by weaker classification and framing were trialled. Most radical among these was the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) aimed at 14-18 year olds. This, as its title implies, attempted to bridge the gap between school and workplace learning and between academic knowledge and vocational skills development. At the end of the 1980s a National Curriculum, comprising subject ordered content and age point standardised assessment tasks was imposed by the third Thatcher government. It is instructive, then, to analyse the two in terms of their reception by teachers, their effects

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>91</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 20.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 194.

on pedagogy and evaluation, and their relationship with the traditional secondary school curriculum. Helsby compares and contrasts the two curriculum initiatives as follows:

Both TVEI and the National Curriculum can be seen as clear attempts by the state to reassert central control of the school curriculum. Both were accompanied initially by claims that teachers had 'failed': in the case of TVEI that they had failed to meet the needs of industry, and with the National Curriculum that they had failed to maintain appropriate standards. However, the two initiatives were quite different in terms of the structural framework which they presented. Whilst TVEI was based upon a very broad set of aims, was relatively well resourced and invited innovation by teachers, the early versions of the National Curriculum incorporated detailed prescription of curriculum content, assessment and evaluation, was underfunded and represented a retreat to the traditions of the past.<sup>93</sup>

Drawing on Bernstein's classification-framing model, Helsby assesses the effects of these two curriculum initiatives on secondary teachers' work:

In so far as TVEI encouraged both cross-curricular approaches and the development of teacher and student initiative in the teaching and learning process, it can be argued that it represented a significant weakening of both classification and framing. Equally it could be claimed that these two aspects were strengthened by the reassertion of the importance of subject divisions within the National curriculum and by the pressures to prepare students for standardized national assessment of extensive bodies of subject knowledge. Whilst, as we have seen, teachers' consequent empowerment or disempowerment is not a forgone conclusion, these changes either strengthen or reduce constraints upon teacher autonomy and make it harder or easier for them to assert control over their work.<sup>94</sup>

This is an interesting analysis because it captures the manner in which the traditional subject-examination dominated, didactic 'collection code' of secondary schooling came under threat in the 1980s as novel forms of curriculum content and assessment were introduced to attempt to meet the needs of a wider range of students. Equally, it argues that the 1988 National Curriculum in England and Wales represented a wholesale retreat from these recent innovations in curriculum and replaced them with a "focus on the acquisition of bodies of academic knowledge, on competitive individualism and on conformist behaviour".<sup>95</sup> The reasons for this retreat are unclear. Helsby speculates that the National Curriculum "could indicate a change in government priorities away from concerns about education as vocational preparation and towards education as social control".<sup>96</sup> The reality is, arguably, more likely to be found in Kliebard's 'potpourri' metaphor – modern national

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<sup>93</sup> Helsby, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 64.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65. See also Goodson and Marsh, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 162.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

curricula aim at both vocational preparation and social control. In this regard, Mac an Ghail notes the way in which the National Curriculum 'in use' straddles and blends old and new curriculum subject divisions and their attendant content, pedagogy and assessment forms to produce "the ascendancy of an entrepreneurial curriculum".<sup>97</sup>

### *Secondary School Subject And Department Traditions*

To an extent, Helsby and Mac an Ghail are both accurate in their analyses; in the 1990s we may well have been witnessing profound challenges to former curriculum hegemonies through changes to teachers' autonomy and from traditional forms of liberal education towards the development of entrepreneurial curricula. However, missing from the analyses is an acknowledgement of the pervasive and enduring effects of the subject traditions and introspective departmental groups among which secondary teachers work in schools; so, finally in this section of the chapter, it is to these enduring curriculum traditions and self-contained workgroups that we now briefly turn.

In their discussion of secondary school workplace contexts, McLaughlin and Talbert begin by posing the simple question:

How is it that two departments in the same high school can establish quite different teaching and learning environments and outcomes?<sup>98</sup>

The basis of their answer is the idea that secondary school teachers inhabit multiple, embedded contexts. Significantly, the most immediate and important of these is the subject area or department. In the concluding section of this chapter, 'Teaching', I consider in detail the part played by these in shaping and developing teachers' work. Here, I wish simply to record the historical importance of the subject tradition to the production and maintenance of what Siskin calls the "realms of knowledge"<sup>99</sup> and Ball and Lacey the "subject subcultures"<sup>100</sup> of secondary schooling.

That the compartmentalisation of curriculum and organisation in secondary schools represents a long tradition in the history of publicly funded schooling is clearly documented in Siskin's<sup>101</sup> analysis of the development of the subject department in American high schools. Since the turn of the century, and with the advent of industrial models of cost-efficient educational delivery, the rigid division and demarcation of the curriculum have been largely unquestioned. Early in the piece, the school curriculum closely resembled the emerging "disciplinary classification" of recently departmentalised universities. Soon, however, debate polarised around the two apparently disparate goals of public education,

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<sup>97</sup> Op. cit., 1994, p. 40.

<sup>98</sup> McLaughlin and Talbert, op. cit., 1990, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994, p. 9.

<sup>100</sup> Ball, S. and Lacey, C. Revisiting subject disciplines as the opportunity for group action: a measured critique of subject subcultures. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1995, 95-122.

<sup>101</sup> Op. cit., 1994, p. 26.

one for college preparation and the other as education for work. In a climate of "social efficiency", academic subjects came under close scrutiny and the principle of contestation within the system and the school for subject status was established. Consequently, by 1940, progressive education reformers:

... could claim to have succeeded in overthrowing some of the targeted subjects such as Latin, which lost its departmental status and retreated to the territory of what was becoming the Foreign Language department. German, which was attacked as not only academic but treasonous, largely disappeared in most states. History, assailed for its emphasis on ancient worlds and long-dead people, was modified to include more socially appropriate knowledge, such as political economy or the responsibilities of citizenship. Algebra, however, proved a formidable and largely invulnerable opponent; it was still required in most schools, enrolling, in 1928, almost a third of all high school students (Krug, 1972). Favored subjects attracted new advocates, and new status: Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Agriculture, and Business commonly appeared as school subjects, and occasionally as departments; less common and less lasting were the 'core' or 'life experience' offerings which directly opposed the subject-specific organizational model of the college.<sup>102</sup>

Such a description might imply that the subject ordered curriculum was open to considerable influence from community, political, vocational and professional interest groups during the first half of the century. However, the last clause in the extract holds the key, here. In effect, new or modified subjects could hope to gain patronage where they were seen to supplant reportedly outdated and elitist forms of knowledge. To gain sufficient purchase and credibility they could not afford to oppose "the subject specific organizational model of the college". In other words, the content and organisation of the high school curriculum continued to be largely derived from the subject disciplines of the university that shaped both the curriculum and its graduates:

This disciplinary model provided a template: a developed, established and legitimated system of matching organisational divisions of departments to the knowledge divisions of subjects. Even as the reformers hammered against these categories, they helped to forge them into familiar and concrete existence, and bring their high school counterparts into focus. What emerged by the 1930s as an almost universal pattern of required high school courses, now securely housed in departmental homes, were the traditional Math (including algebra), the modern - and now slightly streamlined - Science and English, and the newly created Social Studies.<sup>103</sup>

Goodson and Dowbiggin offer a different analysis in the British context of the reasons for and ways in which secondary school subjects sought status and security but they

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

also draw an explicit link between university knowledge and subject tradition in the secondary schools. In contrast to the American experience described by Siskin, where advanced subject credentials for high school teachers were eschewed until comparatively recently, they show how increasing subject specialisation and the acquisition of 'high status' knowledge were intimately linked at school level with teachers' career prospects and their ability to secure favourable levels of resources. Thus they claim that:

Research into the social history of British secondary school subjects has shown how teachers have been encouraged to define their curricular knowledge in abstract, formal and scholarly terms in return for status, resources, territoriality and accreditation. A subtle yet pervasive series of incentives has compelled those educators eager to improve their professional prerogatives and credentials to surrender solicitously to the definitions of 'valuable knowledge' as formulated by university scholars.<sup>104</sup>

The discursive struggle, first to become established and then for increased status relative to other subjects takes place both within and without the school. In this respect, just as we have seen that particular community interest groups lobby for whole curriculum influence across time and space, so too do advocates of particular subjects on behalf of teachers within the subject tradition. Subject advocacy is an important and unifying part of the work of the secondary school specialist teacher as a professional who practices within a discrete subject discipline, i.e. not as a teacher per se, but as a member of a community of teachers of mathematics, or English, or science etc. As Goodson and Marsh explain:

The aspirational imperative to become an academic subject is fundamental and very powerful and can be summarized as follows: school subjects comprise groups of people with differing interests and intentions. Certain common factors impinge on all these sub-groups, most notably the material self-interest of each subject teacher is closely connected with the status of the subject in terms of its examinable knowledge. Associations set up to represent school subjects often place this fact at the centre of their campaigns on behalf of the subject. Academic subjects provide the teacher with a career structure characterised by better promotion prospects and pay than less academic subjects. Most resources are given to academic subjects which are taught to 'able' students. The conflict over the status of examinable knowledge is, above all, a battle over the material resources and career prospects available to each subject community or subject teacher. Even subjects with clear pedagogic or utilitarian origins and intentions, such as art, craft (in aspiration design and technology) and rural studies (in aspiration environmental studies/science) have had to present themselves as theoretical academic subjects if 'A' level status, alongside acceptance as a university discipline, ensures 'establishment'. The attempts of interests groups to promote new subjects have focussed since 1917 on the pursuit of high-status

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<sup>104</sup> Goodson with Dowbiggin, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 41.

examinations and qualifications. Subjects like art, woodwork, metalwork, technical studies, bookkeeping, typewriting and needlework, domestic science and physical education have consistently pursued status improvement by arguing for enhanced examinations and qualifications.<sup>105</sup>

In this part of the chapter we have discussed in general terms, global post-war trends in curriculum reform and the linkage by governments of national curriculum priorities with wider social and economic issues. Curriculum is a shifting political terrain when considered in terms of content, pedagogy and assessment yet, at the school level, its practice has historically been dominated by subject traditions, transmission pedagogies and departmental forms of organisation which seem highly resistant to modification. These enduring structures are important to teachers' understanding of their work in terms of affiliation, loyalty and career. We turn now, therefore, to a more detailed consideration of secondary school teachers' routine work.

## TEACHING

In this final part of the chapter, I want to discuss two closely related 'teaching' issues; (a) the 'social organisation'<sup>106</sup> of secondary teaching within the school; and (b) the epistemology of secondary school teaching, including the concepts of 'expertise', 'professionalism', and the politics of teachers' work. These issues straddle the institutional, occupational, bureaucratic and political contexts within which secondary teachers develop their practice. To understand *how* teachers develop their practice, we need to identify the discursive practices, both inside and outside the school, that shape their thinking, action and interaction.

### *The Social Organisation Of Secondary School Teaching*

As we have just seen in the previous discussion of curriculum, the school subject has long been and still remains of primary importance to an understanding of how secondary teachers conceptualise and carry out their work. The subject *tradition* acts as a central, conceptual framework at several levels inside and outside the school: social, professional and personal. This framework encompasses issues of epistemology, affiliation and career progression. In terms of the practical organisation of teachers' work in the secondary school on a day-to-day basis, however, the subject *department* is pre-eminent.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Goodson and Marsh, *op. cit.*, 1996, pp. 46-47. See also, Goodson, I. On curriculum form: notes towards a theory of curriculum. In I. Goodson with C. Anstead and J. Mangan. *Subject knowledge. Readings for the study of school subjects*. London: Falmer, 1998, pp. 147-148.

<sup>106</sup> Rosenholtz, S. *Teachers' workplace. The social organization of schools*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1991.

<sup>107</sup> Ball and Lacey (*op. cit.*, 1995, p. 99) make a distinction between 'epistemic' and 'epistemological communities'. The former are subject tradition oriented, the latter refers to the organisation of

## Secondary school departments

Although stereotypes of the "subject-oriented" secondary teacher have been overdrawn in important respects, secondary teachers do consistently frame their work in terms of subject and department. Subject departments form the primary organizational unit of the high school, defining in crucial ways who teachers are, what they do, where and with whom they work, and how that work is perceived by others.<sup>108</sup>

However, neither subject traditions nor the processes undertaken in particular departments are fixed, uncontested or homogeneous. As McLaughlin notes, the secondary school workplace comprises what she calls 'multiple, embedded contexts'. These are: subject area or department; school structure and culture; school sector and policy system; community social class culture and educational value system: societal, professional, **community**<sup>109</sup>. Consequently, the work of the subject department and teachers within it is influenced to varying degrees by student, workgroup, school, community, peer and system norms and expectations.<sup>110</sup> Thus, as Siskin and Little point out, "[w]hen we look to departments, we need to look closely at both the broad influences and the local actions that shape the contexts for teachers and for students, and we need to theorize carefully the relationships between them".<sup>111</sup>

It is inevitable, then, that secondary school departments as contexts for teaching and learning will exhibit not only certain common, traditional sub-cultural processes but also changing, idiosyncratic features of subject and workgroup practice. Departmental curriculum practices (content, pedagogy, assessment) vary: within and across schools and subject boundaries,<sup>112</sup> over time and in terms of student attainment levels.<sup>113</sup> It is a truism, but nonetheless an important point of departure, that not all subjects and departments are the same.

Within the school and the national or state system, subjects are hierarchically organised according to their relative, fluid and contestable sources of power and it is,

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departments generally and within particular schools. Departments demand "strategic loyalty" from their members, thus "differentiation of the epistemic community is quite typically suppressed in favor of organizational and status gains".

<sup>108</sup> Siskin, L. and Little, J. The subject department. Continuities and critiques. In Siskin and Little, op. cit., 1995, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Op. cit., 1990, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1981, pp. 163-192; Louis, K. Social and community values and the quality of teachers' work life. In McLaughlin, Talbert and Bascia, op. cit., 1990, 17-39; Metz, M. How social class differences shape teachers' work. In McLaughlin, Talbert and Bascia, 1990, op. cit., 40-107; Metz, M. Teachers' ultimate dependence on their students. In J. Little and M. McLaughlin (Eds.). *Teachers' work. Individuals, colleagues and contexts*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1993, 104-136; McLaughlin, M. What matters most in teachers workplace context? In Little and McLaughlin, op. cit., 1993, 79-103; Talbert, J. Boundaries of teachers' professional communities in US high schools. Power and precariousness of the subject department. In Siskin and Little, op. cit., 1995, 68-94.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>112</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1991; 1994.

therefore, in teachers' interests to work as a group to enhance the status of their own subject:

Thus in secondary schools the material and self-interest of subject teachers is interlinked with the status of the subject, judged in terms of its examination status. Academic subjects provide the teacher with a career structure characterized by better promotion prospects and pay than less academic subjects. The conflict over the status of examinable knowledge, as perceived and fought at individual and collective level, is essentially a battle over material resources and career prospects.<sup>114</sup>

As with Hargreaves' metaphor of secondary schools as typically "balkanized" cultures,<sup>115</sup> Ball has shown how secondary school departments routinely vie with each other within the school for status and resources in a form of 'baronial politics',<sup>116</sup> how the status of the subject waxes and wanes within the school, and with it both the career prospects and the amount of 'high status' academic teaching available to subject teachers. Connell, too, has noted the "division", "conflict" and "serious antagonism" that often exist between subject departments in secondary schools, "especially where the division of subject-matters also involves differences of method and equipment, and educational ideology".<sup>117</sup> Equally, Ball and Lacey<sup>118</sup> have demonstrated that subject departments experience internal ideological and philosophical struggles between teachers or groups of teachers over appropriate curriculum content and pedagogy. Departments may, as a practical consequence, be strong or weak within the school and even traditionally dominant departments such as English may struggle to maintain their relative status if the department's work is perceived by others as too non-academic, or there are internal disagreements over academic content and subject pedagogy, or there are too many non-specialist teachers,<sup>119</sup> or the relationship between the Head of Department and principal or other school senior managers is poor.<sup>120</sup>

Siskin has taken the analysis further and developed a typology of secondary school departments as "social worlds"<sup>121</sup> based on a study of "the big four" (Math, Science, English and Social Studies) departments in three large American high schools. The notion of the department as social world is important to an understanding of teachers' work for, "[i]t is as community, as a social group creating the atmosphere in which they work, that

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<sup>113</sup> Ball and Lacey, *op. cit.*, 1995, Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, *op. cit.* 1997, pp. 46-58; Harris, Jamieson and Rush, *op. cit.*, 1996; Harris, *op. cit.*, 1998; Turner, *op. cit.*, 1998.

<sup>114</sup> Goodson and Marsh, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 134.

<sup>115</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1994, pp. 212-240.

<sup>116</sup> *Op. cit.* 1987, p. 221.

<sup>117</sup> Connell, *op. cit.*, 1985, p. 163.

<sup>118</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1995. See also Talbert, *op. cit.*, 1995.

<sup>119</sup> Talbert (*op. cit.*, 1995) shows how differences in level of specialist qualification lead to internal stratification of the teachers within a department.

<sup>120</sup> On this relationship, see also McCartney, C. and Shrag, F. Departmental and school leadership in promoting higher-order thinking. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1990, 22(6), 529-543; Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, *op. cit.*, 1997; Ball, *op. cit.*, 1987.

departments matter most to the teachers within them. While the department is also an administrative unit which makes critical decisions about teaching assignments ... and the subject which they teach ... for teachers the department is most often and most simply the people they work most closely, the social group in which they are members".<sup>122</sup> The department as social world varies considerably, though, in the extent to which it is (i) factionalised or *inclusive* of its members, and (ii) demanding of loyalty and collective *commitment* from them. Thus Siskin identifies departments as one of four ideal types; either bonded (high commitment, high inclusion), bundled (low commitment, high inclusion), fragmented (low commitment, low inclusion) or split (high commitment, low inclusion).<sup>123</sup> Although in her study (of larger departments in larger schools it should be noted), departments of all four types were found, most frequently departments were bundled, i.e.

[T]eachers are clearly members of a coherent and bounded department, sharing concerns and acting together to co-ordinate and support each other's efforts. Norms of inclusion are high – all members are welcome at meetings, lunch tables, and all are included when departmental decisions are made – but individual concerns rather than collective goals drive decisions ... These are departments where sharing occurs, but in a more limited form, and at less cost to individual teachers' autonomy than in the bonded department.<sup>124</sup>

Equally, like Ball above, Siskin identified a range of political activity both between and within departments. Such activity is claimed to be essential if departments are to exert influence at school level over 'proximal frames'<sup>125</sup> such as staff appointment and student selection, resource distribution, assessment, timetable space, physical environment and student grouping arrangements. But, within the department, too, crucial decisions are made which impact directly on the working conditions of their members:

While the social and professional rewards of membership – support, sympathy, suggestions and humor – are valued resources for teachers, the department, as a formally sanctioned administrative unit, has the authority to command and dispense far more tangible rewards and sanctions. It is in this sense that teachers ... talk about 'the department', and 'the way the department makes decisions' – as the official unit where a surprising number of rules are set, decisions made, and resources acquired and distributed. Which courses will be offered, and which required, who will teach them, at what time, in which room, and with what materials – these are micro-political decisions which are immediately and concretely consequential to teachers, and they

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<sup>121</sup> Op. cit., 1994, pp. 89-112.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-101.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p 100.

<sup>125</sup> "decisions made at the institutional level which operate directly on the teaching process", Ball, op. cit. 1981, p. 305.

are decisions in which departments play critical roles ... In the routine decisions of department politics teachers can win and lose desired courses or students, the materials to make their job easier, or even the jobs **themselves**.<sup>126</sup>

Decision-making practices are, then, a reflection of departmental leadership.

#### Subject department leadership

On the basis of her analysis of internal "power and politics", Siskin attributes differing forms of leadership to each of the ideal department types. Thus bonded departments are characterised by collaborative decision-making and consensual leadership; split departments by struggles over leadership and autocratic or dictatorial decision-making; fragmented departments by an absence of leadership and unclear decision-making and bundled departments by leadership or authority of expertise and administrative type decision-making by the head of department.<sup>127</sup> Significantly, for department members, credibility in leadership and management are in no small part a corollary of subject **expertise**.<sup>128</sup> Consequently, heads of department rather than whole school managers are legitimated in this role. As Siskin's and other empirical studies have all shown,<sup>129</sup> there is a tensile, symbiotic relationship between leadership and membership of the department.

On the one hand, "the power relationships between the head of a subject department and its members can vary from autocratic to non-directive and **democratic**",<sup>130</sup> on the other hand:

Accumulation is a key administrative role for each subject department and in terms of seeking budget, equipment, staff time and high calibre students; these resources are pursued relentlessly by departmental heads. But there is also the allocation of resources internally to subject department members and heads which often demand support and cooperation in return for allocating resources to **staff**.<sup>131</sup>

The "style and preferences" of the Head of department, not least their self-perception as either administrator or **teacher**,<sup>132</sup> have been found to be significant in explaining variations of practice within schools:

The fact that the position of department head is part teacher and part administrator contributes to its unique significance and creates what can be a productive tension in

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<sup>126</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994, pp. 114-115.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>128</sup> Little, J. Subject affiliations in high schools that restructure. In Siskin and Little, 1991, op. cit., p. 191; Little, J. Contested ground: the basis of teacher leadership in two restructuring high schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 1995, 96(1), 48-63, especially pp. 52-55.

<sup>129</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1981; Ball, op. cit., 1987; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, op. cit., 1989; Torrington and Weightman, op. cit., 1989; Siskin, op. cit., 1994;

<sup>130</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996, p. 56

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>132</sup> Johnson, S. The primacy and potential of high school departments. In McLaughlin, Talbert and Bascia, 1990, op. cit., 167-184; Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, op. cit., 1997; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, op. cit., 1989.

the school organization. The extent to which the individuals who hold these positions emphasize either the teaching or administrative components of the role affects their subsequent working relationships with teachers. Those who saw themselves primarily as teachers tended to work more as peers with colleagues and to regard the department as a democratic organization that could be a base for building influence in the larger organization. Those who saw themselves primarily as administrators were more inclined to oversee teachers' work closely and to expect staff to implement their superiors' decisions.<sup>133</sup>

Equally, some see subject leadership as their preferred career position in the school "hierarchy".<sup>134</sup>

Prior to the most recent wave of educational reforms in Britain (characterised by a shift to local administration of central policy, the greater separation of management and teaching functions, the introduction of mandated curricula and more pervasive forms of bureaucratic and market accountability), studies of departmental level leadership or management were equivocal in their findings in this regard.<sup>135</sup> The styles and self-perceptions of heads of department varied considerably. Heads of department were frequently reluctant to "oversee" colleagues' work and often found it difficult to accomplish more than basic administration requirements. Many were reluctant to delegate tasks and increase colleagues' already heavy loads, preferring to absorb the additional work themselves, often at high personal and domestic cost. In contrast, in one case study of curriculum innovation within a department, the decision-making process was shown to be shaped tangibly by issues of "power, conflict and resistance" through "the strategies utilized by the departmental head in an attempt to dominate the realities of the department, and the forms of resistance initiated by the staff".<sup>136</sup>

More recently, there is some evidence of intensified pressure from senior management at school level for more directly interventionist forms of staff, financial and curriculum 'management' at departmental level, linked to the spectre of external accountability. In their focus group interviews with 24 English heads of department in 1996, for example, Brown and Rutherford found that senior management at school level expected that more discipline and finance issues would be dealt with by the head of department, that departmental management was increasingly driven by external accountability issues and that greater proportions of time were spent in producing records and reports of questionable purpose for diverse audiences. More generally:

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<sup>133</sup> Johnson, op. cit., 1990, p. 177.

<sup>134</sup> Dinham, S. Brennan, K., Collier, J., Deece, A. and Mulford, D. *The secondary head of department: duties delights, dangers, directions and development. A pilot study of four NSW secondary schools.* School of Teaching and Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 2000, April.

<sup>135</sup> Hamlin, op. cit., 1990; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, op. cit., 1989; Torrington and Weightman, op. cit., 1989.

The heads of department reported a great reduction in their autonomy and some now regard themselves as the "buffer" between the aspirations of their colleagues and the demands of the National Curriculum. Decisions, it was claimed, are increasing [sic] being made with inspection in mind, and not necessarily what the head of department considers appropriate.<sup>137</sup>

Such pressure toward managerial intervention is bolstered by 'school effectiveness' studies that identify considerable differences in national examination results between subject departments either in the same school, or in similar socio-economic circumstances.<sup>138</sup> The pressures have reportedly been accommodated in a variety of ways within departments, for example, through the wider distribution of management responsibilities among staff and the use of structured development planning processes in scheduled meeting time slots.<sup>139</sup> These, of course, depend on the active participation of department members.

### **Participatory processes within departments**

Participatory approaches to the social organisation of departmental work are consistent with recently developed templates for the administration of the 'self-managing school'. Wider participation in what appears to be 'management' work is also a characteristic feature of teaching in a globalised 'new work order':

It is becoming increasingly clear that the old hierarchical, reductionist ways of thinking and acting to control work (teaching included) are certainly breaking down and giving way to new and apparently more enlightened, flexible, democratic and empowering forms. We are hearing much these days about cultures of learning, learning organizations, partnerships, teamwork, coaching and collaboration. These are the new genres within which the world of work is increasingly being described.<sup>140</sup>

These participatory modes of work "are nevertheless still a form of surveillance and control over the work of teaching".<sup>141</sup> Moreover, "such representations fail to square with our reality of schools as places that are highly politicized, and where forms of knowledge, culture, curriculum, pedagogy, administration and evaluation are continually being contested, confronted, resisted, and at least to some degree, reconstructed".<sup>142</sup> Calls for greater teacher collaboration also ignore many of the complexities of teachers'

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<sup>136</sup> Sparkes, A. Power, domination and resistance in the process of teacher-initiated innovation. *Research Papers in Education*, 1990, 5(2), p. 153.

<sup>137</sup> Brown, M. and Rutherford, D. Leadership for school improvement: key issues for the head of department. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association annual conference, 1996, MSS, p. 4. See also, Paechter, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>138</sup> e.g. Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, op. cit., 1997; Harris, Jamieson and Rush, op. cit., 1996; Harris, op. cit., 1998.

<sup>139</sup> Constable, H. Developing teachers as extended professionals. In H. Busher and R. Saran (Eds.). *Managing teachers as professionals in schools*. London: Kogan Page, 1995, 151-166.

<sup>140</sup> Smyth et al, op. cit, 2000, p. 9.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

traditionally autonomous and private classroom practice and, in part at least, depend on a naive faith in the efficacy of 'collegiality' as a vehicle for the development of 'successful schools' and teachers.

Much of the faith in 'collegiality' is founded on Judith Little's classic American study of teachers' workplace norms, based on interviews and observation of 105 teachers and 14 administrators in three secondary and three elementary urban schools.<sup>143</sup> Little found that "continuous professional development" was most likely to be found among groups of teachers who (a) "engage in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice"; (b) "are frequently observed and provided with useful (if potentially frightening) critiques of their teaching"; (c) "plan, design, research, evaluate and prepare teaching materials together"; and (d) "teach each other the practice of teaching".<sup>144</sup> Thus the ideal form of 'professional development' is strongly associated with the individual teacher's willingness to work closely with and confide in her colleagues.

At an abstract or normative level, the findings are uncontroversial and likely to attract universal endorsement. However, in the specific historical, political contexts of management, curriculum and teaching reform, normative models of professional collaboration tend to develop worrying surface cracks which may indicate underlying structural faults. By 1990, Little herself had become far more circumspect about the likelihood of collegiality to break down teacher isolation or encourage collaborative development.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, she has more recently reported that collegiality and leadership practices may change markedly in schools where cross-subject restructuring is taking place and accountability to external groups becomes more prominent:

Leaders' actions and relationships are thus subject to greater administrative and collegial scrutiny and less open to idiosyncratic interpretation than are the roles and relationships forged by department heads under more ordinary circumstances. Put in colloquial terms, no one cuts much slack to designated leaders in restructuring schools. And the leaders, in turn, adopt modes of leadership that more closely approximate the bureaucratic norm than the collegial one. Under these circumstances, teacher leaders press harder on the conventional norms of privacy (autonomy) than most departmental chairs feel obligated to press and than most teachers willingly accept.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Little, J. Norms of collegiality and experimentation: workplace conditions of school success. *American Educational Research Journal*, 1982, 19(3), 325-340.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>145</sup> Little, J. The persistence of privacy: autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers' College Record*, 1990, 91(4), 491-518. On the difficulties of promoting collegiality between heads of department and senior management, see Brown, M., Boyle, B. and Boyle, T. Commonalities between perception and practice in models of school decision-making in secondary schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 1999, 19(3), 319-330.

<sup>146</sup> Little, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 55.

It has also been argued that collegiality per se is neither good nor bad, that in practice collegiality takes many forms, and that some of these are artificial or "contrived" to suit narrow management control purposes.<sup>147</sup> Teachers value, and often find more productive, their privacy and solitude;<sup>148</sup> indeed, the "culture of isolation"<sup>149</sup> in teaching is persistent. Thus, it is suggested, a sensitive and judicious balance between autonomy and collegiality may be a more realistic and effective demand on the use of teachers' time.<sup>150</sup> The extent to which such a balance is actually achieved is also influenced by other characteristics of departmental and workgroup practice.

### **Other influences on the cultures of subject departments**

In addition to their internal patterns of sociability, collegiality, autonomy and leadership, it is possible further to differentiate subject departments and teachers within and across schools according to the formal qualifications of their members,<sup>151</sup> their student 'mix',<sup>152</sup> the extent to which teachers within the department practice common pedagogies,<sup>153</sup> the influence of written schemes of work,<sup>154</sup> the orientation of their members more to a "technical culture" or a "service ethic",<sup>155</sup> and how they respond to governmental policy directives.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, there are differences within and between subject departments in the extent to which, and with which groups of students, they are concerned to transmit a canonical body of examinable knowledge via, for example, the use of textbooks and more didactic forms of teaching.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, in a recent 'school effectiveness' study of thirty departments in six schools over five years,<sup>158</sup> leadership from senior management, consensus and a shared vision at

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<sup>147</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit. 1994, pp. 186-211.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., pp. 163-185

<sup>149</sup> Griffin, A. Influences of shared decision making on school and classroom activity: conversations with five teachers. *The Elementary School Journal*, 1995, 96(1), 29-45.

<sup>150</sup> Clement, M. and Staessens, K. The professional development of primary school teachers and the tension between autonomy and collegiality. In F. Kieviet and R. Vandenberghe (Eds.). *School culture, school improvement and teacher development*. Leiden: DSWO Press, 1993, 129-152.

<sup>151</sup> Talbert, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>152</sup> Metz, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>153</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1981, pp. 193-238; Gutierrez, R. Departments as contexts for understanding and reforming secondary teachers' work: continuing the dialogue. *Essay review. Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1998, 30(1), 95-103.

<sup>154</sup> Donnelly, J. Departmental characteristics and the experience of secondary science teaching. *Educational Research*, 2000, 42(3), 261-273.

<sup>155</sup> Talbert, J. and McLaughlin, M. Teacher professionalism in local school contexts. *American Journal of Education*, 1994, 102(2), 123-153.

<sup>156</sup> Ball and Bowe, op. cit., 1992.

<sup>157</sup> Ball and Lacey, op. cit., 1995, p. 118; McLaughlin, op. cit., 1993, pp. 85-89; Siskin, op. cit., 1994, p. 120; Ball, op. cit., 1981; Goodson, I. with Mangan, J. Subject cultures and the introduction of classroom computers. In Goodson, Anstead and Mangan, op. cit., 1998, pp. 107-108; Metz, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>158</sup> Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, op. cit., 1997, pp. 61-99. The study is a classic example of recent British 'school effectiveness' research, in which data are synthesised, decontextualised and abstracted to produce a taxonomy of characteristics of school or departmental effectiveness in order to identify generically 'effective' management or improvement strategies. See also, Harris, Jamieson and

whole school level were, unsurprisingly, positively correlated with more effective departments, as were the leadership of the Head of Department, staff commitment and hard work, teamwork and "shared goals, an academic emphasis and high expectations of students".<sup>159</sup> The researchers concluded that departments found it easier to "achieve and maintain effectiveness" in 'more effective' schools. Thus the presence or absence of schoolwide discipline problems and high levels of staff absence also had an impact on departmental 'effectiveness', while within departments, "personality conflicts, an 'obstructive' or weak second-in command [sic], lack of shared goals and values and some 'uncommitted' teachers were seen to inhibit team work and the implementation of agreed policies".<sup>160</sup> In such cases, reported strategies for improving 'poor' departmental performance included "a change in postholder, or removal of certain 'problem' staff ... moving 'difficult' staff around ...[and] intensive work by a [senior management team] member with a HoD perceived as needing extra 'support'".<sup>161</sup>

This is not to suggest that each and every one of these subject department variables merits detailed attention in all studies of secondary schools, but merely to reinforce Siskin and Little's observation above that we need to attend to the manner in which "broad influences and local actions" interact in particular ways in individual school and department sites if we are to attempt to understand more fully the complexities and nuances of workgroup and subject teaching practice among secondary school teachers.

The enduring organisational and social aspects of departments which have been rehearsed above are well summarised by Goodson and Marsh<sup>162</sup> who draw the distinction between their "*administrative* and *social relations* functions".<sup>163</sup> The former includes communication, timetabling, budgeting, "physical territory", material resources, professional identity and networking with the wider "epistemic community".<sup>164</sup> The latter is concerned more with the personal and interpersonal relationships among subject department members which qualitatively affect professional relationships, openness and levels of mutual trust, for "friendships and interests will develop in an atmosphere where teachers spend time together, share materials, and generally co-exist in a common 'comfort zone'".<sup>165</sup>

At this point, I want to draw the discussion of the social organisation of the secondary school to a close and move on to a more specific analysis of what it is that

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Rush, op. cit., 1996; Harris, op. cit., 1998 and Hamlin, R. (1987). *The criteria of managerial effectiveness in secondary schools*. Unpublished Mphil thesis, Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

<sup>159</sup> Sammons, Thomas and Mortimore, op. cit., 1997, p. 94.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Op. cit., 1996, pp. 54-63.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>164</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994; Ball and Lacey, op. cit., 1995; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, op. cit., 1989.

<sup>165</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996, p. 57.

secondary school teachers actually do. In order to do this we need to consider the epistemology and politics of secondary teachers' work.

### ***The Epistemology And Politics Of Secondary Teachers' Work***

The discussion so far in this chapter has taken the practice of 'teaching' as a given. Yet, teaching takes place within specific historical, cultural, political and bureaucratic configurations. Teaching in the 1990s in New Zealand Form 3-7 High Schools was not conducted according to the strictures of Dr Bell's monitorial Madras system that used children as young as seven as 'teachers' and 'assistant teachers' in Church schools in England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>166</sup> Between the 1800s and the 1990s conceptions of teaching have been shaped by competing academic, political, social, bureaucratic, economic and industrial discourses. Conceptions of teaching are produced and reproduced over time through organised social processes (research, education, legislation, regulation) and structures in Church, state and civil society (school, church, guilds, professions, university, training college, education office, parliament). Contemporary practice is similarly shaped by theories and ideologies of teaching and of how teaching practice should be developed.

### **Epistemologies of teaching**

As Diorio observes, attempting to arrive at some consensus over what constitutes teaching is problematic because teaching "appears to be a field in which the performances of its practitioners are not governed by a single framework of knowledge. Rather, there is a series of such frameworks, mutually exclusive in whole or in part, no one of which has drawn the support of most practitioners".<sup>167</sup> Thus definitions of teaching, its knowledge base, its practice, evaluation and control are, not surprisingly, subject continually to question and contestation by teachers themselves, laity, bureaucrats, politicians and researchers. This is true across and within national or state systems and occurs over time. Much as in Kliebard's analysis of the modern American curriculum, certain groups and their theories periodically gain temporary ascendancy according to prevailing political, economic, social and demographic conditions.<sup>168</sup> Prevailing orthodoxies of teaching are, in turn, embodied, for example, in the structure of pre- and in-service education programmes and associated research agendas; the registration, advancement and accountability criteria for teachers at various career stages; and educational policy texts, regulations and operational procedures.

It is significant, for example, that one of the most frequently cited contemporary analyses of the knowledge base of teaching, was written by a teacher educator at a time of

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<sup>166</sup> Burgess, H. *Enterprise in education. The story of the Established Church in the education of the people prior to 1870*. London: National Society, 1958, pp. 45-46.

<sup>167</sup> Diorio, J. Knowledge, autonomy and the practice of teaching. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 1982, 12(3), p. 272.

<sup>168</sup> See also, Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. Teachers' professional lives: aspirations and actualities. In I. Goodson and A. Hargreaves (Eds.) *Teachers' professional lives*. London: Falmer, 1996, pp. 1-27.

widespread reform of teacher education in America, as part of a national movement to "professionalize" and thereby raise the status of the occupation of teaching.<sup>169</sup>

(a) Teaching as knowledge:

In his claims for closer specification of the complexities of teaching 'expertise', and for more widespread recognition of teaching as a "learned profession", Shulman elaborates an argument that examines, first, the "source" of teachers' knowledge "that is the domains of scholarship and experience from which teachers draw their understanding"; and second, "the processes of pedagogical reasoning and action within which such teacher knowledge is used".<sup>70</sup>

In order to understand and improve teaching, and more adequately to assess and certify practising teacher "competence", Shulman maintains that a "proper understanding" of teachers' "knowledge base" and pedagogical reasoning are required.<sup>171</sup> Shulman suggests that a 'learned' model of teachers' knowledge base comprises not just knowledge of: learners; educational contexts; ends, purposes and values; subject content knowledge and general curriculum and pedagogic knowledge; but also what he calls 'pedagogical content knowledge'. That is, the ability to create learning opportunities which match the subject matter to socially and educationally appropriate activities and to students' readiness to learn. The associated processes of 'pedagogical reasoning' enable the teacher to prepare, present, adapt, evaluate and reflect on lessons and to develop her teaching repertoire through this reasoning.

In its identification of subject specific pedagogical knowledge, the model implies that teaching English is different from the teaching mathematics or social studies or science. Lortie makes a similar point, in a discussion of teacher rewards, when he argues that teachers of subjects such as social studies may teach and evaluate their practice against longer term goals than their colleagues in mathematics for example, or that teachers of vocational subjects may, unlike their academic subject counterparts, make "regular and immediate connections between their efforts and seeing students enter occupational life and assume adult responsibilities".<sup>172</sup> Equally, subjects differ in the "definiteness" of what is taught and in "the resulting ease or difficulty in deciding how much students have learned" while the knowledge base in some subjects is considerably more ambiguous than others.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Shulman, L. Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1987, 57(1), 1-22. For an historical analysis of 'professionalisation' and the development of a 'science' of teaching, see Labaree, D. Power, knowledge and the rationalization of teaching: a genealogy of the movement to professionalise teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1992, 62(2), 123-154. On the distinction between 'professionalisation' and 'professionalism', see Hargreaves and Goodson, op. cit., 1996, p. 4.

<sup>170</sup> Shulman, op. cit., 1987, p. 5.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>172</sup> Lortie, D. Unfinished work. Reflections on schoolteacher. In A. Hargreaves et al, op. cit., 1998a, pp. 146-147.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

Other studies have concluded that teachers' abilities to understand and deploy their knowledge, and to reflect and adapt their teaching to local situations, develop over time and with experience. On this model, teachers move through stages from novice, to experienced, to expert teacher. Their thinking and practice both change and become more complex and their 'expertise' develops as they move through the various "cognitive stages".<sup>174</sup>

These theories derive from a positivist research paradigm that seeks to establish a "science of teaching"<sup>175</sup> or what Hargreaves calls a "scientific certainty" about teaching practice and its development.<sup>176</sup> Recently, this paradigm has been challenged by an emphasis on what Hargreaves calls the "situated certainty" of teachers' workplace routines and social practices. In contrast to 'scientific' conceptions of teaching as a cognitive and developmental process, these new paradigms are less deterministic and emphasise, for example, the craft or artistry components of teaching. Grimmett and MacKinnon argue for a conception of teaching as craft which:

... assumes certain skills, proficiencies and dispositions among accomplished teachers – in brief, it suggests an emphasis on a special kind of pedagogical content and learner know-how, a "teaching sensibility", rather than a knowledge of propositions ... Craft knowledge emphasizes judgement – often in aesthetic terms – rather than following the maxims of research-generated knowledge. It relies heavily on intuition, care, and empathy for pupils.<sup>177</sup>

Huberman,<sup>178</sup> who writes of the independent artisan, and Stenhouse,<sup>179</sup> of the teacher as artist, are typical of those writers who are concerned to emphasise the affective, improvisational and intuitive<sup>180</sup> dimensions of teaching in which the teacher mediates classroom activity, through strategies, activities and personal pedagogical "jewels"<sup>181</sup> which have been built up and honed through experience.

Among feminist and humanist discourses, teaching as an ethic of 'care' or 'nurturing'<sup>182</sup> rather than of contractual 'responsibility'<sup>183</sup> is often emphasised as are the

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<sup>174</sup> For a brief review, see Galton, M. Teaching, learning and the co-ordinator. In J. O'Neill and N. Kitson (Eds.) *Effective curriculum management. Co-ordinating learning in the primary school*. London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 13-19.

<sup>175</sup> Labaree, op. cit., 1992.

<sup>176</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, pp. 59-61.

<sup>177</sup> Grimmett, P. and Mackinnon, A. Craft knowledge and the education of teachers. *Review of Research in Education*, 1992, 18, p. 393.

<sup>178</sup> Huberman, M. The model of the independent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In Little and McLaughlin, op. cit., 1993, pp. 11-50.

<sup>179</sup> Stenhouse, L. Artistry and teaching; the teacher as focus of research and development. In D. Hopkins and M. Wideen (Eds.). *Alternative perspectives on school improvement*. London: Falmer, 1984, 67-76.

<sup>180</sup> Connell, op. cit., 1985, pp. 173-174.

<sup>181</sup> Louden, W. *Understanding teaching*. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>182</sup> Gilligan, 1982, cited in Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, p. 173; Bullough, R. and Knowles, G. Teaching and nurturing: changing conceptions of self as teacher in a case study of becoming a teacher. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1991, 4(2), 121-140.

<sup>183</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, p. 173.

range of emotional investments<sup>184</sup> and senses of guilt<sup>185</sup> that are a recurrent feature of classroom teaching. Such issues are absent from many androcentric<sup>186</sup> definitions of what counts as teachers' "expertise"<sup>187</sup> or "professionalism".<sup>188</sup> Also missing from these craft and scientific discourses reported here is an understanding of how teachers working with students in specific local and classroom contexts constantly strive to maintain a balance in what Loudén calls the "education-control dilemma":

In classroom work the teacher's imperative is to act, to respond to what is happening at the moment and then to move on. This action always involves some resolution of the education-control dilemma ... resolutions such as these are unstable and could have been upset by any one of a host of actions taken by teachers or students, or by forces outside the classes. Judgments about the quality of each temporary resolution to the education-control dilemma depend, among other things, on the specifics of the context. Different resolutions would have been required by other teachers, if we had been teaching another subject, or if there had been just one teacher working with three classes of 30 students. The second point to be made about these resolutions to the dilemma is that they were shaped by the predispositions to action which we carried forward from our previous experience of teaching and by our biographies.<sup>189</sup>

In terms of 'predispositions to action' there is an additional, important dimension to Grimmett and Mackinnon's definition (above) of teaching as a craft:

It is steeped in morality and ever critical in its search for meaningful schooling and benefit for pupils. Understandings derived from craft knowledge appear to revolve around the purposes of teaching, the context of work within which learning takes place, teachers' sentiments about their role as facilitators of learning, and their need to be heard during a tumultuous time of restructuring.<sup>190</sup>

Teachers, on this definition are not pedagogic automatons who interact on a purely functional basis with students in the classroom. Their work is informed also by a sense of moral and emotional purpose, and a search for agency and meaning amid shifting workplace and policy terrains. At a collective level, this is most vividly captured in McLaughlin and Talbert's longitudinal study of American high schools where they found that the most

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<sup>184</sup> Hargreaves, A. The emotions of teaching and educational change. In Hargreaves et al, op. cit., 1998a, 558-570.

<sup>185</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, pp. 141-159.

<sup>186</sup> Tabakin, G. and Densmore, K. Teacher professionalization and gender analysis. Teachers' College Record, 1986, 88(2), 263-279.

<sup>187</sup> Shulman, op. cit., 1987.

<sup>188</sup> Glazer, J. Feminism and professionalism in teaching and educational administration. Educational Administration Quarterly, 1991, 27(3), 321-342.

<sup>189</sup> Loudén, op. cit., 1991, pp.105-106. Loudén's analysis refers to resolutions made by individual teachers. Connell, op. cit, 1985, p. 174, refers more generally and structurally to the "two major axes of ability and disruptiveness" that are encountered by all classroom teachers.

<sup>190</sup> op. cit., 1992.

'effective' teachers, departments, schools and/or districts were those which over time actively worked, and were supported, to modify their traditional curriculum content, pedagogies and evaluation criteria to suit the needs of "non-traditional students".<sup>191</sup>

(b) Teaching as career:

In the most detailed study to date of secondary school teachers' lives and careers, Michael Huberman<sup>192</sup> has meticulously documented the ways in which individual teachers' actions, commitments, levels of involvement and personal and occupational aspirations all shift and change over the course of their careers as a function of age and experience. In Huberman's study, for example, men and women followed different career trajectories with men more frequently concerned to consciously pursue a structured career.<sup>193</sup> Men were more likely to consider leaving teaching and their periods of self-doubt tended to last longer than those of women. Women often found it difficult to balance family and career responsibilities and therefore their "best years" in teaching typically occurred once family pressures had eased. Both men and women's early careers as teachers were dominated by the need to acquire "pedagogical mastery". Most teachers encountered one or more difficult periods in their careers prompted by a range of personal, occupational and institutional issues, both crisis and routine, which in turn might lead variously to renewal, withdrawal or burnout. The relationships between personal, institutional and occupational patterns of work are complex. Consequently, in his conclusion, Huberman studiously avoids drawing a simplistic picture of what professionalism and professional satisfaction might look like in secondary school teaching, preferring to concede that "professional career journeys are not adequately linear, predictable or identical".<sup>194</sup>

However, what is common throughout the discussion in this section is the idea that 'expertise' and 'professionalism' develop over time as teachers gain experience, confidence and insight. In Huberman's<sup>195</sup> study, the acquisition of "pedagogical mastery" (often achieved without the support they felt they needed) was a major 'rite of passage' for beginning teachers but personal doubt and crises of confidence were also apparent for some teachers in mid- and late-career stages. Huberman identified a relationship between institutional norms, occupational socialisation and individual teachers' practices, suggesting that the former dictate the conditions under which "with experience, teachers become more cautious, mistrustful toward changes and reforms, and more fatalistic in terms of their degrees of freedom and means of action".<sup>196</sup> Equally, some experienced teachers give up the

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<sup>191</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. *Communities of practice and the work of high school teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming.

<sup>192</sup> Huberman, M. *The lives of teachers*. London: Cassell, 1993.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 244-264.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255; Also, Connell, op. cit., 1985.

<sup>196</sup> Huberman, op. cit., 1993, pp. 259-260.

pursuit of 'career' altogether and "admit to hiding behind their formal roles so as to avoid new commitments and, more generally, to invest less". Finally, socialised experience in the school was also associated with "routinization: an acquired occupational life-style which is progressively sclerotic, conventional and conservative over time".<sup>197</sup>

This is an important finding and directly relevant to our discussion, below, of changes to teachers' work as a result of recent management and curriculum reform. If, over time, teachers work towards the establishment and maintenance of highly idiosyncratic "normal desirable states" of activity<sup>198</sup> in their classrooms and, if with experience they often become questioning of and uncommitted to innovation or reform, as Huberman claims, serious questions are raised about the extent to which experienced teachers might accept management and curriculum reforms which profoundly challenge their hard won personal classroom norms and routines. Potentially, then, we have a serious disjuncture between recent, normative discourses of teacher professionalism and expertise which emphasise the willingness to change one's personal practice and collaborate with others in order to implement mandated reform,<sup>199</sup> and the reported empirical reality of secondary school teachers' lives and careers.

### **The politics of teachers' work**

At one level, the existence of paradigmatically different theories of teaching is entirely inconsequential. In the absence of objective certainty about teaching and its constituent processes, people will legitimately debate, argue and advance their differing positions. At another level, however, the right to define 'expertise' and 'professionalism' is an important prize in the historical and political discursive struggle to control the work of teachers. In this regard, theories that appear to define teaching in generic terms that are amenable to 'scientific' measurement, assessment and management arguably have more appeal to politicians in periods of bureaucratically driven educational reform than do those which emphasise 'situated', tacit forms of knowledge and intuitive, improvisational practice. In the contemporary climate of the restructuring of school management and curricula, the work of teachers cannot simply be left to chance.

#### (a) The politics of professionalism:

The political, contested and changing nature of teacher professionalism is considered in depth by Hargreaves and Goodson who argue that teachers are currently positioned somewhat ambiguously in the expertise-professionalism debates:

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>198</sup> Brown, S. and McIntyre, D. *Making sense of teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993, pp. 110-112.

<sup>199</sup> Hargreaves and Goodson, op. cit., 1996; Smyth, J. International perspectives on teacher collegiality: a labour process discussion based on the concept of teachers' work. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1991, 12(3), 323-346.

[T]eacher professionalization has been a historically precarious project: resisted by governments, bureaucracies and business interests without, and undermined by ambiguities of loyalty, strategy and identity within. Recent years have seen an intriguing twist in this familiar tale, however. Across many parts of the world, teacher professionalization is now being sponsored with exceptional vigour by governments, bureaucracies and big business. There seems to be an enormous interest, politically and administratively in identifying, codifying and applying professional standards of practice to the teaching force.<sup>200</sup>

Discourses of professionalism and expertise, then, are not simply reflective of teachers' desire to secure greater standing within the community and more autonomy over their work, but they also embody attempts by government to specify and contractualise the demands they may make of teachers as accountable employees. Indeed, this is the politics of 'professionalization' at work; at times these discourses appear highly complementary, in that they seemingly meet the needs and aspirations of both groupings:

As states in fiscal crisis find they are unable to sustain large educational bureaucracies and their more direct forms of administrative control, the tasks and costs of licensing and registering teachers, monitoring standards of conduct and practice, handling promotions and securing dismissals can be handed over to teachers themselves as matters of self-regulation (paid for by member subscription!), as can the detailed delivery of centrally defined outcomes through school development planning, site based decision-making and the like. Yet self-regulation and collegial decision-making are not simply cynical in their origins and consequences. The empowering effects of these professionalizing tendencies for building strong senses of professional competence and community among teachers should not be underestimated (Talbert and McLaughlin, 1994). Teacher professionalization may well mark a shift in the mechanisms of state steering (through self-regulation of means) and in opportunities for empowerment as well.<sup>201</sup>

In this sense, the actual content of the various discourses of professionalism discussed by Hargreaves and Goodson<sup>202</sup> is of secondary importance to their underlying purposes and assumptions. For example, in their study of the *Advanced Skills Teachers (AST)* policy initiative in Australia, Smyth and Shacklock identify four "competing ideologies" of teaching,<sup>203</sup> a clash between official discourses that emphasised particular constructions of 'good teaching' (in terms of skills, standards and efficiency) and teachers' own craft discourses. Smyth and Shacklock see such attempts to change teachers' work as

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<sup>200</sup> Hargreaves and Goodson, op. cit., 1996, p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-19.

"the idea that something is being expunged or effaced from the professional and historical renderings of teaching through the current rounds of educational restructuring". Although the AST policy was "sold" to teachers as a new model of reward and career advancement for classroom teachers, and a vehicle for affirming and enhancing their professional status, Smyth and Shacklock analysed the AST project as an attempt by the state to displace teachers' "indigenous" or "educative" discourses with "official" and "preferred" policy discourses that emphasised atomised standards, skills acquisition, managerial control and the reorientation of teaching to the needs of the economy. The inflexible, bureaucratic, competency driven procedure of applying for AST status became in practice one over which teachers could ultimately exert little influence and voice of their own. Smyth and Shacklock therefore saw the initiative as an example of the "reinscribing" of teachers work by the state in terms of economic "palimpsests".<sup>204</sup>

To reveal the purposes and assumptions that shape discourses of the ideal professional teacher, it is important to examine (a) how such discourses are currently deployed in practice at both school and system level as a means to shape teachers work; and (b) how far discursive processes are oriented towards "control" or "empowerment".<sup>205</sup> Moreover, as we saw above, Smyth and colleagues argue that governments may resort to coercive, bureaucratic forms of control only where more subtle attempts at ideological control through "the engineering of broad consent and acquiescence to a particular set of beliefs and values" fail.<sup>206</sup> For example, discourses of 'reflective practice', 'collegiality', 'professional development' and 'commitment', as well as the more generic terms 'expertise' and 'professionalism' may be used equally well to promote greater autonomy by teachers and their professional associations as to secure closer control by politicians and bureaucrats.<sup>207</sup> In order, then, to discover the actual effects of these contemporary discursive practices in education, we need briefly to examine what the effects of the education reforms have been on teachers workplaces, work and workloads in specific educational settings.

(b) Changes in teachers' work:

Michael Apple's<sup>208</sup> work reminds us that the work of classroom teachers is largely a female occupation while school management or administration is mostly conducted by men. The management of teachers' work has historically mirrored that of women workers in other sectors and has been characterised by processes of *proletarianisation* and *intensification*.

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<sup>203</sup> Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Re-making teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 10.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-10 & 201-202.

<sup>205</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>206</sup> Op. cit., 2000, pp. 43-45.

<sup>207</sup> Smyth, op. cit., 1991.

Proletarianisation involves 'the separation of conception from execution' (in schooling the introduction of a managerial elite to define and control the work of teachers) and the reduction of autonomy through close specification of outcomes, the provision of pre-packaged curriculum materials, testing and the introduction of teacher competencies.<sup>209</sup> Over time, teachers lose the traditional skills which enable them to work independently of management control.

Intensification is a related process in which work demands increase in scope and frequency. As a result, teachers work longer hours, spend a greater proportion of their time recording and reporting on the achievement of objectives, and have less time to digress, to socialise, or to keep up with professional educational developments. Just as significantly, Apple points out that some teachers in his study appeared to "misrecognise" these increased workloads and decreased relaxation time as "a symbol of their increased professionalism".<sup>210</sup> For some of the teachers, the ability to more efficiently manage the technical and administrative aspects of curriculum and assessment change, became, consequently, a desirable set of new skills and evidence of enhanced professional status. Although he found evidence of teacher resistance (and some discomfort with the idea of being a 'manager'), such patterns of resistance were fragmented and inconsistent. In short, some teachers took to the changes more than others.

Recent empirical studies have fleshed out this basic conceptual thesis and explicitly challenged the extent and pattern of teacher proletarianisation and intensification as a result of educational reform. Hargreaves<sup>211</sup> argues that intensification theories need to be contextualised in terms of teachers' individual career stage and personal work commitments and that providing more preparation time during the school day is of limited benefit, particularly where teachers are required by administrators to use the time for collaborative planning. Campbell and Neill<sup>212</sup> are rather doubtful about the empirical validity of Apple's proletarianisation argument, arguing, like Hargreaves, that historical comparisons of teachers' work are difficult and that in some senses teachers' work has become markedly more professional since the latter part of the 19th century. In addition, they refute the suggestion that teachers 'misrecognise' increased technical work for enhanced 'professionalism'. Their empirical study of 2,688 working days from 384 teachers in 360 secondary schools in 91 local education authorities in England and Wales in 1991-1992, leads them to construct a complex collage of teachers' work, and its constituent patterns. They note at the outset that secondary school 'teaching' is no longer an occupation limited

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<sup>208</sup> 1986, op. cit., 1986, p. 31. Much of the discussion relates to elementary schooling but the discussion of proletarianisation and intensification applies equally well to the secondary school sector.

<sup>209</sup> Apple, M. and Teitelbaum, K. Are teachers losing control of their skills and curriculum? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1986, 18(2), 177-184.

<sup>210</sup> Apple, op. cit., 1986, p. 45.

<sup>211</sup> Op. cit., 1994, pp. 136 et seq.

<sup>212</sup> Op. cit., 1994, pp.159-168.

to the confines of the classroom, but one which encompasses many other tasks (only four percent of their sample had no additional responsibilities outside the classroom)<sup>213</sup> and consequently, the analysis of teachers' work needs to include, for example, meetings, collaborative work, administration, record keeping, time spent working outside the school day and term, and at home in the evenings, weekends and holidays.

The findings on intensification are worth summarising in some little detail here not least because the New Zealand work of Bloor and Harker (see chapters three and four) is essentially a replication study of this research. Campbell and Neill identified a clearly differentiated pattern of work with 'managers' spending large amounts of time on school administration and little on classroom teaching - and the reverse with 'teachers'.<sup>214</sup> There was a reasonably objective match of teachers to subjects taught although teachers were less confident about the appropriateness of their qualifications to their teaching assignments. The match was less good in small schools and with pastoral or cross-curricular programmes. There was also a differential pattern of work between men and women:

[F]emale teachers in the schools were at a disadvantage by comparison with their male colleagues. They taught the larger classes more, and the smaller classes less, than men; they clustered more on the lower, and less on the higher, salary levels than men; and more women than men were on fixed-term contracts. There is no self-evident explanation or justification for this state of affairs. The women worked as long hours as men and spent more time on in-service training at weekends. Furthermore, there was no difference in 'conscientiousness' between men and women. The women, therefore, represented better value for money (from an employer's perspective) or an exploited group of workers (from the perspective of equal opportunities).<sup>215</sup>

The researchers identified ten characteristics of secondary teachers' work.<sup>216</sup> First, in comparison with 1976 (46.75 hours) teachers' typical term-time workloads had increased to over fifty four hours. Second the pattern of work had changed with at least 59 per cent of time spent out of contact with students. Classroom teaching took up "less than a third of teachers' working time". Third, personal 'conscientiousness'<sup>217</sup> rather than salary or responsibilities held influenced the amount of time spent on work. Fourth, about 15 per cent of time was spent on teaching subjects for which teachers were 'unqualified'. Fifth, an

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 32. Note: for comparison purposes, 43% of the sample were 11-18 and only 10% 13-18 secondary schools.

<sup>214</sup> Managers: deputy heads and incentive allowance D and E holders (the New Zealand equivalent would be PR/MU 4 & 5); Teachers: standard national scale teachers and incentive allowance A, B and C holders (NZ equivalent PR/MU 1-3).

<sup>215</sup> Campbell and Neill, op. cit., 1994, p. 153.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-159.

<sup>217</sup> Teachers in the study spent an average of 11 hours more per week in term time on school work than they themselves though reasonable. 'Conscientiousness' is therefore used by the researchers to signify both a "personal and moral sense of obligation" and "the idea that teachers could spend too much of their own time on work [as in] 'over-conscientiousness'" (Ibid., p. 170).

average of 14 per cent of time was spent on school administration "and in connection with examinations". Sixth "time spent on teaching in relation to preparation could typically be expressed as a ratio of 1:0.8". Seventh, compared with primary school teachers, secondary teachers "spent their time less intensively" and did mostly "single subject". Eighth "work carried over into break times, with nearly **fifty** percent of break times being used for work". Ninth, while classroom teaching was typically an isolated and private occupation, "over four-and-a-half hours a week were spent in meetings, non-pupil days, inter school liaison and in-service training, all in the company of, and interacting professionally with, teacher colleagues. Tenth, much of teachers' work was "carried out at home in the evenings and at weekends" (on average 40 hours per week at school, and a further 14.5 at home of which six were at the weekend).

These questionnaire data, then, quantify differential experiences and expectations in the intensification of individual teachers' work across a range of teaching and out-of-class activities, many of which involve working not in isolation but with fellow teachers. The study of teachers' work is not, however, simply about 'time-and-motion'.<sup>218</sup> What of the socially constructed processes which serve to produce and sustain these changing patterns of work in particular school sites, and their personal and professional consequences for individual teachers?

In this regard, Gewirtz highlights "the growing emphasis on formalised assessment, target setting and performance monitoring [that] is generating huge amounts of paperwork".<sup>219</sup> This, combined with frequent syllabus changes, an escalating incidence of "behavioural difficulties among the student population", overcrowding, under-resourcing and a climate of inter-school competition ... mean that teachers feel under growing pressure to perform and conform".<sup>220</sup> Gewirtz argues that these pressures had *emotional* (a loss of autonomy and increased stress), *social relations* (reduced opportunities for informal socialisation and self-directed curriculum discussion) and *pedagogical* consequences (pressure to adopt traditional pedagogies and to focus on examination results) for teachers in the four London secondary schools she studied. Using data from the same four schools, Reay analysed the way in which senior staff deploy discourses of school effectiveness, institutional loyalty, teamwork and external accountability to lever more work from subject departments and individual teacher **compliance**.<sup>221</sup> Indeed, she argues that "contemporary schooling cultures increasingly emphasize loyalty and corporate identities in which compliance is becoming part of the normative, taken-for-granted assumptions of how

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<sup>218</sup> Connell (op. cit., 1985, p. 69) argues for a threefold analysis drawn from industrial sociology and which includes "the nature of the labour process, the division of labour, and the pattern of control and autonomy in the workplace".

<sup>219</sup> Gewirtz, S. Post-welfarism and the reconstruction of teachers' work in the UK. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1997, 12(4), p. 224.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

junior staff relate to junior management".<sup>222</sup> Together with "strategies of forced compliance", the individualization of dissent, "the singling out of a number of 'expensive', very experienced middle managers who 'drag the school down' because of the drain they represent on a diminishing school budget", and top-down communication,<sup>223</sup> these all contribute to a managerialist climate in which teachers are viewed as resources to be deployed by senior staff rather than as autonomous moral agents.

According to Reay, the divisions between staff are exacerbated by competition between departments for resources and examination success together with a diminution in the importance of pastoral work and mixed ability teaching. School policy agendas are driven by senior management and teachers and departments are expected to "fit in" rather than "feed into" decision-making.<sup>224</sup> In contrast, and on a more positive note, Helsby's interview data from a sample of 180 secondary school teachers "at or below the level of Head of Department" suggests both that professional confidence and sense of agency have increased, and that collegiality and 'space' for professional judgement have been enhanced in some subject departments in some schools as teachers have become more familiar with the individual and collective demands of managing the implementation of the National Curriculum and its various revisions in the mid-1990s.<sup>225</sup>

This final observation reinforces the point that teachers' work is bound closely with discourses of curriculum and management. We have examined management and curriculum reforms as discursive ebbs and flows in which various political, professional, bureaucratic and lay interests compete in order to achieve ascendancy in the struggle to define policy and practice in secondary schooling. Teachers work within particular management, curriculum and teaching discourses which set out to provide greater or lesser degrees of autonomy of practice to practitioners, but it remains a matter of balance for teachers' work can never be fully controlled, even if this were considered desirable. Currently, the literature would suggest that regimes of control and accountability appear dominant but it would be quite wrong to conclude from this that teachers exert no agency or resistance in their work. Rather, what we were witnessing in the 1980s and 1990s, were gradual changes in the ways teachers work. Such changes are influenced, but not determined, by co-ordinated policy shifts in management, curriculum and teaching and are resisted to greater or lesser degrees in individual school, subject and workgroup sites. Underlying these changes, are social, political and economic processes that have been well documented in the literature.

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<sup>221</sup> Reay, D. Micro-politics in the 1990s: staff relationships in secondary schooling. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1998, 13(2), 179-196.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>225</sup> Helsby, G. Defining and developing professionalism in English secondary schools. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 1996, 22(2), 135-148.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the contemporary practice of secondary schooling was examined through the themes of 'management', 'curriculum' and 'teaching' in order to address three questions:

### *1. What are the characteristics of contemporary secondary school teaching?*

Secondary school teaching takes place in 'multiple embedded contexts' among which the subject tradition and subject department have historically exerted a major influence over how teachers conceptualise their work. The work of secondary teachers has increased in intensity and changed in focus and composition in recent years and in response to politically and ideologically driven curriculum and management reforms. Teaching is no longer simply the work that takes place inside the classroom but encompasses a wide range of collegial, administrative and other activities. Thus, at one level, the distinction between teachers and managers is hazy. At another level, the introduction of site-based management has produced sharp divisions between teachers and managers with the latter being held increasingly accountable for the work of their staff and its quality.

Ideological discourses of professionalism, expertise and improvement create demanding idealised constructs of what may be asked of teachers in terms of collaboration and compliance. Local school markets and increased surveillance may fracture emotions, social relations and valued pedagogies while increases in control strategies dissipate the energies, inclinations and opportunities for teachers to work together autonomously and on self-determined agendas. These trends are widespread and therefore depressing but they are not deterministic. There is evidence both of teacher resistance to bureaucratic and ideological control and of them regaining confidence in their professionalism as they grow more familiar with the nuances of imposed management and curriculum reforms.

### *2. How do secondary school teachers learn to develop their practice?*

Teachers' practice and its development are shaped to a great extent not only in the school by subject and department influences but also externally by the demands of central government curriculum content, pedagogy and evaluation policies. Curriculum trends internationally in the last few decades have vacillated between progressive and traditional curriculum forms and between vocational and competitive academic assessment and credential forms. Most recently, the economically liberal and socially conservative discourses of the New Right have achieved curriculum ascendancy in countries such as England, Australia and America. Political, ideological and theoretical discourses thus shape teachers' thinking and practice through the medium of official curriculum.

In addition to any 'objective' knowledge base much of teachers' knowledge is practical, derived from experience and early career rites of passage. This craft knowledge, affective, intuitive and improvisational, develops over time and is personalised and idiosyncratic - to

teach is to learn. Teachers may, in fact, become more conservative and less committed to innovation with experience. There is some evidence that teachers develop their practice collectively in 'collegial' workgroups, but these may not be the norm for all secondary school teachers as some subject departments exhibit internal ideological, philosophical and methodological differences. In short, teachers' practices and self-perceptions appear to be as much, if not more, social and affective as they are cognitive and individual in nature.

### ***3. What part do curriculum managers play in helping colleagues to develop their practice?***

This issue is complicated by the ambiguity of the position in which Heads of Department<sup>226</sup> find themselves in contemporary secondary schools. Are they fellow teachers or curriculum managers? Should their loyalties and affiliations be to the school or the workgroup? Should they be more concerned with the individual development of colleagues or with the 'improvement' of examination results across the department as a whole or the acquisition of resources in competition with other departments?

School effectiveness and improvement discourses have begun to focus on the key role of the HoD or subject leader in leveraging up benchmark standards of attainment among students. There is some evidence which suggests that in the current cycle of educational reform, senior management within the school expect HoDs to act in a more overtly managerial capacity within the department. There is also evidence that the work of departments and their heads has become intensified and instrumental: taken up with survival, accountability, compliance, reporting and planning issues, all of which activities are accompanied by copious amounts of paperwork. There is little evidence that these people are finding sufficient time, space and energy to work closely with colleagues in order to develop further their individual and collective knowledge base of teaching outside the narrow demands of centrally imposed curriculum (content, pedagogy, evaluation) reform.

In the next chapter, the analysis focuses on the context of New Zealand secondary schooling and the ways in which specific curriculum and management reforms influence teachers' work.

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<sup>226</sup>The research reviewed in this chapter refers almost exclusively to the Head of Department or Faculty, not to other curriculum leadership positions or pastoral work.



## CHAPTER THREE

### SECONDARY SCHOOLING, CURRICULUM AND TEACHING IN NEW ZEALAND

This chapter examines the practice and administration of curriculum in New Zealand secondary schools. First, to provide an overview of the field, the years 1995-1997 are discussed in terms of popular and professional print media coverage of secondary education issues, the industrial climate of the time, and the progression of curriculum and assessment reforms. Second, in order to help us understand these contemporary events, the history of secondary schooling, curriculum, teaching and management since the publication of *The Post-Primary School Curriculum* in 1943 is discussed. Here, the expansion of secondary schooling since 1945 is analysed, as are changes in the student population and attempts over successive decades to adapt curriculum and assessment policies to meet the needs of students. Equally, between the 1940s and 1990s, models of the ideal teacher and ideal HoD evolved as part of a continuing effort to match what went on in classrooms and schools to the demands of broader social and economic change. These developments are also analysed.

#### INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the international literature, the following questions seem most germane to an analysis of how the discursive practices of secondary school teaching in New Zealand have unfolded over time.

- (a) What are the forms and origins of the various contemporary discourses of teaching, curriculum and management that exist within the New Zealand secondary school system?
- (b) What effects have changes in central curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policy had on teachers' work?
- (c) What is the role of the Head of Department in contemporary secondary schools in New Zealand?

In attempting to address these questions in the New Zealand context, it is important, just as in the previous chapter, to pay due heed to the recent history and politics of schooling for "our educational past still casts an irrevocable shadow upon our educational present and future".<sup>1</sup> Contemporary secondary schooling in New Zealand is culturally and historically specific inasmuch as it embodies a complex of professional, bureaucratic, political and lay educational discourses which, over time, have been forged into enduring, normative structures, processes and procedures. Thus, in order to understand the way things are in secondary schools (i.e. management, curriculum, teaching) we need to examine how and why they have come to be this way.

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<sup>1</sup> Openshaw, R. *Unresolved struggle. Consensus and conflict in state post-primary education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995, p. 138.

Equally important, however, is the realisation that secondary school teaching takes place in multiple embedded contexts.<sup>2</sup> The data and experiences reported in subsequent chapters provide details of the internal school and workgroup contexts in the study, but in themselves they tell us little about the bureaucratic, occupational and societal discourses within which the protagonists work and learn. To understand the ways in which these discourses help shape the work of teachers in New Zealand, we need to look beyond the schools themselves and the individual experiences of teachers within them, and to other sources of data, from both contemporary and more distant history.

The preparation for this study took place in 1995 and the data gathering in two discrete phases in 1996 and 1997. Like many others in the post-war period, these were years of clamour for educational change of one sort or another from several quarters of society. In order to provide the reader with an understanding of the immediate historical and political context within which the study took place, and to provide a flavour of the discourses negotiated daily by the protagonists in the study, we might usefully examine New Zealand's domestic press and its topical coverage of educational issues and events,<sup>3</sup> the issues that were canvassed in schools by the Ministry of Education<sup>4</sup> and the regular pronouncements of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA), the sole secondary teachers' union.<sup>5</sup>

## **SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1995-1997**

The 1995 school year opened with an Opinion piece in the Wellington Evening Post by Martin Cooney, immediate past-president of the PPTA, under the headline "Taskforce says School Cert must be replaced – and soon".<sup>6</sup> The piece merits a close reading as it provides a useful Cook's tour of the major polemics in secondary schooling that have repeatedly been canvassed in the decades since the second world war. Arguably, these are also deeply embedded in popular conceptions of the purposes of secondary schooling in this country. Cooney was commenting on the November 1994 report of the Employment Task Force established by Prime Minister Bolger to recommend strategies to address chronic levels of long term unemployment, including

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<sup>2</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. The contexts in question: the secondary school workplace. In M. McLaughlin and J. Talbert (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1990, pp. 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> To this end, a search using the terms "secondary schools", "teachers", "curriculum" and "administration" was undertaken of the Newtext on-line database for the years 1995-1997, i.e. the two years of the fieldwork and that immediately preceding.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, I conducted a manual search of the *Education Gazette*, the Ministry of Education's official publication, which is sent to all schools fortnightly during the school year.

<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the PPTA *News* is sent to all members and secondary schools in the country on a monthly basis.

<sup>6</sup> *The Evening Post*, 1995, 20 January, p. 6.

burgeoning levels of youth unemployment.<sup>7</sup> Part of the Taskforce's proposed solution was, unsurprisingly, a restructuring of the education system and the existing qualification structure. A particular target for reform was School Certificate, the national examination taken by most students at the end of the compulsory phase of their schooling, aged 16.<sup>8</sup> Cooney quoted approvingly and verbatim the Taskforce's proposal 46, a recommendation that 'School Cert' should be phased out:

School Certificate is seen by many as a barrier to the development of more flexible approaches to teaching and learning in the senior secondary school. However, in the absence of anything more useful, many employers still use School certificate to screen applicants. We propose that School certificate be replaced with a Record of Achievement and the National Certificate as soon as the National Qualifications Framework is in place in schools.<sup>9</sup>

On which proposal Cooney commented:

The centrality of School Certificate to the New Zealand way of life will make this proposal hard for many parents to understand – and carrying it out difficult. The community will want the chance to debate the rationale if it's finally to be buried. Changes to qualifications will always cause heated discussion since this is where schools touch the rest of society – largely because of the importance of qualifications for working out who has the greatest economic opportunities. Many traditionalists are fighting to keep School Certificate. They have advised the Minister of Education to shift it to the fourth form. But the real question should be about the original purpose of this examination and whether it's still relevant today.<sup>10</sup>

In the remainder of his article, Cooney went on to reprise, as he saw them, the three major phases of New Zealand secondary schooling and credentialling: the first, a period from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s when secondary schooling was available only to those few who passed the proficiency examination at the age of twelve and who were to be prepared for university entry; the second, from the 1930s, that of universal secondary education in which School Certificate was used to "weed students out"; and a third, characterised by "an upsurge in the senior school population" and consequent pressures for "far more school-based "non academic" courses for our young".

Cooney noted that the relevance of the credential had been questioned as early as the 1960s, that secondary teachers had been calling for the abolition of School Certificate for over

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<sup>7</sup> Prime Ministerial Task Force on Employment. *Employment: addressing New Zealand's biggest challenge. Proposals for action*. Wellington: The Taskforce, 1994, November. See also The Employment Taskforce: recommendations for the transition beyond school. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 12, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> The school leaving age was raised from 15 to 16 on 1 January 1993.

<sup>9</sup> *The Evening Post*, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

20 years, and that the profession and successive governments had attempted on more than one occasion to develop alternative programmes and credentials to meet the needs of the large numbers of secondary students who were not "going on to university". Cooney concluded:

The Employment Task Force has effectively said: enough of tinkering and clip-ons to an outdated system. It's time the new solution – the NZQA framework with its national certificate – was applied across our senior schools into post-compulsory education. Don't think of it as losing School Cert – we're gaining a whole new inclusive qualification system."

What do the substance and tone of this brief newspaper column suggest about the norms and assumptions surrounding New Zealand secondary school education at the end of the twentieth century?

First, we may glean that the value of School Certificate, both as terminal examination and employment selection device, is under serious scrutiny<sup>12</sup> and, moreover, that its relevance to the needs of a majority of students has long been questioned by teachers and government. Notwithstanding pressures for its abolition, and despite the perception that it was anachronistic and distorted teaching and learning, it had remained in place since 1945, albeit with periodic modifications to its structure. In 1995, the Taskforce and the PPTA both appeared to be anticipating its imminent demise and replacement with a supposedly "inclusive" and seamless qualifications system, based on a record of achievement, and national certificate accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). However, some resistance, it was suggested, might be expected from "traditionalists" who were unwilling to approve the removal of external examinations, and, initially at least, from some employers and sections of the public who relied on the terminal examination to provide what they saw as reliable or objective evidence of student attainment and future potential. Prominent among these was the Education Forum, an offshoot of the libertarian New Zealand Business Roundtable, which in May 1994 had published a lengthy critique of the curriculum and qualifications frameworks. The report argued for a greater emphasis on subject knowledge within a restricted core curriculum, the strengthening of external examinations and the selection of all students at fifth form into 'academic', 'technical' or 'vocational' pathways.<sup>13</sup>

Second, the arguments of Cooney as PPTA officer, suggest a commitment to engage in public debate on educational issues (and their social consequences). For instance, from the potted history of secondary schooling and his account of a longstanding teachers' campaign to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> The Ministry of Education, through the Principals' Lead Group, proposed to review the school certificate examination in 1995 in order to accommodate it within the National Qualifications Framework (*Timeframes* 1995, 11, p. 7).

replace the terminal examination, we see some evidence of a professional association that is active in policy discourse, champions the needs of all students and feels a collective ethical obligation to help shape the content and direction of this public debate. Equally, in the extract from the Taskforce there is an understanding of the limiting effects of an outdated terminal examination on the development of "more flexible" teaching and learning approaches.<sup>14</sup>

Third, there is a heightened sense of expectation from both Cooney, on behalf of PPTA, and the Taskforce, on behalf of government and the unspecified "many", that the emerging national qualifications framework will, sooner rather than later, provide ready solutions to longstanding and structural problems of restricted secondary school curricula and pedagogies, credentialling, youth alienation and unemployment.

Fourth, and finally, there appears to be an implicit consensus on the need for secondary schools to provide a broad, general education and updated credentialling structure, suited to the needs of all students. This has apparently been frustrated by the continued hegemony of an anachronistic terminal examination, inexplicably sustained by a combination of conservative interests, the instrumental concerns of employers and the nostalgia of some sections of the general public. (In many respects, these historical developments in curriculum and assessment reflect similar post World War II social, economic and educational tensions to those documented in other countries in chapter two (pp. 22-31).)

In terms of the years covered by this study, and on the basis of Cooney's opinion piece, we might reasonably anticipate a fairly rapid shift towards full implementation of the new qualifications structure, smoothed by the 'good oil' of enthusiastic joint patronage from government and the teaching profession, albeit mediated, perhaps, by public arena debate prompted by certain vocal pressure groups. But, that was not what actually happened. One of the lessons learnt from the previous chapter was that education policy unfolds over time, and in idiosyncratic political and educational contexts, in hesitant, fragmentary fashion, often as a result of enduring struggles for ascendancy and voice in which various interests collaborate, pragmatically and opportunistically, on certain issues while continuing to compete and disagree on others. This lesson certainly holds true for New Zealand secondary education between 1995 and 1997 as PPTA and government engaged in often acrimonious public sparring over a range of industrial issues in which the continued co-operation of teachers in curriculum and qualifications reform was carefully calibrated against the resolution of long-standing pay, staffing, workload and career progression issues.

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<sup>13</sup> Irwin, M. *Curriculum, assessment and qualifications. An evaluation of current reforms*. Prepared by Michael Irwin New Zealand Business Roundtable for the Education Forum. Auckland: Education Forum, 1994, May.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, PPTA president Roger Tobin noted that many of the themes in both the Taskforce report and the curriculum and qualifications frameworks had been canvassed by PPTA in its influential 1969 publication, *Education in Change*. The year ahead. *PPTA News*, 1994, 16(1), September, p. 1

### *1995: Partnership, Staffing And Workload Issues*

The secondary teachers collective contract had expired on November 30 the previous year. In anticipation of this, the front page of the *PPTA News* issue of September 1994 [Figure 3.1] was a full page monochrome mock-up poster of teachers demonstrating on the steps of the Beehive building, the banner headline: "Modernisation or confrontation? Government decision soon", and a ballot paper style pair of boxes in which to make the choice.

In his comments on the development of the new curriculum and qualifications frameworks, PPTA president Roger Tobin commented that:

Currently the reform process is underfunded, poorly planned and lacking co-ordination. There is little opportunity for professional input. If the changes are to result in improvements, then a new approach is needed. We call this modernisation. Modernisation emerged from the debris of conflict from 1988 to 1992. Fixing pay and conditions does not need to be done by concessionary bargaining. Reform of education cannot be achieved by exclusion and confrontation. Hence, modernisation – not just a set of goals, but a process of change, based on co-operation and partnership. Unfortunately, it is not certain that Government will opt for the path of partnership and progress – Modernisation; or for the path of conflict and confrontation.<sup>15</sup>

The Modernisation<sup>16</sup> talisman was to provide the basis of collective employment contract negotiations in the following year and had a number of linked components: a 'modest' pay rise to compensate for the 'freeze' of the previous four years and to "recognise teachers' key role in the success of the curriculum and qualifications reforms"; increased non-contact time to reduce workloads and stress; enhanced exit provisions for those teachers who no longer had sufficient enthusiasm and energy for the reforms; retention of funding for bilingual Maori language units; and the end of the bulk funding of teachers' salaries policy.<sup>17</sup> In the *PPTA News* for the remainder of the year, Modernisation and the government's response to it, was to remain front-page news for members as the collective contract negotiations between the State Services Commission and PPTA achieved only an interim settlement.<sup>18</sup> From February 1995, a number of newspaper reports appeared on the issue of school staffing.

A Ministerial Reference Group (MRG)<sup>19</sup> had been established by the Minister, Hon Lockwood Smith, to develop a new formula for school staffing entitlements.

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<sup>15</sup> Campaign time. *PPTA News*, 1994, 15(10), September, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> NZPPTA. Modernisation/Te ara hou. Work in Progress. *A discussion document prepared by the NZ Post Primary Teachers' Association about moving beyond bulk funding*, 1994, June.

<sup>17</sup> Modernisation or confrontation. *PPTA News*, op. cit., 1994, 15(10), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> The frameworks. Who supports them? *PPTA News*, 1994, 15(11), October, p. 1; Modernisation – judgement day. *PPTA News*, 1994, 15(12), November, p. 1; Govt says no?. *PPTA News*, 1994, 15(13), November, p. 1; *Education Gazette*, 1995, 15 February, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Education. *Resource entitlement for school staffing: The report of the ministerial reference group*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1995.

# Modernisation or Confrontation?

**Government Decision SOON!**

Work Load Control

2%

Te rep funding

exit

\$1,000

LOCKDOWN

**We can change! Can the Government?**

**Modernisation**  **Confrontation**

Circulation 16,000+ to Workers in Education.

Figure 3.1 Modernisation or confrontation

PPTA argued that, under this, secondary schools in general, and rural schools in particular, would lose out; that intermediate schools would lose their specialist manual training teachers at the expense of the new technology curriculum; and, that the report, *Resource Entitlement for School Staffing* also promoted the bulk-funding of teachers' salaries, a policy to which the PPTA was ideologically opposed. In turn the PPTA was accused by government of unilaterally leaking the report's findings and, by principal and trustee associations, of putting out misleading information on the impact of the formulae on individual schools (although these groups also subsequently voiced their own concerns about the effects of the new staffing formulae).<sup>20</sup> From the Greater Wellington Secondary School Principals' Association, came the additional claim that the new formulae "failed to grasp the complexity of secondary schools' staffing needs".<sup>21</sup> Their secretary, Graeme Murray, claimed that secondary schools were having to cope with "a huge increase in social and guidance problems resulting from the "fragmentation and dislocation of society", without sufficient guidance counsellors. This, it was claimed, was reducing the time available for teaching and also hampering the implementation of new curricula and qualifications.<sup>22</sup>

Murray's is an intriguing line of argument for two reasons. First, it marks the first attempted linkage in this sparring round of the new staffing formulae with other government educational policy initiatives in the area of curriculum and assessment, and with conditions of service concerns of teachers and principals in schools. Second, the attempted linkage foreshadows several components of the positioning and strategising which would be used variously by government and PPTA (through its Modernisation campaign) to advance their own educational and industrial relations agendas over the next two years as the issue of schools' staffing entitlements and bulk-funding fused with issues of increasing student rolls<sup>23</sup> and national teacher shortages; and that of curriculum and qualification frameworks implementation with concerns about teacher workload, stress and remuneration.

Thus, by the end of 1995, the PPTA was warning of a 'national crisis' in staffing for 1996 and into the next century, which was putting the "quality of education in many schools" at

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<sup>20</sup> School class sizes may be reduced. *The Dominion*, 1995, 20 February, p. 8; War of words rebounds on teacher union. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 13 March, p. 3; Schools to get funding for 800 more teachers. *The Dominion*, 1995, 16 March, p. 1; More teachers, but not till next year. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 15 March, p. 1; Technology courses to replace manual training teachers' jobs. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 22 March, p. 15; Secondary principals slam teacher allocation plan. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 3 April, p. 8; Manual training [letter to the editor from Secretary for Education, Maris O'Rourke]. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 10 April, p. 4; Trustees pan teacher plan. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 15 April, p. 4; Otaki College fears loss. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 30 May, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Violence 'spills into class'. *The Dominion*, 1995, 3 April, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Back to school: enrolments 1995 and beyond. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 27 January, pp. 1-2. Secondary school roll decline was offset by the increase in the school leaving age from 15 to 16 in January 1993. School rolls were predicted to be stable until 1997 when they would rise sharply, peaking in 2008.

risk.<sup>24</sup> (what had passed almost unnoticed during the year was the change in regulations which allowed schools to adopt a four term year from 1996.)<sup>25</sup> Earlier, in May 1995, the PPTA's executive had sought:

... members' approval to plan industrial and political action in support of pay and staffing claims. Other issues were concerns about the ministerial reference group staffing system, bulk funding of teacher salaries, and the curriculum and qualifications frameworks. Making curriculum changes had hugely increased teachers' workloads without a pay rise, [PPTA president] Mr Tobin said.<sup>26</sup>

Soon after, there were indications that as part of their collective contract claims secondary teachers were feeling sufficiently frustrated by the government's stance to consider withdrawing their co-operation with the introduction of the curriculum and qualifications frameworks.<sup>27</sup> The Ministry of Education meanwhile pressed ahead with its timetable for the development of new curricula in the areas of social studies and health and physical education, and the NZQA with its for the trial of unit standards based assessment.<sup>28</sup> Yet, cracks in both frameworks were beginning to appear. In responding to reports that "some senior secondary school maths teachers involved in the reforms were resigning because of the 70 to 100 hour-a-week workload", Professor Megan Clark of Victoria University suggested that "the reform of school assessment is being done too quickly".<sup>29</sup> In addition, through the latter part of 1995, The Education Forum, an influential New Right lobby group comprising business and employer group representatives and sympathetic secondary school principals, released a number of substantial and well-publicised critiques both of individual curriculum areas and of the qualifications framework in general.<sup>30</sup> (The Education Forum's New Right arguments reveal a similar mix of neo-conservative and neo-liberal strands to those described in Britain, by Quicke, and in America,

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<sup>24</sup> Principal warns of crisis ahead. *The Dominion*, 1995, 7 December, p. 10; Teacher shortage in Wellington area, too. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 7 December, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Education Gazette*, 1995, 27 January, pp. 4-6.

<sup>26</sup> Teachers discuss pay claims. *The Dominion*, 1995, 23 May, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Teachers vote to reject changes. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 1 June, p. 2. PUMS show members mood. *PPTA News*, 1995, 16(6), June, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Contract settled for new curriculum. *The Dominion*, 1995, 8 May, p. 8; Teaching resource database to be produced. *The Dominion*, 1995, 26 June, p. 7; Curbs possible on political teaching. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 4 July, p. 15; Social studies curriculum draft defended. *The Dominion*, 1995, 30 August, p. 2; Assessment issues. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 29 March, p. 1; Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum, *Education Gazette*, 1995, 1 May, p. 1; *Time Frames* 1995, 12, p. 1; Social studies in the New Zealand Curriculum. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 15 May, p. 1; Managing curriculum change. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 14 July, pp. 1-2; Language and languages in the New Zealand Curriculum. *Update*, 1995, 10; Framework implementation gathers momentum. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 1 September, pp. 1-2; New Zealand Qualifications Authority school based assessment for the national Qualifications Authority professional development programmes. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 15 September, p. 4; Technology in the New Zealand Curriculum. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 16 October, pp. 1-2; Skill New Zealand. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 1 November, pp. 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Assessment reform done too quickly – professor. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 2 May, p. 14.

by Apple, in the previous chapter.) Drawing these dissonant voices together in an Opinion piece of his own, also in the Evening Post, and barely six months after Cooney's optimistic clarion call, Wilf Haskell, secretary of the Wellington College branch of the PPTA, delivered a blistering attack on the qualifications framework:

A huge storm is brewing on the educational horizon as New Zealand secondary school teachers face the daunting task of implementing a gigantic, ambitious and unwieldy juggernaut. The national framework possesses the potential to wreck the high reputation and ethos of the national system of secondary school education before the end of the decade ... Secondary school teachers who have been "shell shocked" by continuous educational change in the past decade, are in no mood to tolerate such a burdensome and bureaucratic assessment monolith ... It appears likely that teachers will be sucked into a quagmire of continuous assessment while the more creative and exciting elements of teaching and learning will be stifled ... The traditional methods of evaluating student learning through comparison and ranking where merit is recognised and rewarded is to be moved to a merit system based on the illusory comparison of achievements within limited and imprecise standards. The worst feature of the framework is the impossible system of moderation which is to be carried out through benchmark sampling of selected pieces of students' work.<sup>31</sup>

With such questions being asked of the framework and its demands on teachers, the government's announcement that it intended to implement the MRG proposals for new staffing formulae,<sup>32</sup> and the prospect of heightened militancy by teachers in pursuit of their contract claims and in opposition to the bulk-funding policy,<sup>33</sup> it is perhaps a little surprising, then, that by the end of the school year, nearly half of secondary schools in the country had volunteered to participate in school-based trials for the qualifications framework in 1996.<sup>34</sup> However, the Ministry for its part acknowledged that the multiple demands of simultaneous assessment, qualifications and curriculum reform were beginning to tell on schools, and extended the timeline for further curriculum implementation.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Big flaws found in education framework. *The Dominion*, 1995, 29 May, p. 1; *The Dominion*, op. cit., 1995, 30 August; Education Forum finds fault with science curricula. *The Dominion*, 1995, 27 November, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Teachers in juggernaut's path. *The Evening Post*, 1995, 7 July, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Resourcing for school staffing. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 1 November, pp. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Branch action on bulk funding. *PPTA News*, 1995, 16(11), November, p. 2; 21% Conference says yes 21%. *PPTA News*, 1995, 16(9), September, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> More schools for trials on qualifications. *The Dominion*, 1995, 16 November, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> More time for implementing curriculum. *Education Gazette*, 1995, 1 December, pp. 1-2; *Time Frames*, 1995, 13, pp. 1-2.

*1996: A New Minister And A Curriculum And Assessment Moratorium*

In terms of popular press coverage, the 1996 year began as 1995 ended, with the prospect of industrial confrontation between PPTA and the school boards over bulk funding of teachers' salaries, and between PPTA and government on teacher shortages and outstanding collective contract issues.<sup>36</sup> To further muddy the industrial relations water, the Ministry released a managerialist model of performance appraisal of teachers for discussion during the school year.<sup>37</sup> By the beginning of March, Hon Dr Lockwood Smith had been replaced by Hon Wyatt Creech as Minister after five years in post. Smith was given a mixed farewell message by Martin Cooney who noted "Dr Smith's contribution to the changes in what students learn and how that is assessed". He also said that "the minister's vision and tenacity need to be acknowledged" but condemned him for his stance on bulk funding and other policies.<sup>38</sup> At this stage, little contract progress had been made with PPTA still claiming a 21 per cent pay increase "that is necessary to recruit and retain teachers in face of a staffing shortage" and the State Services Commission offering "a 2 per cent pay rise and a 1 per cent performance-linked incentive payment".<sup>39</sup> In response to the reported extravagance of the 21% element, Bernadine Vester, PPTA's junior vice-president, argued that the claim was also about "the whole teacher quality package", with PPTA pushing for the return of compulsory teacher registration, more promotion opportunities, competency procedures to remove bad teachers, a developmental appraisal scheme, and strategies to address "the crisis in Maori education".<sup>40</sup>

As part of their industrial action, including strikes, PPTA members voted, at a series of stopwork meetings, to 'freeze' further work on the curriculum and qualifications frameworks.<sup>41</sup> Soon after, The Minister announced that, partly in acknowledgement of workload concerns, "Cabinet had agreed to slow down the [curriculum and qualifications] changes to make sure the resources and policies were in place to support them".<sup>42</sup> While the moratorium was welcomed by PPTA, the industrial action over contract claims continued with signs that teachers continued

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<sup>36</sup> School bulk funding brings threat of strikes. *The Dominion*, 1996, 13 January, p. 2; Schools fight to attract enough staff. *The Sunday Star Times*, 1996, 14 January, p. A13; Teacher shortage [letter from Martin Cooney, President, PPTA]. *The Dominion*, 1996, 26 January, p. 20; Passionate teachers [letter from Graham Murray, Greater Wellington Secondary Principals' Association]. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 27 February, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Draft National Guidelines for Performance Management in Schools. *Education Gazette*, 1996, 19 February, p. 3; Proposed guidelines for performance management in schools. *Education Gazette*, 1996, 4 March, pp. 1-3.

<sup>38</sup> Mixed report card. *PPTA News*, 1996, 17(3), March, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Teachers still plan to strike. *The Dominion*, 1996, 1 March, p. 3; Teachers meet Creech as school strike nears. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 4 March, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *PPTA News*, 1996, 17(3), March, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Supervision at all but four schools in region. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 5 March, p. 3. PPTA putting freeze plan before teachers. *The Dominion*, 1996, 19 March, p. 2; Teachers to freeze work on national curriculum. *The Dominion*, 1996, 15 May, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> School reform to be slowed. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 28 May, p. 1; Curriculum changes slowed. *The Dominion*, 1996, 29 May, p. 8.

to enjoy the balance of public support.<sup>43</sup> However, although the moratorium on curriculum and assessment reform promised an easing of workloads, it also created significant uncertainties for schools and teachers over the timetable for the introduction of curricula and qualifications, and the abolition of existing credentials.<sup>44</sup> Mid year, in fact, marked the turning point in the lengthy and acrimonious contract dispute. As public support for teachers was reported to be waning, the union called off its strike action,<sup>45</sup> and a proposed pay settlement was put to members.<sup>46</sup> By the time of the PPTA annual conference in September, President Martin Cooney was celebrating the salary increase which accompanied the new contract and was calling for teachers to regain control of curriculum and qualifications development, on the basis that "development of curriculum and qualifications had been carried out by bureaucratic imposition since 1990".<sup>47</sup> At the same venue, the Prime Minister, Minister of Education and PPTA Principal Council's chairperson, Karen Sewell, all delivered keynote speeches focused on the curriculum and qualifications frameworks and the potential benefits these would secure for students.<sup>48</sup>

By the end of 1996, issues of teacher staffing, bulk funding and the draft social studies curriculum document were once again the principal subjects of popular press reports.<sup>49</sup> Just before the end of the secondary school year, Howard Fancy, the newly appointed Secretary for Education, gazetted the prescribed requirements for performance management in schools, which were republished in the Education Gazette early in the new year.<sup>50</sup> As part of the contract settled at the end of August, the parties had agreed "to redesign the pay structure from one which is essentially age/experience related to one which is performance related"<sup>51</sup> in an attempt actively to promote the "quality teaching" criteria which were already contained in Appendix G to the contract. Potentially, this constituted a major change in the control and management of teachers' work with the introduction of annual performance management systems to replace automatic

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<sup>43</sup> Stop striking or risk losing support – Bolger. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 6 June, p. 3; Education an issue in a class of its own. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 6 June, p. 6; Secondary staff to decide on action. *The Press*, 1996, 25 June, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Reform go-slow gives teachers room to breathe. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 19 June, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> Teacher support about to wane. *The Evening Standard*, 1996, 16 July, p. 9; Teachers call off industrial action, cut pay claim. *The Press*, 1996, 22 July, p. 3; Teachers to blame for erosion of standards. *Sunday Star Times*, 1996, 18 August, p. A13.

<sup>46</sup> Teachers ARE worth it. *PPTA News*, 1996, 17(9), September, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Teachers urged to snatch back control of the curriculum. *The Press*, 1996, 17 September, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Teachers told of advantages. *The Dominion*, 1996, 18 September, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Social studies curriculum 'sanitised'. *The Press*, 1996, 16 October, p. 4; Schools in a bid to avert staff cuts. *The Timaru Herald*, 1996, 22 October, p. 2; National attitudes are being shaped in our classrooms. *The Daily News*, 1996, 3 December, p. 6; Education Forum views 'not representative'. *The Dominion*, 1996, 3 December, p. 2; Creech praised over curriculum. *The Evening Standard*, 1996, 3 December, p. 3; Teachers dismiss curriculum attack. *The Evening Post*, 1996, 4 December, p. 22; Contentious social studies. *The Press*, 1996, 5 December, p. 11; PPTA asks teachers to escalate bulk-funding fight. *The Dominion*, 1996, 20 December, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Performance Management for Schools. *New Zealand Gazette*, 1996, 12 December, p. 4724; Prescribing performance assessment. *Education Gazette*, 1997, 10 February, p.1.

<sup>51</sup> NZPPTA. Secondary teachers' collective employment contract (1.9.1996- 1.2.1998). Wellington: PPTA, 1996, September, p. 4.

salary progression. In future, teachers' performance was explicitly to be assessed annually against the criteria in Appendix G. In addition, the contract explained that "the merit-related element of the pay structure is achieved through the introduction of the units scheme"<sup>52</sup> whereby boards of trustees gained the flexibility to award annually a number fixed term salary units to teachers on the basis of "management, responsibility, recruitment, retention or reward".<sup>53</sup> In the context of this study, we should note that the criteria set out in Appendix G of the contract included additional criteria for Teachers with Responsibilities (organised under Area of Responsibility, Professional Leadership, Relationships with Students, Resource Management and Relationship with Community).<sup>54</sup>

*1997: An Uneasy Educational Alliance And Cracks In The Qualifications Framework*

Despite PPTA anger over the continuation of bulk funding policy in the newly formed coalition government,<sup>55</sup> 1997 began in considerably more sedate fashion with the now familiar tales of shortages of suitably qualified teachers in New Zealand schools (this in spite of a Ministry initiative announced in the middle of 1996),<sup>56</sup> and workloads, in the lead up to the 1997 budget.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear that the pay rise and contract settlement had not obviated workload concerns,<sup>58</sup> and it was July 1997 before the moratorium on curriculum implementation was formally lifted. Newspaper reports implied an uneasy alliance between PPTA and government on the rescheduled timetable for the introduction of the remaining curriculum areas. Mathematics, science and English documents had been introduced between 1992 and 1994. Technology had also been introduced in draft form in 1994 but would not now become compulsory until 1999 and new learning areas would also enjoy a two year phasing in period. The contentious social studies curriculum was due for full implementation in 2000, health and physical education by 2001 and arts by 2002, with the Maori language equivalents to follow by 2004.<sup>59</sup> Notwithstanding these workload concerns, PPTA's commitment to the principles underpinning the curriculum and qualifications reforms, and teacher's centrality to their successful implementation, was underlined in its decision to organise a second *Curriculum Conference* for the middle of the year.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

<sup>55</sup> Bulk funding betrayal. Education under a coalition government. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(2), March, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Meeting the challenge. Teacher supply*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1996, August.

<sup>57</sup> Claiming the time to teach. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(3), April, p. 1; Extra-curricular activities. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(5), June, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> The pay round is over but workload issues remain. *PPTA News*, 1997, 17(9), September, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Curriculum reform revived. *The Evening Post*, 1997, 14 July, p. 3; New school curriculum gets approval. *The Dominion*, 1997, 14 July, p. 3; New curriculum hailed for quality, scope. *The Dominion*, 1997, 25 October, p. 3; New curriculum timelines. *Education Gazette*, 1997, 21 July, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Curriculum conference, 1997. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(1), February, p. 1.

Any suggestions that the new curriculum and qualification frameworks might now enjoy a trouble free implementation and that the industrial confrontations of the previous year were in the past, were, however, premature. In July, PPTA reported on the independent Qualifications Framework Inquiry, *Te Tiro Hou*, which it had commissioned from researchers at Canterbury University<sup>61</sup>. Based on a survey questionnaire to PPTA members, the authors' findings addressed teachers' major concerns and called for:

The redesign of unit standards. This would provide for the recording of merit and excellence in assessment and avoid large numbers of small unit standards and over-detailed requirements for content coverage – a significant source of additional workload in both assessment and reassessment. Reassessment has also created major workload stresses for teachers and the report argues for changed expectations about re-assessment.<sup>62</sup>

Additionally, the report argued for improved moderation, avoidance of dual assessment (i.e. for existing credentials and unit standards), a more realistic timetable for the implementation of the framework and greater resourcing.<sup>63</sup> In this regard, the aspirations of PPTA and its members were in conflict with the government's recently released Green Paper on qualifications reform<sup>64</sup> (which, according to PPTA, sought to add further bureaucracy and greater marketisation into the framework) and the NZQA Board (which was promoting dual assessment as the way forward).<sup>65</sup> In the following month, *PPTA News* was devoted to a report of the Curriculum Conference, from which it was clear that PPTA members were far from unified on their stance towards the curriculum and assessment reforms. The journal reported on the Conference's "effort to find common ground about the Qualifications Framework among our members. Some PPTA members are still calling for outright bans, others are still operating the Qualifications Framework as it stands. However, there is a sense of urgency about finding an acceptable way forward".<sup>66</sup>

By the end of the 1997 school year, it was clear that the way forward had still to be found, as curriculum and assessment issues spilled into the public domain. The Education Forum's chairman, Avondale College principal Phil Raffils, delivered a damning verdict on the new social studies curriculum;<sup>67</sup> the rector of South Otago High School used the occasion of the school prize-giving to bemoan the additional workload for teachers created by the qualifications

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<sup>61</sup> Qualifications Framework Inquiry. *Te Tiro Hou: report of the Qualifications Framework Inquiry*. Commissioned by the NZ Post Primary Teachers Association. Wellington: PPTA, 1997.

<sup>62</sup> Framework – no tick yet. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(7), July, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of Education. *A future qualifications policy for New Zealand: a plan for the national qualifications framework*. Wellington: MoE, 1997; Government consultation on qualifications policy and National Qualifications Framework. *Education Gazette*, 1997, 9 June, pp. 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> *PPTA News*, op. cit., 1997, 18(7).

<sup>66</sup> Jury still out on the framework. *PPTA News*, 1997, 18(8), August, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Social studies curriculum 'unsound'. *The Dominion*, 1997, 12 November, p. 13.

framework and unit standards development and their uneven take-up by schools;<sup>68</sup> and, the PPTA had conducted a national round of stop-work meetings in preparation for its forthcoming contract negotiations as a result of which members voted to engage once again in a campaign of industrial action if the employment contract was not settled early in the new year.<sup>69</sup>

In what we might see as an ironic epitaph on the fitful and intermittent nature of the progress made in the implementation of the qualifications and curriculum frameworks between 1995 and 1997, and to emphasise the seeming indestructibility of School Certificate, Martin Cooney wrote a Viewpoint article just after the 1997 cohort of fifth form students had begun their examinations, in which he recycled, verbatim, various bits of his January 1995 commentary on the Employment Taskforce recommendations. Significantly, however, whereas in 1995 he had been enthusiastically anticipating School Certificate's imminent demise and replacement with an "inclusive" and seamless qualifications framework, at the end of 1997 and with the benefit of two years' hindsight, Cooney was prepared to concede a more pragmatic, but far from perfect compromise:

Modifications to School Certificate have been ongoing, but the big question is how to link it to the credit/unit standards system on the Qualifications Framework. However, delegates to PPTA's recent annual conference listed deficiencies with the unit standard type of assessment. Teachers decided they were inappropriate in their current form, for a number of school subjects. Although PPTA delegates were also unhappy with aspects of School Certificate, they voted for its continuation. So the debate goes on. PPTA has proposed the establishment of a statutory board of studies that would oversee the development and monitoring of a single qualification structure for all students. This could enable a modified School Certificate to exist through to the next century. The longer we allow two qualification systems to continue, the closer we come to having a two-tier school system in New Zealand – in which students at "poor" schools do unit standards and students at "rich" schools sit the traditional examinations.<sup>70</sup>

As if to underline the elusive (and illusory) nature of educational change, these more modest, revised aspirations were dealt a further blow with the reporting, three days later, of Professor Alan Smither's findings from a comprehensive evaluation of the Qualifications Framework, commissioned by the Education Forum.<sup>71</sup> In recounting the consistent logistic, epistemological and workload difficulties encountered by those to whom he talked in industry, schools and tertiary establishments, Smithers was highlighting the fragile credibility of the

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<sup>68</sup> Standards create heavy workload. *The Southland Times*, 1997, 18 November, p. 20.

<sup>69</sup> Secondary school teachers to meet. *The Southland Times*, 1997, 24 November, p. 11; Secondary teachers back strike plan. *The Nelson Mail*, 1997, 26 November, p. 3; Teachers press for higher salary levels. *The Southland Times*, 1997, 29 November, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> School certificate debate continues. *The Evening Standard*, 1997, 25 November, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> Smithers, A. *The New Zealand Qualifications Framework*. Auckland: The Education Forum, 1997.

Framework and its basic building blocks, standards based units of learning and assessment, among those charged with their implementation. As he cuttingly observed:

Even the New Zealand Qualifications Authority now accepts that standards are as much in people's heads as on paper. But if the written standards do not pin the qualification down then the whole structure is unsound. It is a bit like Lego with deformable shapes, and just think how frustrating that would be. The government has recognised that all is not well and has issued two Green papers ... From them it is possible to discern the drift of its thinking. It is evident that the government would still like to see a qualifications framework, but it is now less confident that the "unit standard" is the key. The Green Papers reveal that education administrators are hoping that another central unifying concept – that of a "quality threshold" will do the trick. It is doubtful whether this quality concept would be any more successful than unit standard has been, and it may be that it is this hunt for a magic formula that is at the heart of New Zealand's qualification difficulties. Instead of searching for a philosopher's stone which, at a stroke, will transform the whole of the education and training system, it would be better to address, from first principles, the issues and problems relating to particular areas.<sup>72</sup>

### **THE MYTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING FOR 'EVERY PERSON'**

In choosing to deploy the image of New Zealand in search of a philosopher's stone to deliver education from all its ills, Smithers, a British academic, was inadvertently echoing the observations of one of New Zealand's most revered icons of twentieth century schooling, the director of education from 1940-1960 and architect of the post-war expansion in universal secondary education, Dr Clarence Beeby. In an introduction to a collection of essays written by another director of education, Bill Renwick, Beeby argued that the advancement of educational policy relied on consensus derived from a broad measure of agreement on the purposes of education. These purposes were embodied in what Beeby chose to call educational myths:

Each generation creates, or simply assumes, its own educational myths and its own unattainable but approachable goals, with at least an appearance of permanence, on which to build its plans for education. To be both acceptable and effective, a myth has to meet certain conditions: it must be in general accord with some strong – though not always clearly defined – public aspiration; it must be expressed in language flexible enough to permit a reasonably wide range of interpretations, and yet specific enough to provide practical guidance to administrators, planners and teachers ...<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> What's wrong with unit standards. *The Daily News*, 1997, 28 November, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> Beeby, C. Introduction. In W. Renwick. *Moving target. Six essays on educational policy*. Wellington: NZCER, 1986, p. xv.

That the PPTA and a National government, ideologically poles apart on many educational and industrial issues, should both be advocating and working to implement the same qualifications and curriculum frameworks is puzzling only until one realises that they are, in effect, the practical manifestation of the enduring and "over-arching" myth which drove the expansion and metamorphosis of universal secondary education in New Zealand after the second world war, and the legacy of which is still to be found both in contemporary curriculum and assessment policy development and teachers' occupational folklore. I refer, of course, to the statement made by the first Labour Minister of Education in 1939, Peter Fraser:

The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his powers.<sup>74</sup>

What I want to show below is how that statement, that over-arching myth, was operationalised in the forms and structures of secondary schooling from 1939 and which survive largely intact to this day; how contemporary forms of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in secondary schools are, in many ways the continuing manifestation of that same myth; why secondary school teachers should consequently see these curriculum and assessment reforms as consistent with their own educational and occupational agendas, and why, therefore, they should be prepared to work 'conscientiously' to implement them despite the workloads, stress and practical difficulties they produce.

The origins of mass compulsory secondary schooling in New Zealand lie in the abolition of the proficiency examination (1936), the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen years and the accrediting of University Entrance (1944), the development of a national core post primary school curriculum (1945), and the introduction of the new School Certificate examination to supersede the University Entrance Examination as the standard terminal credential for school leavers (1946). Most of these initiatives date from the early 1940s, the years following the Great Depression, and were implemented during New Zealand's post-war economic boom. Together with Peter Fraser's statement of intent on behalf of the first Labour government, they constitute what Openshaw<sup>75</sup> has described as the New Zealand post primary education settlement, a period of comparatively uncontested policy based on a broad consensus regarding the aims of secondary schooling and how these might be achieved.

However, as Openshaw and other scholars have shown,<sup>76</sup> the 'equality of educational opportunity' objectives of secondary education in the post-war years were imperfectly realised

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<sup>74</sup> Cited in Beeby, *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

<sup>75</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Shuker, R. *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1987; Openshaw, R., Lee, G. and Lee, H. *Challenging the myths. Rethinking New Zealand's educational history*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1993. Codd, J.,

*inpractice*, and any ideological consensus was a fragile and shifting one. In particular, from the 1960s onward, fundamental operational cracks began to appear in these ideal curriculum, assessment and schooling structures. Some of these flaws are attributable to broader economic, social, labour market and demographic trends, others to enduring tensions between the educational and vocational purposes of mass secondary education and the structures put in place to support these. That politicians, teachers and scholars should still be debating in the 1990s, basic problems of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy that had surfaced and been comprehensively reviewed in previous decades, serves only to underline the structural difficulties of attempting to create a secondary education system fit to cope with the many, changing and often conflicting social demands made upon it (demands that were not unique or specific to New Zealand, as shown in the previous chapter).

There are two recurrent themes of these decades that are directly relevant to this study: First, the expansion and contraction of schooling and attendant changes in the composition of the secondary school student population; and, second, the relevance of the curriculum and assessment, or credentialling, processes to changing student needs. Below, we examine each. In the final section of the chapter we consider the work of teachers and the head of department, the subject of this study.

## SCHOOLING

This part of the chapter considers the expansion and contraction of post war secondary schooling from the 1940s and changes in retention rate and ethnicity among the student population.

### *Schooling Expansion And Changes In The Student Population*

The post-war expansion of secondary schooling in New Zealand occurred in three discrete periods of roll growth, decline, and growth again. Prior to the current resurgence in roll growth which commenced in the second half of the 1990s the great expansion in secondary education in New Zealand took place between 1945 and 1977-78, when rolls peaked.

#### **Expansion, 1945-1978**

In the 1975 baseline survey of secondary schools<sup>77</sup> it was noted that sixty percent of secondary schools had been built in the previous thirty five years, one third between 1954 and 1968.

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Harker, R. and Nash, R. (Eds.). *Political issues in New Zealand education*. Second edn. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990.

<sup>77</sup> Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand. A baseline survey*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1981, pp. 18-19.

Between 1945 and 1975, student numbers had risen from 35,000 to 200,000. During this period of expansion the size of the largest schools, partly because of the difficulty of finding new sites for building in urban areas, continued to grow from 600-800 students to twice that size and more. Before the war, secondary schools had been individually planned, typically consisting of one block of classrooms off a central corridor, one room per form, and a limited range of specialist teaching rooms. After the war, school design and construction reflected the imperatives of rapid roll growth; northern and urban migration; larger numbers and greater student diversity; a greatly enlarged subject-based curriculum; and, a growing emphasis on schools' social and pastoral functions. Schools were constructed according to a standard design. They gradually came to comprise a number of connected single and, later, two storey buildings, often organised around clusters of classrooms and subject specialist facilities, together with various 'social spaces'. The liberal-progressive comprehensive ideal, as manifested in secondary school design and construction, reached its zenith in 1975 with the publication of a 'whanau house' modular building design, the foreword to which was written by then Minister of Education, Hon P. Amos.<sup>78</sup>

Amos emphasised two key points that had informed the design brief for secondary schools:

1. The need to construct an environment "for living and learning in which the individual can live with dignity and, at the same time feel himself a contributing member of a larger, caring community, both inside and outside the school",<sup>79</sup>
2. The assertion that "today's secondary schools are moving away from the professional subject centred institutions towards guidance centred communities in which subjects, while still important, are, nevertheless, seen as being only a part of the total life of the school".<sup>80</sup>

(In this regard, the document's argument has echoes of Bernstein's 1971 conceptual discussion on the classification and framing of educational knowledge (chapter two)).

In advocating a secondary school design based on functioning groups of approximately 250 students 'guided' by a limited number of teachers with whom they would spend most of their time, this new 'whanau house' design template attempted to reconstruct teaching and learning spaces around the notion of schools within schools; to facilitate the promotion of social and pastoral education as well as the academic; and to mitigate the effects of the post-war trend towards larger, more impersonal secondary schools. The design was also intended to solve three basic organisational problems. First, the lack of "a stable home base"<sup>81</sup> for students that had occurred as large numbers of form rooms had been supplanted by "specialist laboratories,

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<sup>78</sup> Department of Education. *Secondary schools for tomorrow. A new approach to design and construction*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1975.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

workshops, home economics departments or art rooms unsuited to form room purposes”,<sup>82</sup> second, “the enormous strains on the circulation patterns of the school”<sup>83</sup> caused by all students shifting from subject specialist room to subject specialist room at each period change; and, third, the fact that until larger buildings on the Nelson and S68 designs were introduced, school buildings had struggled to provide sufficiently large clusters of rooms to ensure that subject specialist teachers, and single year cohorts of students could be located within the same part of the school.<sup>84</sup> In its glowing commendation of the whanau house concept in 1977, the Committee on Health and Social Education (the Johnson committee) expressed a concern that “some schools are allowed to grow to such a size that they remain impersonal in spite of the best efforts of organisation” and recommended that “there be a vigorous promotion of the ‘Whanau House’ concept among teachers and that any opportunity be taken to extend this philosophy to existing schools”.<sup>85</sup>

### **Contraction, post-1978**

After 1978, however, overall secondary school enrolments began to decline<sup>86</sup> and with them the need for significant numbers of new school buildings. Such was the extent of the projected reverse in growth that the Department of Education commissioned a report to examine the consequences for curriculum, staffing and school organisation, of the downturn.<sup>87</sup> Figures in the report show a decline from an actual enrolment of 223,500 students in 1982, to a projected figure of 188,800 in 1992.<sup>88</sup> Of the 250 state secondary schools in 1982,<sup>89</sup> 47 per cent had more than 850 students on roll, thirty six percent a roll between 501 and 850, sixteen percent between 201 and 500, and the remaining one percent, below 200 students. The report's author claimed that, under existing staffing and administrative structures, “schools seem to function best within a range of about 500 to 1000 pupils, and that strains may appear above or below this range”.<sup>90</sup> Among the issues raised in the report were the effects of contraction on school *staffing* (namely, a projected reduction of approximately 200 teachers annually from the mid-1980s, an ageing teacher cohort in consequence, with fewer beginning teachers, reduced career and promotion prospects, and increased workloads in order to maintain the curriculum); and the effects on *curriculum* (fewer subject specialist teachers, fewer options for students, the combining of

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Growing, sharing, learning*. Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education (J.G. Johnson, Chairman). second edn. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978, p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> *Learning and achieving*. Second report of the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 5 to 7. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Roy, R. *A survey of the consequences of decline in secondary school enrolments*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1983.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> This figure excludes integrated schools.

subjects into broader based disciplines, pressures on guidance and counselling structures, and the loss of co-curricular activities).

In the context of this study, it is interesting to note, in passing, Roy's specific observation that:

An additional area of curriculum that can be affected by decline in numbers is subject leadership. When entitlement for positions of responsibility decreases there will be competition for the units remaining between the administrative hierarchy and the heads of subject departments. This may lead to a combination of allied subjects under one common leader or the elimination of any senior position from a small subject area. Either of these outcomes would reduce the quality of teaching, especially if there are beginning teachers who are unsure of any aspect of their subject.<sup>91</sup>

In 1985, a smaller, follow-up survey to the department's exhaustive 1975 baseline study reported that the number of teachers in schools "varied from two to 100 full-time and zero to 26 part-time, with a median of 37 full-time and six part-time teachers"<sup>92</sup>. The maximum size of surveyed schools was 1901 in 1985 (1975 N=2610), with a median roll size of 770 (1975 median=781) in non-integrated schools.<sup>93</sup> Between 1975 and 1985 a number of significant changes occurred in schools' staffing entitlements and organisational practices that also merit brief mention.

### **Changes in student retention and ethnicity**

In 1985, the survey report noted that the sixth form student retention rate had increased in the previous decade from 46% to 54% (for Maori, from 16% to 26%). Fifty seven percent of girls and 51% of boys were retained to sixth form. The numbers of students in the sixth and seventh forms and of adult students had also reportedly increased substantially since 1975. From very modest beginnings in two schools in 1960, the number and qualifications of guidance counsellors increased slowly until the Department of Education announced the provision of ten further positions per year for five years from 1969<sup>94</sup>. By 1973, the phased introduction of "full guidance networks for state secondary schools" had been approved by government.<sup>95</sup> In 1975, half of the schools had guidance counsellor positions. In 1985, all schools with more than 400 students were entitled to a guidance counsellor position. Between 1971 and 1981, the number of

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>92</sup> Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand. A 1985 follow-up of the 1975 baseline study*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Webster, A. Guidance and counselling. In R. Bates (Ed.). *Prospects in New Zealand education*. Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, pp. 221-222.

<sup>95</sup> Department of Education. *Report of the secondary school staffing working party*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1983, p. 33.

guidance counsellors nationally increased from 53 to 256, the staffing of the Psychological Service from 69 to 144, and of the Visiting Teacher Service from 38 to 70. In addition, by 1981, the Department of Education employed two full-time Education Officers (guidance) and eight district guidance advisers.<sup>96</sup>

The data above confirm that, in addition to a declining national birthrate, the student composition in schools was changing as a result of greater senior school retention. Some of this retention is attributable to the rapid and sharp rise in unemployment generally, and youth unemployment, in particular, after 1977; by December 1983, "school-leaver and under-19 age categories constituted nearly 25 percent of all long-term unemployed".<sup>97</sup> With significantly increased targeted funding and staffing from the Department of Education in this period, schools developed specific 'transition education' (school to work) programmes to cater for 'reluctant returners'. By the end of 1983, this comprised "work experience, work exploration and pre-employment vocational training".<sup>98</sup> Schools were also responding to increasing retention generally by devoting more attention to social and pastoral provision and careers and guidance counselling. Relatedly, the data on the use of corporal punishment show that in 1985, 46% of schools surveyed restricted its use, 27% did not permit its use, 13% permitted but did not use it, and 10% reported that its use was being phased out. Ninety four percent of boys' schools permitted the use of corporal punishment in 1985, 67% of co-educational schools and no girls' schools.<sup>99</sup> Corporal punishment was most likely to be used in junior forms, but its use overall was decreasing: "for example, in 1975, a mean of 30 canings per school had been administered to fourth form boys compared with 11 in 1985".<sup>100</sup> The use of corporal punishment in state schools was suspended in 1987 and legislated against in 1990, having been "a subject of major debate in New Zealand educational circles" between the 1950's and 1980's.<sup>101</sup>

In 1995, the year before the fieldwork for this study commenced, there were 320 state secondary schools in New Zealand (1985 N=316). The median roll size was 617.<sup>102</sup> Although the largest school had a roll of 2078 students, 75% of secondary schools had a roll less than 910.<sup>103</sup> In 1995, student numbers totalled 220,891 in state secondary schools, having fallen each year since 1991, but still remained higher than a decade earlier. As a result of primary school

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<sup>96</sup> Ross, D. Guidance in schools - into the 1980's. In G. Hermansson (Ed.). *Guidance in New Zealand secondary schools*. Palmerston North: Massey University, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Khan, G. *Transition from school to work*. Delta Research Monograph No 8. Palmerston North: Massey University, Department of Education, 1986, p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3 & 24-26.

<sup>99</sup> Department of Education, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp. 138-140.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>101</sup> Marshall, J. and Marshall, D. *Discipline and punishment in New Zealand education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1997, p. 97.

<sup>102</sup> This figure includes the 16 independent secondary schools.

<sup>103</sup> Ministry of Education. *New Zealand schools 1995*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1995, p. 19.

roll growth patterns, however, secondary student numbers were projected to increase by a third (N=73,100) in the decade to 2005.

Between 1985 and 1995, the sixth form (apparent) retention rate of students increased from 54.1% to 80.5%, and in the seventh form from 17.3% in 1985 to 48.3% in 1995. In 1995, female students (52.3%) were more likely than male (44.4%) to enter seventh form, and non-Maori students were more than twice as likely to enter seventh form as their Maori counterparts. Moreover, for decile one and two schools, the average retention rate to seventh form was 32%; for decile nine and ten schools, the proportion was 71%. In 1985, the average Maori student retention rate for forms 3-5 was 62.8% (all students = 86.2%) in 1995 it was 91.3% (all students = 97.0%). The Minister's 1995 report also recorded an increase in participation in Maori medium education, from under 10,000 students in 1990 to over 25,000 in 1995, thus "sixteen percent of all Maori students in New Zealand schools were studying in Maori medium programmes in 1995".<sup>104</sup> By comparison, in 1985, only two of the 142 secondary schools surveyed had bilingual (English/Maori) classes.

In 1995, Maori constituted 16.89% (1975<sup>105</sup>=11%), Pacific Islanders 6.89% (1975=1.4%), Asian 6.75% (1975=0.7%) and Europeans or Pakeha 68.55% (1975=86.5%) of all secondary school students. Eight percent of students came from non-English speaking backgrounds in 1995, a quarter of whom had no or only limited English language and writing competency. Also, in 1985, there were 3480 full- or part-time adult students attending state secondary schools; by 1995, this figure had risen to 9354.<sup>106</sup> In 1995, there were 3953 full-fee paying overseas students in the country, three quarters of whom were enrolled in forms five, six or seven. Finally, approximately three percent of all school students in 1995 were identified as having special educational needs, only one in ten of whom attended special schools.

The next question we need to consider is, how were such changes in student composition and societal expectations of schooling reflected in the development of curriculum, assessment and credentialling practices in secondary schools in the post-war decades prior to the period of this study?

## **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

In this part of the chapter, we consider (a) the aims and structure of the original universal post-primary curriculum as expressed in the Thomas Report of 1943; (b) government attempts to address a crisis of teaching quality in the 1960s; (c) the reviews and developments in secondary

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>105</sup>Department of Education, op. cit., 1981, p. 80. Comparative figures for 1985 not available, although Maori comprised 14% of the roll in the survey schools in that year.

<sup>106</sup>the basis for calculation differs slightly from 1985 to 1995. The figures also include students enrolled at the Correspondence School.

education attempted during the years of partnership between state and teachers' unions; and (d) the curriculum and assessment reforms instituted under the National government after 1990.

### *The Post-Primary Curriculum (The Thomas Report)*

The basic shape, structure and balance of the contemporary secondary school curriculum derives from the *Post-Primary School Curriculum* (the Thomas Report) (1943) and the subsequent *Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations 1945* and remained substantially so until the 1990s. The Thomas Report set out six general aims for the curriculum and its assessment;<sup>107</sup> (a) to reinforce the principle of a "generous and well balanced education" for all students through a "common core" curriculum, the main emphasis of which was not solely to promote individual academic attainment but to act as "an aid to growth and as a general preparation for life in a modern democratic society"; (b) to encourage the provision of content and "methods" suited to "pupils of widely differing abilities and interests" by providing "a very wide range of options" for examination; (c) to develop examination prescriptions suitable for all students, and not just for an academic minority who were expected to proceed to university study; (d) to avoid bifurcation of the School Certificate credential through the "pursuit of 'soft options' or concentration on a few subjects of such a character that a pass in them is no guarantee of a satisfactory level of general education"; (e) to minimise the influence of external examinations by encouraging schools to decide the "scope, organisation and content" of the core subjects and to promote the further development of school-based accrediting of student attainment; and (f) to attempt to minimise the fragmentation of the curriculum into separate, subject specialist areas lacking in overall integration.

In the subsequent regulations, the compulsory curriculum core was confirmed as: English language and literature, social studies, general science, elementary mathematics, music, a craft or one of the fine arts, and physical education. The regulations also prescribed a minimum number of units of instruction for the core subjects, to comprise just over half the time available, within an overall minimum weekly instruction figure of twenty hours. The regulations specified a minimum weighting also, of 14.5 units of instruction in total in English and social studies for School Certificate, eight units in general science and elementary mathematics, seven in music and craft or fine art, and six in physical education, half of which could be "devoted to organised games". After a course of study of at least three years, candidates were required to be examined in English and either three or four other subjects (from a total of thirty six). Passes were to be awarded to students who gained a minimum of 30% of available marks in each subject, and with a minimum aggregate of 50%.

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<sup>107</sup> *The post-primury school curriculum*. Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in November 1942. (W. Thomas, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1959, pp. 5-11.

In both documents, above, schools were encouraged to use local initiative in developing schemes of work and methods appropriate to the needs and interests of students, within national syllabus guidelines. For the members of the Thomas committee, this latitude presented secondary schools with both the freedom and responsibility to create local curricula suitable for an enlarged and more diverse student population:

The question that remains to be answered is whether or not the new opportunities will be seized with boldness and imagination. There is an easy road and a hard one. A school that takes the easy road will continue to accept uncritically the standards and objectives, and the curricula and methods hitherto largely imposed from without, and will be content with minor adjustments - the elimination of the more academic subjects from the courses of the less scholarly pupils, the devotion of more time to subjects hitherto given relatively little, and so on. A school that takes the hard road will re-examine its whole theory and practice, make up its mind about the real needs of its pupils and the means by which they can best be met, and then act courageously in accord with its findings.<sup>108</sup>

This freedom aside, the committee was also quick to recognise that little by way of practical support was available to schools:

The most that a committee of our kind can do to encourage the schools that are prepared to take the hard road, does not amount to very much. It can help to remove a few obstacles from the path, indicate what it believes to be promising lines of advance, possibly make some useful practical suggestions; but ultimately each school must work out its own salvation.<sup>109</sup>

Even in the 1940s then, the potential for external examinations and credentialling requirements to subvert the more general educational objectives of secondary schooling for the masses, was recognised. Yet, while the Thomas committee's membership expressed a commendable confidence in the ability of schools and teachers independently to develop curricula and methods suited to their diverse students' needs, the lack of Departmental support structures to facilitate this normative change seems, with the benefit of hindsight, naive.

#### *A 'Crisis' Of Teacher Quality*

Although there appeared in the 1940s to be a general consensus of the need for new teaching methods and more practical, less bookish classroom activities for the great majority of students, by 1962, the *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (the Currie report), was

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

able to identify specific popular concerns and "problem areas"<sup>110</sup> in the secondary education system, as a result of its rapid growth in the previous fifteen years, together with what was referred to more than once as a "chronic shortage of teachers".<sup>111</sup> The Currie report noted that the proportion of students, "urged onwards by their parents"<sup>112</sup> to seek School Certificate after three years schooling, rather than four as originally intended by the Thomas committee, had increased substantially. In 1949, 76% of boys and 66% of girls first attempted School Certificate after three years, in 1960 the respective figures were 96% and 92%.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, the maximum number of examinable subjects that could be taken, with the permission of the principal, had increased to six. Alongside this increasing domination of teaching and learning by the acquisition of credentialled outcomes, there was growing recognition of the particular needs of 'slow', 'reluctant' and 'gifted' learners, the disciplinary challenges caused by increased retention of the senior secondary school population, a perception among employers and training colleges that the calibre of school leavers was deteriorating, a questioning of the utility of separate intermediate schooling in forms one and two and, above all, the shortage of "experienced and expert teachers".<sup>114</sup> The Commission members observed that "in their treatment of the modern adolescent both school and community are much divided"<sup>115</sup> and concluded that if a remedy was to be found, the "quality of the teachers in the schools"<sup>116</sup> was a major priority for action.

In proposing solutions to the 'problem' of poor teacher quality, and the consequent difficulties schools and teachers were experiencing in catering for the full range of student needs and aspirations, the Commission suggested a clearer grouping by ability of students within secondary schools, and more organised support from the Department of Education for curriculum revision and development. In 1943, the Thomas committee had left each school to "work out its own salvation" through local decisions. In 1962, the Currie Commission recommended a dramatic shift in emphasis. It advocated the creation of a centralised curriculum development unit, the preparation of curricula, syllabuses and handbooks with "interpretive and practical guidance" for teachers, standardised national tests to act as checkpoints at several stages of both primary and secondary schooling, and the use of Departmental staff to organise in-service training for teachers in new content and method."<sup>117</sup> On this point, it has been argued

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<sup>110</sup> *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (G. Currie, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1962, p. 38.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273. Although Codd, for example, makes the point that the commission also "anticipated ... that the participatory process would be greatly expanded". Codd, J. Democratic principles and the politics

that "the tendency towards the centralisation of decision-making [and the] increasingly techno-scientific bias of educational innovation from the 1960s meant that a comparatively small group of 'experts' within the inspectorate and Department, who had read widely, often possessed overseas experience in curriculum construction and already held influential positions within the education hierarchy, came to exert a powerful influence on the curriculum as a whole".<sup>118</sup>

The Currie Commission had also argued that the education of students in forms one to four "will require substantially three sets of syllabuses, one for the normal group, one for the brighter pupils, and one for slower learning pupils".<sup>119</sup> Such stratification is consistent with Peddie's observation that as secondary schools grew in size and number after the war, students typically were streamed in the junior school, following set, full year courses, and differentiated by ability into academic, general and technical, or manual options.<sup>120</sup> However, these hierarchically organised curriculum delivery models were to come under increasing scrutiny in the 1970s and 1980s as the national economic situation deteriorated, youth unemployment grew, dissatisfaction with secondary schooling of teachers, politicians, employers and Department officials persisted<sup>121</sup> and a wide-ranging and protracted series of curriculum reviews was undertaken at school, regional and national levels. Noteworthy, also, from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s is the influential role played by the PPTA on behalf of its membership in the formal review and development of secondary school curriculum and assessment.

By the 1990s, it is possible to discern four contiguous strands in the development of post-war secondary school curriculum and assessment policy. The years immediately following the Thomas Report manifested a dominant belief in laissez-faire, school-based curriculum development within broad national guidelines; those of the Currie report an ideology of benevolent central government intervention;<sup>122</sup> and the 1990s, the adoption of a homogeneous curriculum and assessment development process conducted on behalf of the Ministry by contracted private persons or organisations.<sup>123</sup> In between, the 1970s and 1980s were broadly characterised by the pursuit of common educational ends and means between the Department, schools and the PPTA by means of consultation and participation.<sup>124</sup> Jesson has aptly described this approach by the state as "corporatist".

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of curriculum change in New Zealand. In M. Clark (Ed.). *The politics of education in New Zealand*. Wellington: NZCER, 1981, p. 45.

<sup>118</sup> Openshaw, op. cit., 1995, pp. 105-108.

<sup>119</sup> Op. cit., 1962, p. 267.

<sup>120</sup> Peddie, R. *What shall they learn? Junior secondary school curriculum in New Zealand*. Auckland: Uniservices Ltd., 1994, p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> See, for example, the various contributions to *Education*, 1979, 28(5).

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, McCulloch, G. From Currie to Picot: history, ideology and policy in New Zealand education. *Access*, 1988, 7, 2-15.

<sup>123</sup> E.g. Curriculum. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(2), February, 1-2; Curriculum contracts. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(9), May, 1-2.

<sup>124</sup> And also with researchers and academics, vis.: Codd, J. and Hermansson, G. (Eds.). *Directions in New Zealand secondary education*. Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.

Corporatism can be seen as an arrangement of mutual compromise between the State, the employers and the unions. Education existed within this corporatist framework, with the teachers' associations, Parent Teacher Associations and the education structures working in a "partnership".<sup>125</sup>

In practice, though, during the 1970s and 1980s the participatory process generated frequent conflict involving public, educational and political interest groups; conflict that was to become increasingly polarised between the 'progressives', committed to a greater emphasis on social and moral education, and the 'traditionalists', wishing a return to the 'basics' of schooling.<sup>126</sup>

### *The Corporatist Partnership*

The PPTA became a significant political force in the 1960s when it established its own curriculum subject panels and lobbied for improvements in salaries, conditions and increased payments for examination marking. PPTA published its highly influential and well received *Education in Change* volume in 1969 following its own review of the aims of secondary schooling<sup>127</sup> and, in 1971, persuaded the Department of Education to sponsor the conference that led to the *Review of Secondary Education*. Having thereby earned its place at the educational decision-making table,<sup>128</sup> PPTA was in future to lobby for and participate actively in curriculum and assessment reform as a matter of course.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, it was not until 1991, with new curriculum, assessment and qualifications frameworks about to be introduced to schools by government and NZQA, that it felt obliged forcefully to reiterate what it saw as the union's customary right to participate in curriculum policy making:

In the last three years the New Zealand education system has been reformed along lines dictated by an instrumental and managerial analysis. Such an analysis reduces curriculum questions to technical problems of what tools are required to produce specified outcomes. But deeper and historically longer lived theoretical tradition sees

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<sup>125</sup> Jesson, J. Curriculum development: changing models with the changes in the State. In P. Capper (Ed.). *Proceedings of the Post Primary Teachers' Association Curriculum Conference*. Christchurch, 1991, May 12-14, p. 89; see also, Ross, J. Development of the secondary school curriculum: an overview. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit. 1976, 83-94; Aitken, R. An adaptive approach to English. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit. 1976, 95-107; Openshaw, Lee and Lee, op. cit. 1993, chapter 10.

<sup>126</sup> Codd, op. cit., 1981, p. 43; Snook, I. Reforming the curriculum in New Zealand. In D. Carter and M. O'Neill (Eds.) *International perspectives on educational reform and policy implementation*. London: Falmer, 1995, 158-168.

<sup>127</sup> Openshaw, op. cit., 1995, pp. 105-108; Webster, B. The politics of the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association. In Clark, op. cit., 1981, 191-206; Fletcher, W. Yesterday, today and tomorrow: a personal view. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976, 29-41.

<sup>128</sup> Symbolised in the growing prominence of officially endorsed PPTA contributions to the debate, e.g. *The challenge is change. The secondary school curriculum*. 3. Wellington: Department of Education, 1972.

<sup>129</sup> Jesson, op. cit., 1991.

education as an integrated activity wherein the processes gone through are themselves part of the valid outcomes<sup>130</sup>.

The period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s was, then, one of increasing complexity, polarisation, politicisation and, latterly, fragmentation<sup>131</sup> in curriculum and assessment policy development. A detailed analysis is clearly beyond the scope or purpose of this chapter. Instead, at this point, it will be useful to tabulate a chronology of the major reports, discussion documents and other publications relevant to secondary school curriculum and assessment from 1969 onward; and then to tease out the trends.

**Table 3.1 A Chronicle Of Secondary School Curriculum And Assessment Debate, 1969-1994**

	<b>1994</b>
1969	Education in Change <sup>132</sup>
1971	Maori Education <sup>133</sup>
1971	The Secondary School Curriculum: Some Issues and Prospects (Secondary Review, Lopdell House) <sup>134</sup>
1971	Guidance in Secondary Schools <sup>135</sup>
1972	External Examinations and Internal Assessments <sup>136</sup>
1972	Internal Assessment for School Certificate <sup>137</sup>
1972-1974	Education Development Conference <sup>138</sup>
1972-1975	The Secondary School Curriculum <sup>139</sup>
1973	Secondary Schools in Change <sup>140</sup>
1974	Teachers in Change <sup>141</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Capper, P. Introduction. In Capper, op. cit., 1991, p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Since 1989-1990, the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office and NZQA have each offered 'independent' policy advice to the Minister of Education.

<sup>132</sup> NZPPTA. *Education in change*. Report of the Curriculum Review Group. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1969.

<sup>133</sup> *Maori education*. Report of the National Advisory Committee on Maori Education. Wellington: Department of Education, 1970. Established in 1955, this was the first report of the committee with a majority of Maori members following its reorganisation in 1969.

<sup>134</sup> Department of Education. *The secondary school curriculum: some issues and prospects*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1971a.

<sup>135</sup> Department of Education. *Guidance in secondary schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1971b.

<sup>136</sup> Elley, W. and Livingstone, I. *External examinations and internal assessments*. Wellington: NZCER, 1972.

<sup>137</sup> School Certificate Examination Board. *Internal assessment for school certificate*. Wellington: the Board, 1972.

<sup>138</sup> E.g. Education Development Conference (EDC). *Educational aims and objectives*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1974a; EDC. *Improving learning and teaching*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1974b.

<sup>139</sup> Department of Education. *The secondary school curriculum*. Vols. 1-10. Wellington: Department of Education, 1972-1975.

<sup>140</sup> Shallcrass, J. (Ed.). *Secondary schools in change*. Wellington: Price Milburn for the NZPPTA, 1973.

1976	Towards Partnership <sup>142</sup>
1976	Directions in New Zealand Secondary Education <sup>143</sup>
1976	Education and the Equality of the Sexes <sup>144</sup>
1977	Growing, Sharing, Learning <sup>145</sup>
1978	Realities of Curricula <sup>146</sup>
1978	Educational Standards in State Schools <sup>147</sup>
1979	The Self-Concept of Maori Secondary School Pupils <sup>148</sup>
1980	He Huarahi <sup>149</sup>
1981	State Secondary Schools in NZ (1975 baseline) <sup>150</sup>
1981	Secondary Education and the Path to Work <sup>151</sup>
1981	School Certificate in a Changing World <sup>152</sup>
1983	A Survey of the Consequences of Decline in Secondary School Enrolments <sup>153</sup>
1984	A Review of the Core Curriculum for Schools <sup>154</sup>
1985	Implications of the Removal of the University Entrance Examination from Form 6 <sup>155</sup>
1986	State Secondary Schools in NZ (1985 follow-up) <sup>156</sup>
1986	The Quality of Teaching <sup>157</sup>

<sup>141</sup> NZPPTA. *Teachers in change*. Report of the Curriculum Review group on the Education and Training of Secondary Teachers. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1974.

<sup>142</sup> Committee on Secondary Education. *Towards partnership*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1976.

<sup>143</sup> Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>144</sup> *Education and the equality of the sexes*. A report of the national conference in International Womens' Year 1975. Wellington: Department of Education, 1976.

<sup>145</sup> *Growing, sharing, learning*, op. cit., 1977.

<sup>146</sup> Campbell, E. M. *Realities of curricula*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978.

<sup>147</sup> Department of Education. *Educational standards in state schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978.

<sup>148</sup> Ranby, P. *The self-concept of Maori secondary school pupils*. Wellington: NZCER, 1979.

<sup>149</sup> *He Huarahi*. Report of the National Advisory Committee on Maori Education. Wellington: Department of Education, 1980.

<sup>150</sup> Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand. A baseline survey*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1981.

<sup>151</sup> New Zealand Employers Federation. *Secondary education and the path to work*. A discussion paper (Ed. R. Pedder) Wellington: NZEF, 1981.

<sup>152</sup> New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. *School certificate in a changing world*. A discussion document prepared by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. Wellington: NZPPTA, 1981.

<sup>153</sup> Roy, op. cit., 1983.

<sup>154</sup> *A review of the core curriculum for schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1984, March.

<sup>155</sup> *First Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 5-7. Implications of the removal of the University Entrance examination from form 6*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1985, May.

<sup>156</sup> Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand. A 1985 follow-up of the 1975 baseline survey*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986.

<sup>157</sup> *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*. Education and Science Select Committee. Wellington: Government Printer, 1986.

1986	Learning and Achieving <sup>158</sup>
1986	The Curriculum Review <sup>159</sup>
1988	Draft National Curriculum Statement <sup>160</sup>
1988	The April Report <sup>161</sup>
1988	Administering for Excellence <sup>162</sup>
1988	Tomorrow's Schools <sup>163</sup>
1989	Learning for Life <sup>164</sup>
1989	Learning for Life Two <sup>165</sup>
1989	Assessment for Better Learning <sup>166</sup>
1989	Education Act 1989 <sup>167</sup>
1990	Tomorrow's Standards <sup>168</sup>
1990	Conference on National Monitoring in Education <sup>169</sup>
1990	Education Amendment Act 1990 <sup>170</sup>
1991	The National Curriculum of New Zealand <sup>171</sup>
1991	Curriculum Conference 1991 <sup>172</sup>
1991	Maori Education <sup>173</sup>
1991	The Achievement Initiative <sup>174</sup>

<sup>158</sup> *Learning and achieving*. Second report of the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 5-7. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, June.

<sup>159</sup> *The Curriculum Review 1986*. A draft report prepared by the Committee to review the Curriculum for Schools. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, July.

<sup>160</sup> Department of Education. *Draft national curriculum statement*. A discussion document for primary and secondary schools. Wellington: Department of Education, 1988.

<sup>161</sup> The Royal Commission on Social Policy. *The April Report*. Vol. IV. Social perspectives. Wellington: the Commission, 1988.

<sup>162</sup> *Administering for excellence: effective administration in education*. Report of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration (Chair, B. Picot). Wellington: the Taskforce, 1988, May.

<sup>163</sup> Lange, D. *Tomorrow's schools*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1988, August.

<sup>164</sup> Goff, P. *Learning for life. Education and training beyond the age of fifteen*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1989, February.

<sup>165</sup> Goff, P. *Learning for life: two. Education and training beyond the age of fifteen. Policy decisions*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1989, August.

<sup>166</sup> Department of Education. *Assessment for better learning*. A public discussion document. Wellington: Department of Education, 1989, September.

<sup>167</sup> In this Act, the Department of Education (including the Curriculum Development Division) was disestablished and replaced by a Ministry of Education. A number of stand-alone educational agencies including the Education Review Office were established.

<sup>168</sup> *Tomorrow's standards*. The report of the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning (Chairman: J. Stewart). Wellington: Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 1990, July.

<sup>169</sup> Croft, C. (Ed.). *Proceedings of the conference on national monitoring in education*. Wellington: NZCER, 1990, September.

<sup>170</sup> This legislation provided for the creation of NZQA and the National Qualifications Framework. See Tuck, B. and Peddie, R. Introduction. In R. Peddie and B. Tuck (Eds.). *Setting the standards. The assessment of competence in national qualifications*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995, pp. 9-11.

<sup>171</sup> Ministry of Education. *The national curriculum of New Zealand*. A discussion document. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1991.

<sup>172</sup> Capper, 1991, op. cit.

<sup>173</sup> Maori education. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(5), March, 1-3.

1991	Designing the Framework <sup>175</sup>
1991	School Certificate. A Discussion Document About Changes to the [SC] Qualification <sup>176</sup>
1991-	(timetabled production of individual curriculum statements) <sup>177</sup>
1992	Beyond the Norm <sup>178</sup>
1993	The New Zealand Curriculum Framework <sup>179</sup>
1993	National Education Guidelines (revised) <sup>180</sup>
1993	Education for the 21st Century <sup>181</sup>
1994	Tomorrow's Learners <sup>182</sup>
1994	Assessment Policy to Practice <sup>183</sup>

### Review and experiment

The 1970s, in particular, were seen as a period of "educational revolution"<sup>184</sup> in secondary schools or what then Assistant Director of Education, W. L. Renwick, called "a restless exploratory phase". In this, Renwick discerned three trends: (i) a search for "social relevance" in teaching and learning; (ii) the participation of students in decision-making; and (iii) the development of a sense of community within the school. Central to these emerging trends were a focus on guidance and the responsibility of schools, through all teachers, to promote students' personal and social development, in part by considering the place of values and moral education in secondary schools.<sup>185</sup> And, as was to occur with increasing frequency over the next twenty five years, the relevance of external examinations to this embryonic ideal of a general, liberal

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<sup>174</sup> The Achievement Initiative. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(7), April, 1-2; The Achievement Initiative: progress. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(16), September, 1-2. From February 1991, the Ministry of Education began to use the front page of the *Education Gazette* to disseminate information and "engender debate" about "action on important issues and developments" (p.1).

<sup>175</sup> New Zealand Qualifications Authority. *Designing the framework. A discussion document about restructuring national qualifications*. Wellington; NZQA, 1991, March.

<sup>176</sup> NZQA. *School Certificate. A discussion document about changes to the School Certificate qualification*. Wellington: NZQA, May, 1991.

<sup>177</sup> In order of publication, Mathematics (1992), Science (1993), English (draft), Technology (draft). During 1994, draft Maori versions of science (putaiao) and mathematics (pangarau) were released. In December 1994, English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Social Studies (draft) were published.

<sup>178</sup> Peddie, R. *Beyond the norm? An introduction to standards-based assessment*. Wellington: NZQA, 1992.

<sup>179</sup> Ministry of Education. *The New Zealand curriculum framework*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, April.

<sup>180</sup> O'Rourke, M. School charters and the revised national education guidelines. *New Zealand Education Gazette*, 1993, 30 April, 3-4.

<sup>181</sup> Ministry of Education. *Education for the 21st century*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, October.

<sup>182</sup> NZQA. *Tomorrow's learners. An approach to implementing the qualifications framework in secondary schools*. Wellington: NZQA, 1994.

<sup>183</sup> Ministry of Education. *Assessment. Policy to practice*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1994.

<sup>184</sup> Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976, p. 9.

education curriculum designed to engage all students in productive modes of enquiry was seriously questioned by senior professional educators:

The place of national external examinations needs investigation. The early dismantling of the existing examination structure must parallel the introduction of this curriculum, which cannot be implemented while the present influences on pupils, teachers and parents remain. The progressive introduction of internal assessment at the School Certificate level could well begin in 1973, and it is recommended that this is given urgent attention. But it should be noted that any certificate should not merely be a record of attainment but should also deal with the total development of the pupil.<sup>186</sup>

### **Curriculum review in the 1980s**

The 1980s were similarly infused with public, professional and political positioning over secondary schooling which prompted two official reviews of the core curriculum. The first, instituted by National's Minister Hon. Merv Wellington, and considered by him to be "a most important development in the history of education in this country",<sup>187</sup> proposed an increase in the core curriculum subjects from approximately fifty to seventy percent of the time available together with the introduction of taha Maori, Computer awareness, career education and Health education, as additional compulsory components of the core (albeit with no specific time allocated to them).<sup>188</sup> The impetus for the review dated from a 'back to basics' controversy surrounding teaching and the curriculum that coincided with the 1978 election and the economic and unemployment crises.<sup>189</sup> The second, commissioned by Labour's Minister of Education Hon. Russell Marshall, following a change of government in 1984, sought again to broaden the definition of curriculum and to challenge existing subject divisions:<sup>190</sup>

Whereas Wellington's proposed core curriculum was widely perceived as conservative and narrowly instrumental, based on limited consultation, Marshall's proposals tended to be seen as liberal and somewhat vague in their espousal of social ideals. Neither initiative achieved support broad or deep enough to achieve its goals.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>Department of Education. *The secondary school curriculum: 6. Guidance in a changing context*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1973; Webster, op. cit., 1970; Small, J. *Guidance: retrospect and prospect*. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976, 218-230.

<sup>186</sup>*The secondary school curriculum: 5. Lopdell House Conference Report 1972*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1972, p. 3. On the replacement of examinations by internal assessment, see also School Certificate Examination Board, op. cit., 1972; EDC, op. cit., 1974b, chapter 13.

<sup>187</sup>Wellington, M. A review of the core curriculum for schools (covering letter). Wellington: Office of the Minister of Education, 1984, 22 March.

<sup>188</sup>1988, op. cit., p. 41

<sup>189</sup>Openshaw, R. The politics of 'back to basics'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 1980, 15(2), 127-136.

<sup>190</sup>Peddie, op. cit., 1994, p. 16

<sup>191</sup>McCulloch, G. Introduction. In G. McCulloch (Ed.). *The school curriculum in New Zealand. History, theory, policy and practice*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1992, p.18.

Notwithstanding, *The Curriculum Review* recommended the introduction of a national curriculum for all schools. A discussion document was produced, *Draft National Curriculum Statement*,<sup>192</sup> the structure and format of which directly foreshadow those used in the *The National Curriculum of New Zealand* and *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* of 1991 and 1993. Labour's Draft specified eight "curriculum aspects" rather than traditional subject divisions, together with "knowledge, skills, attitudes and values". These were expressed as broad "learning outcomes" at five "levels of schooling" from "junior primary" to "senior secondary",<sup>193</sup> although as far as secondary schools were concerned, it was recognised that "requirements for national awards in forms 5, 6 and 7 and the system of options schools currently give senior secondary students may mean that a balanced programme cannot be realised immediately for students at this level".<sup>194</sup>

The development, implementation and review of the *Tomorrow's Schools* administrative reforms (which made almost no reference to curriculum)<sup>195</sup> from 1988 to 1990 took centre stage in Labour's education policy portfolio under the Prime Minister, Hon. David Lange, who replaced Marshall as Minister of Education. Further secondary school curriculum and assessment reforms were delayed until National, with Hon Dr Lockwood Smith as Minister of Education, took office in October 1990 and immediately embarked on a major initiative to develop a 'national curriculum'.<sup>196</sup>

In the 1980s, secondary students in forms three and four most frequently took a common compulsory course with some options, and, in forms five and six, had a 'free choice' of subjects in addition to compulsory English. Outside the core subjects, those most commonly taken were economics/economic studies, technical drawing, typewriting, geography, home economics, liberal and general studies, health education and French.<sup>197</sup> Between 1975 and 1985 there was "an increase in the number of schools which did not stream any classes (20% to 35% at form 3, 12% to 32% at form 4), and in the proportion streaming off the top classes (7% to 13% at form 3, 7% to 15% at form 4); and a reduction in the proportion streaming off the bottom classes (12% to 7% at form 3, 10% to 7% at form 4)".<sup>198</sup> By 1988, "thirty two percent of fourth year students and thirty seven percent of fifth year students were engaged in multi-level study".<sup>199</sup> At the beginning of the 1990's, there was also some evidence, in forms three and four at least, that secondary schools had begun to experiment with half-year or part-year courses, modularisation

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<sup>192</sup>Department of Education, op. cit., 1988.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>195</sup>McCulloch, op. cit., 1992, p. 19.

<sup>196</sup>Ibid.

<sup>197</sup>Department of Education, op. cit., 1986, p. 70.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>199</sup>Rivers, Lynch and Irving, cited in *Tomorrow's standards*, op. cit., 1990, p. 40.

of the curriculum and more varied timetable arrangements than had been the norm twenty or thirty years earlier.<sup>200</sup>

### **Assessment and credentialing changes**

In addition to evolving curriculum policy and practice, however, these years were marked by further attempts to resolve the long-standing polemic about the proper place of assessment and examinations in secondary schooling. Throughout the post-war decades three pressures on schooling credentials had been apparent. First, increased retention rates with proportionately more non-academic students (and Maori students and girls)<sup>201</sup> remaining in the secondary school system as a whole, meant there was a need to provide an alternative terminal qualification to School Certificate, which a large proportion<sup>202</sup> of candidates were inevitably destined to fail. Second, with greater proportions of fifth form students successfully attaining some form of School Certificate, its scarcity, and therefore its marketable value to potential employers, was being eroded.<sup>203</sup> Third, being the sole nationally accepted terminal examination at the end of compulsory schooling, School Certificate, through its various subject-based examination prescriptions, continued to dominate the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom.<sup>204</sup> In 1962, the Currie Commission had acknowledged the narrowing effects of external examinations on teaching and learning but nonetheless recommended their retention for the foreseeable future. In 1968, single-subject passes for School Certificate were introduced and, in 1974, the internally assessed Sixth Form Certificate qualification and single-subject passes for University Entrance.<sup>205</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, as the chronicle above records, there were consistent arguments by educationists, employers and the community for the replacement of external examinations in discrete subject areas with school-based forms of internal assessment and individual 'records of achievement' in integrated areas of study. In the 1990s the emphasis shifted markedly to a discourse of national achievement, the assessment and credentialling of clearly specified curriculum objectives in each area of study and the use of age-related achievement benchmarks to improve 'standards' and ensure 'accountability'.<sup>206</sup>

In the 1980s the Department of Education (controversially) introduced hierarchical scaling of subjects as an attempt to avoid discrimination against students opting for less

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<sup>200</sup>Peddie, op. cit., 1994, pp. 6-7.

<sup>201</sup>*Learning and achieving*, op. cit., 1986, p. 24.

<sup>202</sup>According to McNaughton, some 40%. McNaughton, A. Are national examinations at secondary schools fair? In Codd, Harker and Nash, op. cit., 1990, p. 279.

<sup>203</sup>Lee, G. and Lee, H. *Examinations and the New Zealand school curriculum past and present*. Delta Research Monograph No 12. Palmerston North: Massey University Department of Education, 1992.

<sup>204</sup>Openshaw, Lee, and Lee, op. cit., 1993, chapter 12, Inflating the paper chase; Nash, R. From school to work: effects of differential attainment. In Codd, Harker and Nash, op. cit., 1990, 118-130; McNaughton, op. cit., 1990. Also, Elley and Livingstone, op. cit., 1972.

<sup>205</sup>Archer, E. The credentialing game; snakes and ladders. *Delta*, 1983, 33, 13-22.

academic subjects "clustered at the bottom of the scaling hierarchy and with pass rates below 50%".<sup>207</sup> In 1985, some secondary schools in the Department's survey offered alternatives to School Certificate in fifth form, mostly to students of reportedly low ability. Typically, these were certificates offered by local teachers' subject associations in English and mathematics, or New Zealand Certificates endorsed by the local area. In the sixth form, 94% of schools surveyed offered approved non-University Entrance Sixth Form Certificate subjects. Some schools also offered a range of alternative non-University Entrance non-Sixth Form Certificate sixth form subjects and courses. Most of the students taking these subjects were reported to be of mixed or average ability.<sup>208</sup>

More generally, however, there was a sensibility among educationists and groups such as the Employers' Federation and the Parent Teachers' Association that the national system of assessment was continuing to fail students, in more than one sense of the word, as the PPTA's public discussion document, *School Certificate in a Changing World*, argued when it tried to garner popular support for the introduction of an internally assessed Fifth Form Certificate in 1981.<sup>209</sup> Consequently, running alongside the 'back to basics' lobby, there was another body of opinion which maintained that "structural changes are needed",<sup>210</sup> not more of the modifications that had periodically taken place since single subject passes for School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate were introduced in 1968 and 1974.<sup>211</sup>

Accordingly, following a change of government, the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment, and Qualifications in Forms 5 to 7 (CICAQ) was established in November 1984. Its second term of reference asked it to "consider methods of assessment for use in forms 5, 6 and 7, and make recommendations for the award of leaving certificates, including arrangements for the moderation of standards and policy advice on the further development of such awards as are recommended".<sup>212</sup> Its first report in 1985 "recognised the widely held view that University Entrance is an inappropriately placed examination for the majority of students in today's sixth forms [which in comparison with 1945] now includes a more diverse group of students with correspondingly diverse needs and vocational intentions and interests".<sup>213</sup> It recommended that the internally assessed Sixth Form certificate should be

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<sup>206</sup>The National Curriculum of New Zealand: discussion document. *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(8), February, 1-2; What's all this about accountability? *Education Gazette*, 1991, 70(11), June, 1-3.

<sup>207</sup>Snook, I. and StGeorge, R. Failing school certificate. *Delta*, 1986, 37, p. 26.

<sup>208</sup>Department of Education, *op. cit.*, 1986, pp. 67-68.

<sup>209</sup>NZPPTA, *op. cit.*, 1981; New Zealand Employers Federation, *op. cit.*, 1981.

<sup>210</sup>*Learning and achieving*, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 8.

<sup>211</sup>See, for example, Hughes, D. and Lauder, H. Public examinations and the structuring of inequality: a case study. In H. Lauder and C. Wylie (Eds.). *Towards successful schooling*. London: Falmer Press, 1990, 151-173.

<sup>212</sup>*Implications of the removal of the University Entrance examination from form 6*, *op. cit.*, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>213</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 5 & 7.

the sole national award in form 6 but that, to ensure "inter-school comparability",<sup>214</sup> grade allocations to schools should continue to be moderated using School Certificate results<sup>215</sup> (a practice that continues at the time of writing). CICAQ also recommended the establishment of a Secondary Board of Studies. Consistent with the 'corporatist' approach of the time, the proposed Board, widely representative of educational interest groups, was to have responsibility for promoting the maintenance of educational standards, the approval of courses, syllabuses and prescriptions, and all assessment and awards in the secondary school<sup>216</sup> (Under the Education Amendment Act 1990, the responsibilities of the Board were transferred to NZQA). CICAQ's second report, in June 1986, *Learning and Achieving*, advocated strongly for a symbolic and practical break with the assessment structures of the past forty years:

The proposals in this report should also result in a fairer and more equitable assessment system in which all students receive appropriate recognition of their strengths, whatever their ability, at whatever level they are studying, and without the emphasis on what they have failed to achieve. The achievement of each student will be assessed independently of others, and results will not be adjusted to conform to a predetermined distribution of marks.<sup>217</sup>

Significantly, the language, arguments and recommendations (emphasising individual attainment) of this widely representative Committee of Inquiry established by a Labour government, quite clearly contain the genesis of the Curriculum and Qualifications Frameworks that<sup>218\*</sup> were to constitute the basic scaffolding of Hon Dr Lockwood Smith's Achievement Initiative (emphasising national standards) under National a few years later.<sup>219</sup>

In addition to a national curriculum comprising "eight broad compulsory areas of learning, together with a range of associated skills", CICAQ recommended "national guidelines" for the curriculum, courses for "the transition from school to adult life", and school-based, achievement-related assessment leading to the award of a Fifth Form Certificate instead of the School Certificate examination. Sixth Form Certificate was to record nationally comparable levels of achievement, and Seventh Form Certificate only would include an externally examinable component.<sup>220</sup> These themes of the liberal left, in turn, would be picked up and carefully repackaged by Dr Smith in the 1990s in pursuit of National's New Right economic, social and educational agendas.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>214</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>217</sup>*Learning and achieving*, op. cit., 1986, p. 8.

<sup>218</sup>Modified in light of the recommendations of the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning, Tomorrow's standards, in 1990, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid. The 'standards' debate with regard to secondary schools was thoroughly rehearsed in the report. Teacher and school performance standards were also considered.

<sup>220</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>221</sup>McCulloch, 1990, in Snook, op. cit., 1995, p. 162.

## Changes in the 1990s

There are two key points to be made about curriculum and assessment reform under National in the 1990s. First, the curriculum and qualifications frameworks that were developed drew heavily on themes that had haunted New Zealand secondary education debates since 1945. In articulating a national curriculum framework based on "broad categories" of essential learning areas "which are cross curricular in nature and which enable the grouping of subjects similar in kind", and which would also "provide a helpful framework for planning locally derived school programmes and courses",<sup>222</sup> the Ministry was merely reworking the structures and arguments of previous governments since the Thomas committee consigned secondary schools to seek their own salvation via broad national subject guidelines within a defined core curriculum. In arguing for assessment that would be "linked more closely to the curriculum by developing procedures for monitoring students' progress against these objectives",<sup>223</sup> the Minister was simply enacting some of the major recommendations of the *Learning and Achieving* and *Tomorrow's Standards* committees established by the previous Labour government.<sup>224</sup> In seeking to develop new achievement based credentials for all students and an integrated qualifications framework, while assuring national standards of comparability through the retention of external examinations in the basic subjects,<sup>225</sup> the Minister and NZQA were proposing similar looking solutions to the familiar questions that had regularly been asked by widely representative educational committees on behalf of the 'corporatist' state in 1943, 1962, 1974 and 1986.<sup>226</sup>

In a sense it should be no surprise that a national curriculum, and associated qualifications framework, sponsored by a New Right government committed to national economic growth and participation in the global knowledge economy, should seek explicitly and instrumentally to link secondary schooling to the world of business and work.<sup>227</sup> Equally, however, we must recognise that, while the emphasis and the rhetoric in the 1990s may be largely economic and individualistic in tone, the proposed frameworks and structures have strong continuities with educational concerns of both the immediate and the more distant past. In so doing they acquire a measure of popular appeal, and thereby support, from educationists, business and the community at large. As Snook wryly observed:

In retrospect, Mr Wellington's 'conservative' curriculum, liberally interpreted, would have served the system satisfactorily. Similarly, Mr Marshall's 'liberal' curriculum, given a bit of pedagogical backbone would have worked quite well. And Dr Smith's

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<sup>222</sup>Ministry of Education, op. cit., 1991, p. 9.

<sup>223</sup>*Ibid.*, Foreword.

<sup>224</sup>Op. cit., 1986; 1990.

<sup>225</sup>NZQA, op. cit., 1991a, 1991b.

<sup>226</sup>By the Thomas Committee, the Currie Commission, the EDC, and the CICAQ.

<sup>227</sup>Smith, L. Conference address. In Capper, op. cit., 1991, pp. 66-71.

curriculum might be 'all things to all people' - conservative rhetoric and liberal structure.

But these abstract statements are not where the action is any more - if it ever was.<sup>228</sup>

With this in mind, we turn now to a review of 'the action' inside secondary schools in the decades since 1945.

## DISCOURSES OF TEACHING

In this part of the chapter, we consider the discursive practices of secondary school teaching and its professionalisation that have developed over the last half-century in New Zealand. Three broad conceptions of post-war teaching may be discerned: those of the 'ideal' teacher, the 'professional' teacher, and of the 'accountable' teacher.

### *The Ideal Teacher For 'Every Person'*

Although the Thomas Committee's terms of reference excluded "problems of teaching method, of corporate life, and of internal school organisation",<sup>229</sup> their proposals for a core post primary curriculum in the 1940s were based on a particular ideal of teaching, both individual and collective. As Whitehead aptly put it:

In brief, the Committee was anxious to see an end to the formality, narrowness and authoritarianism that was then characteristic of the teaching methods in the schools, Instead, they wished to see classroom work conducted in a freer, democratic and more humane setting, with greater emphasis placed on flexibility, diversity and increased pupil participation.<sup>230</sup>

The Committee noted, for example, that in the past "the nature of the education a pupil has been given has frequently been determined less by what his teachers have believed he actually requires, even for vocational purposes, than by the demand for attainments that can readily be marketed".<sup>231</sup> It was argued, also, that a "fairly general change in approach" was needed from teachers to "cater for pupils of widely differing abilities and interests" and that in order to meet these diverse needs, "differentiation should often be considered not so much as a problem of curricular content as one of method - i.e., of adapting the approach to the abilities of pupils".<sup>232</sup> Equally, in calling for each school to "re-examine its whole theory and practice, make up its mind about the real needs of its pupils and the means by which they can best be met, and then act courageously in accordance with its findings",<sup>233</sup> the Committee was making considerable

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<sup>228</sup> Op. cit., 1995, p. 167.

<sup>229</sup> Op. cit., 1959, p. 1.

<sup>230</sup> Whitehead, C. The Thomas Report - a study in educational reform. *NZJES*, 1974, 9(1), p. 57.

<sup>231</sup> Op. cit., 1959, p. 5.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

assumptions about the capability of schools to do precisely that. Indeed, it commented that the development of a curriculum geared to meeting the needs of each student:

... involves very close co-operation among teachers, who must themselves, under the leadership of their principal, achieve unity of purpose and work as a team. There are schools in which staff collaboration is well developed, but more of it is needed if what we have in mind is to be accomplished.<sup>234</sup>

What the committee did not predict, of course, were the rapid post-war expansion of the economy and the schooling system – and attendant crisis in teacher numbers and quality - the influence of the School Certificate examination on the entire curriculum, and changes in student composition. All of these militated strongly against the successful development of classroom teaching and staff collaboration along the normative lines envisaged by the Thomas Committee.

In attempting to explain why the implementation of the proposed curricular and pedagogical changes largely failed, Whitehead provides a useful synthesis of the practical problems faced by schools. In addition to the difficulties of even obtaining a copy of the Thomas Report until 1959 when it was reprinted by the Department of Education:

Third- and fourth-form classes were large and often housed in temporary buildings, and there was a shortage of suitable source material in subjects like social studies and general science. These circumstances, of necessity, forced many teachers to employ traditional teaching methods characterized by 'chalk and talk', and to continue using existing and often out-of-date textbooks. Teaching aids were also in short supply, and this fact prevented teachers from innovating with new techniques and classroom methods. Staffing shortages also forced teachers to teach subjects, especially in the common core, for which they had no qualifications or interest.<sup>235</sup>

At one level, discourses of teaching since that time may be seen as attempts to remedy the national failure fully to realise Thomas Committee's vision of curriculum and methods differentiated to meet the real needs of each student, developed at school level by teams of energetic and appropriately qualified teachers. Indeed, from the 1960s, politicians, the Department and PPTA together participated in exhaustive attempts to develop training, employment, in-service and accountability structures to attempt to ensure that teacher supply and quality would not again be the major impediments to secondary schooling reform that they proved to be from the mid-1940s to the mid 1960s.

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>235</sup> op. cit., 1974, p. 62.

## The Professional Teacher

If, in 1961, Phoebe Meikle's pamphlet<sup>236</sup> *School and Nation. Post Primary Education since the War*, and the PPTA's *The Critical Situation in Post-Primary Schools*<sup>237</sup> captured the "desperate" mood of educationists in the 1950s, the PPTA's *Education in Change*, published in 1969 represented a forward-looking attempt by teachers and teacher educators to redefine the objectives of secondary education, and teachers' envisaged role in securing those objectives. While the PPTA has since the 1960s attempted to secure regular industrial improvements in teachers' pay and conditions of service, it has also taken an active and collaborative professional role in defining 'the teacher' and promoting the participation of teachers in curriculum development and decision-making at both national and school levels.<sup>238</sup>

In a series of three publications between 1969 and 1974 (*Education in Change*, *Secondary Schools in Change*, *Teachers in Change*)<sup>239</sup> PPTA made a major contribution to the development of another ideal of the 'preferred'<sup>240</sup> teacher to supersede that articulated by the Thomas Committee in the 1940s. PPTA's conception of individual and collective teachers' practice was of autonomous, educated, thoughtful and creative professionals working on the basis of "mutual respect" in a humanistic partnership with students:

If mutual respect is a desirable basis for classroom activity, the implications are clear: in order to allow children the freedom necessary to develop initiative and self-respect teachers must be prepared to do things with children rather than to them or for them. Moreover, the teacher who wishes to release this independent drive in his pupils must know a great deal about them so that he can organise their learning activities and set appropriate goals. He must know about their interests, skills knowledge, attitudes and values before he can lead them to contribute fully to classwork and thus to participate in their own education. Much of this understanding can be obtained more readily outside the classroom in informal discussions with pupils and during other school activities. Many more opportunities should be provided for teachers to learn more about their pupils by mixing with them in small groups.<sup>241</sup>

This image stood in direct contrast to that of the Currie Commission in 1962, which had emphasised teachers' lack of training and competence to deliver the core curriculum. (It also appears to most closely compare with the craft discourse of teaching described in chapter two (p. 47).)

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<sup>236</sup> Meikle, P. *School and nation. Post-primary education since the war*. Wellington: NZCER, 1961.

<sup>237</sup> NZPPTA. *The critical situation in post-primary schools*. Wellington; NZPPTA, 1961, November.

<sup>238</sup> Webster, op. cit., 1981

<sup>239</sup> PPTA, op. cit., 1969; Shallcrass, op. cit., 1973; PPTA, op. cit., 1974.

<sup>240</sup> Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Remaking teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Falmer, 1998, p. 116. However, in New Zealand, as elsewhere, the preferred teacher discourse of the 1970s looks very different from its 1990s counterpart.

<sup>241</sup> PPTA, op. cit., 1969, pp. 11-12.

The Commission noted that there had been a shortage of teachers since 1949 and that between 1959 and 1961, this constituted 12% of all positions in secondary schools. Moreover, "if to [these figures] is added the estimated numbers of secondary positions occupied by inadequately qualified regular teachers, the percentages for the secondary service rise to 15.0 per cent for 1959 and 17.1 per cent for 1961".<sup>242</sup> In addition, the possibility of school-based curriculum development was hampered by "young and less experienced teachers who have had, in the explosive expansion of the schools, not only to take most of the rank and file positions but also to assume positions of responsibility and guidance beyond their seniority and experience".<sup>243</sup>

Between the report of the Commission and the end of the 1970s a raft of policy and procedural changes were instituted in order to transform the secondary teaching profession from an inadequately qualified, poorly paid labour force into a modern profession (see the discussion of professionalisation in chapter two, p. 50). Central to this was the creation of an ideal model of the secondary teacher as guide or facilitator of enquiry-based learning.<sup>244</sup> Notwithstanding the apparent consensus on the ideal, there was recognition of the difficulties involved in moving towards it, of the problems of classroom control that many teachers faced,<sup>245</sup> and of the need to provide more time for teachers outside the classroom in order to undertake the necessary curriculum and assessment work that was required under a school-based curriculum development approach.<sup>246</sup> In 1978, a survey of secondary schools undertaken by Dr E. M. Campbell on behalf of the Department found discrepancies between the official or intended curriculum in schools (as evidenced in policy and discussion documents in the early 1970s), and what teachers were able to realise in practice. Campbell noted that, despite teacher support for liberalisation, the curriculum and its assessment were still dominated by tests and external examinations, that memorisation of facts received greater emphasis than higher levels of learning, most talking was done by teacher, there was little integration of studies in a subject focused curriculum, schools were more discipline than guidance oriented with sanctions outweighing rewards and that pupils had little say in rules, curriculum content, methods or reporting.<sup>247</sup>

From the mid 1960s, the professionalisation of *subject* teaching also became more organised. PPTA established its own subject committees,<sup>248</sup> the Department of Education instituted a round of major subject revisions by Syllabus Committees on behalf of the secondary

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<sup>242</sup> *Report of the commission on education in New Zealand*, op. cit., 1962, p. 581.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>244</sup> PPTA, op. cit., 1969; 1974; *Improving teaching and learning*, op. cit., 1986; Department of Education, op. cit., 1975.

<sup>245</sup> *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1986, pp. 31 & 32.

<sup>246</sup> PPTA, op. cit., 1969, chapter 3; Department of Education, op. cit., 1982, pp. 19-20.

<sup>247</sup> Campbell, op. cit., 1978, pp. 82-84.

<sup>248</sup> Webster, op. cit., 1981.

schools<sup>249</sup> and there was a growth in the numbers of regional and then national associations established in the principal secondary school subject areas.<sup>250</sup> Together with the piloting of internal assessment for School Certificate in the mid 1970s,<sup>251</sup> these developments firmly established teachers and their representatives at the heart of curriculum and subject developments in New Zealand secondary schools. At a national level, their influence possibly reached its zenith with the establishment of the Secondary Board of Studies following the second report of CICAQ in 1986, and its nadir not long after with the transfer of responsibilities for school qualifications and their assessment from the Board of Studies to NZQA in 1990.

### *The Accountable Teacher*

Running parallel with these professionalising trends were issues regarding the training, registration and discipline of teachers. Although the 1964 Education Act required "that teachers to be registered as a prerequisite for appointment",<sup>252</sup> it was not until 1974 that secondary teachers were required to hold a trained teachers' certificate.<sup>253</sup> In 1978, the statutory provisions for teacher registration and discipline were reviewed and amended.<sup>254</sup> Just as attempted curriculum and assessment reform in the 1980s reflected a conflict between various 'progressivist' and 'restorationist' lobbies, so too did arguments about teaching and the accountability of teachers.<sup>255</sup> In May 1983, the Minister of Education, Hon Merv Wellington announced his intention to introduce by the next year, a personal grading or assessment scheme for teachers. (Two grading schemes based on assessments by the principal and departmental inspector had been in place until 1974 for teachers seeking promotion since when only beginning teachers had been formally assessed). The proposal was unanimously rejected by PPTA at its annual conference.<sup>256</sup> It was not, then, until 1986 that the first ideological attempt was made to link teachers' claims to professional status to the requirement that they be held specifically accountable for their and their students' performance (on this point, see Smyth and colleagues' discussion of ideological and disciplinary strategies for the control of teachers' work (chapter two, p. 15)). Using an explicitly managerial language of 'quality', 'standards',

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<sup>249</sup> E.g. Ross, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>250</sup> The New Zealand Science Teachers' Association in 1976 and The New Zealand Association of Teachers of English in 1980. The New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers held its first biennial conference in 1989. See also Openshaw, Lee and Lee, op. cit., 1993, chapter 10 on the role of subject teachers in local curriculum development.

<sup>251</sup> Greenhill, D. *Towards internal assessment for school certificate*. Unpublished DipEd Investigation, Massey University, 1978.

<sup>252</sup> *Report of the Committee on the Registration and Discipline of Teachers* (J. Marshall, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1978, p. 11.

<sup>253</sup> Fletcher, 1976, op. cit., note 10.

<sup>254</sup> Marshall, 1997, op. cit.

<sup>255</sup> Openshaw, 1980, op. cit.; See also the *Delta*, 1983, 32, issue devoted to teacher assessment and accountability.

<sup>256</sup> Holm, R. Do secondary teachers want professional assessment. *Delta*, 1983, 32, 40-43.

'outcomes' and 'accountability to consumers', the *Report of the Inquiry into the Quality of Teaching* in 1986<sup>257</sup> argued that as professionals, all teachers should be held accountable for learner outcomes. According to the Education and Science Select Committee, "professionalism must emphasise learners' rights. Professionalism must not become protectionism ... [Thus] "professional standards must not be determined or assessed solely by the profession. Both consumers and providers must have an equal say in what is acceptable as quality teaching".<sup>258</sup>

The Report went on to define what it saw as the attributes and characteristics of "quality teachers" and recommended the development of assessment schemes against which individual teachers' performance could be "assessed" in order to both "monitor standards", "recognise good teaching" and identify teachers for promotion, further assistance or removal from the workforce.<sup>259</sup> The Report contained as an attachment, PPTA's proposed revisions to the criteria for the classification of teachers which would "apply to all practising secondary schoolteachers in permanent positions and cover skills needed to be a classroom teacher". Their proposals listed a number of 'demonstrable abilities' under the headings; Planning and Preparation, Subject Competence, Teaching Techniques and Management, Relationships with Students and Relationships with the School.<sup>260</sup> Subsequently, in 1990, and following the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms, the *Report of the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning* made a sharp distinction between "the formal assessment of teachers and their ongoing appraisal for professional development" and recommended that guidelines and resources for the latter be developed for use in schools.<sup>261</sup> This twin agenda was pursued in a number of guises under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office and the State Services Commission (SSC) in the 1990s.<sup>262</sup>

### *Controlling Teachers In The 1990s*

To reach an understanding of these developments it is essential to realise that the reforms of educational administration instituted through the *Tomorrow's Schools* and *Today's Schools* reports were articulated within a larger structural adjustment project in economic and social policy. The success of this project depended on introducing private sector management controls and 'labour market flexibility' to public sector collective employment practices through de-regulation, enterprise bargaining, bulk-funding of salaries and productivity gains.<sup>263</sup> Many of

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<sup>257</sup> Op. cit, 1986.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>261</sup> 1990, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

<sup>262</sup> Collins, G. Performance management – development and implementation issues. In J. O'Neill (Ed.). *Teacher appraisal in New Zealand Beyond the impossible triangle*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997, 1-16.

<sup>263</sup> E.g. Jesson, B. *Fragments of labour. The story behind the labour government*. Auckland: Penguin, 1989.

these principles were embodied in major employment and industrial relations law changes between 1987 and 1991 and were applied by the SSC in its role as bargaining agent for the Ministry of Education after 1988.<sup>264</sup> Between 1989 and 1991, the SSC was unable to secure the introduction in secondary schools of individual contracts for senior staff, flexible pay scales and formal teacher assessment schemes in its negotiations with PPTA.<sup>265</sup> Equally, the National government was encountering strong opposition from PPTA in its policy to devolve bulk-funding of teachers' salaries to schools in 1990-1991.<sup>266</sup>

In 1992, the industrial climate worsened<sup>267</sup> and, under pressure from the School Trustees' Association and PPTA, the government modified its attempt to secure direct changes to teachers work and conditions and established the Schools' Consultative Group (SCG), initially to negotiate over bulk-funding, and later to review the staffing formulae for schools. The SCG was succeeded in by a Ministerial Reference Group (MRG) to complete the review of staffing. Its report was released in February 1995. Despite the appearance of a return to the old corporatist model of consultation and partnership with the unions, in practice, the terms of reference and membership of both bodies were tightly controlled by the Minister.<sup>268</sup> As a result, in secondary schools, the government was able to (a) implement bulk funding of salaries for senior staff and most (in some cases all) teachers in positions of responsibility; and (b) replace historical patterns of discretionary funding of additional teachers to (small, rural and/or socially disadvantaged) schools with capped contestable funds in government priority areas for which all schools could apply in direct competition with each other (see, for example, the at Risk programme at Kauri in chapter seven).<sup>269</sup>

The other part of the 'flexibility' agenda, performance-based assessment for teachers, was also proceeding slowly. Progress was hampered by the reality that government control agencies (SSC, ERO, Treasury) and lobby groups (the Education Forum) clearly saw a direct link between teacher performance, assessment, in-service training, management and remuneration. Appraisal, to these groups, was not simply a form of planned professional development for teachers.<sup>270</sup> Its ambiguous status was reflected in the fact that while SSC was pursuing teacher assessment as an industrial issue in contract negotiations in the 1990s, the Ministry of Education was in the same period developing its own teacher appraisal initiative,

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<sup>264</sup> Rae, K. Industrial relations for New Zealand teachers. *Access*, 1991, 10(1), 21-34.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Simkin, G. Overcoming the bulk funding blockage. The Ministerial Reference Group on School Staffing. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 1995, 5, 57-74.

<sup>267</sup> Rae, op. cit., 1991.

<sup>268</sup> Pearce, D. *Two years of peace? The Schools Consultative group and the State in New Zealand*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Education Department, University of Canterbury, 1996, chapter IX.

<sup>269</sup> Simkin, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>270</sup> Collins, op. cit., 1997; Education Forum. *Better teachers for better learning. Teachers' employment conditions; current and prospective*. Auckland; Education Forum, 1992. O'Neill, J. ERO's capable teacher: a science of control, *Delta*, 1998, 50(2), 201-224.

one in which teachers' development was linked to better outcomes for students.<sup>271</sup> Thus, at the end of 1995, when the Ministry's discussion document was released for consultation during the following year, it attempted to unite accountability and development agendas in the one bureaucratic concept of 'performance management'.<sup>272</sup> (Hargreaves and Goodson's analysis of recent teacher professionalization trends (chapter two, p. 50) mirrors trends in New Zealand in the 1990s.)

Finally, in this chapter, we consider the role of the secondary school head of department; its establishment; the subsequent growth in responsibilities as schools expanded after the war; and the transition to HoD as 'middle manager'.

## THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Although with passing decades, the role of the HoD has become bigger and more complex, its basic components remain the same as those articulated many decades ago.

### The Basics Of The Role

There are two principal historical subtexts embodied in the role of the HoD, namely 'development' and 'accountability'. These two official expectations of the role have been evident since the early part of the twentieth century together with the assumption that the HoD will act as the 'leading professional' within the workgroup. Thus, in the 1924 Secondary School Regulations, it was stated that “[i]n the larger schools teachers with special knowledge and teaching ability in certain subjects or groups of subjects may be selected by the Principal as heads of department”.<sup>273</sup> At the direction of the principal, the duties of the HoD were:

- (i) To arrange a continuous course of study in his subject or group of subjects;
- (ii) To co-ordinate the work of various classes;
- (iii) To suggest to headmaster suitable text-books;
- (iv) To help the junior teachers in their preparation of schemes of work;
- (v) To watch at least one lesson per week by a junior teacher;
- (vi) To enter a criticism of each such lesson in a criticism book;
- (vii) To give not less than four specimen lessons per term in the presence of some of the junior teachers;

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<sup>271</sup> Collins, op. cit., 1997, p. 4.

<sup>272</sup> Ministry of Education, op. cit., 1996.

<sup>273</sup> *Secondary school regulations*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1924.

(viii) To submit through the Principal to the Inspector schemes of work for the subject or group of subjects throughout the school, and the criticism book initialed by the junior teacher concerned.<sup>274</sup>

For these additional duties HoDs were paid a lump sum of £30 at the end of the year "on the certificate of the Principal endorsed by an Inspector that the special duties described in clause 20 hereof have been satisfactorily carried out by the assistant concerned".<sup>275</sup>

In a school of 600 or more students, a maximum of three HoDs could be appointed in 1924. Until the abolition of the proficiency examination in 1936, however, secondary schools were generally small, simple in their construction and organisation, and oriented to the preparation of academically able students for university. As we have seen, the great expansion in secondary schools and schooling took place between 1945 and 1977. By 1961 Meikle had complained that:

More and more teachers with too little knowledge or teaching skill have been appointed Heads of Departments. They cannot draw up satisfactory schemes of work or guide the growing numbers of inexperienced, overburdened teachers who must serve under them.<sup>276</sup>

In 1962, the Currie Commission<sup>277</sup> reported that young and inexperienced teachers were having to take on positions of responsibility in the absence of more experienced and better qualified staff. In 1967, a special conference of PPTA resolved to lobby government to reduce class sizes, implement Heads of Department allowances and introduce Minor Positions of Responsibility, improvements that were eventually secured at the end of the decade.<sup>278</sup>

#### *The Professionalisation Of The HoD*

By the 1970s, then, the HoD role had inevitably become more demanding and complex in terms of its administrative and management content. It was also more clearly established as a stepped career path in a highly bureaucratised national secondary education service. The levels of responsibility were graded from PR1 to PR4 (the most senior). The Department of Education's exhaustive *Administration Manual Part C Teachers* required applicants for PR1 and PR2 appointments to have "a minimum of three years teaching as a List B teacher in a state secondary school". For PR3 and PR4 appointments, applicants needed "a minimum of five years teaching as a List B teacher in a state secondary school or to have held a PR1 or a PR2 for one year",<sup>279</sup> i.e. eligibility for promotion was dependent on length of service accrued. In the 1975 Baseline Survey, it was reported that the role of HoDs was very clearly defined and

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<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1961, p. 34.

<sup>277</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1962, p. 267.

<sup>278</sup> NZPPTA. *Meeting human needs in secondary schools*. PPTA, 1973, October.

consistently interpreted across schools. Schools' entitlements to PR units were based on a roll related formula, which allowed schools to allocate set proportions of each level of PR. In 1975 "there was an average of twenty-eight PR units allocated per school ... The most numerous were PR2s which were normally given to the head of an average sized department". Positions were usually allocated to subject areas rather than guidance or administration.<sup>280</sup>

Eight areas of duty of the Hod were listed in the *Administration Manual*. Apart from the removal of references to the ominously titled 'criticism book' and the annual lump sum payment of £30; and the inclusion of the need "to arrange meetings of the teachers in the department to discuss schemes of work prepared ..., teaching methods, books, the progress of classes, and all other matters related to the efficient running of the department",<sup>281</sup> the list is very similar to that drawn up in 1924.

In the 1980s, secondary schools faced the prospect of rapid roll decline leading to teacher redundancies, reduced career prospects and the integration or loss of lower status curriculum areas from the timetable<sup>282</sup> (although in the event, much of the decline in birthrate was offset by increased senior school retention). The *Secondary School Staffing Working Party*, comprising Department, PPTA and School Board representatives, was established in 1977 to recommend a new staffing system for the needs of the 1980s. In their final report in 1982 (the recommendations of which were accepted in full by the incoming Labour government in 1984) the Working Party noted that "holders of positions of responsibility carry an unduly heavy workload ... [and] work up to ten per cent longer per week than assistant teachers".<sup>283</sup> This increased workload was attributed to the changing nature and emphasis of secondary school curriculum content, methods and assessment, including internal assessment and option-based teaching. Moreover:

Curriculum changes have been accompanied by the development of a wide range of new equipment and resource materials. The management of these resources is an expanding area of responsibility for all teachers in middle management. Induction of beginning teachers, internal assessment co-ordination, growth in outdoor education, work exploration, and similar employment related tasks have all placed additional demands upon the PR holders.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>279</sup>*Administration manual. Part C. Teachers. Volume 1. Chapters 1 to 12.* Wellington: Department of Education, 1971, C3-10.

<sup>280</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1975, pp. 126-130.

<sup>281</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1971, C16-15.

<sup>282</sup> Roy, op. cit., 1983.

<sup>283</sup> *Report of the Secondary School Staffing Working Party.* Wellington: Department of Education, 1983,

p. 39.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

### *The HoD As Middle Manager*

Arguably, it is here that we see the first significant move away from the HoD as 'leading professional' discourse that was most evident in 1924, to the image of the HoD as a member of the school's 'middle management' tier that endures today. Indeed, the increased 'management' component of the role is the principal argument used to press for greater numbers of PRs for use in smaller departments, and more generous time allowances:

The Working Party considers that more emphasis should be placed upon the managerial function of departmental heads and PR holders. In the curriculum area there are a number of responsibilities devolving on PR holders. These include six broad categories:

- staff management;
- curriculum planning;
- resource management;
- induction of beginning teachers;
- internal assessment responsibilities (where applicable);
- financial management (departmental).<sup>285</sup>

To aid their day-to-day work, cyclostyled A5 booklets such as the *HOD Book* and the *Handbook on School Based Inservice Training in Secondary Schools* were distributed by the Teacher Education Division of the Department of Education from the mid-1970s.<sup>286</sup> *The HoD Manual* was written by a teacher seconded to the Department of Education in 1984. It comprised an integrated collection of official expectations, templates for action, suggested activities and reflective questions, organised under the headings: Leadership, Schemes, Resources, Finance, Administration, Teacher Development, List A Teachers, Observation and Supervision, Evaluation, Teaching Methods, Public Relations, Stress, Department Organization and Department Meeting Starters.<sup>287</sup> (The manual was revised and updated twice in the early 1990s in response to changes to the National Education Guidelines and the Achievement Initiative.)<sup>288</sup>

Consistent with such expectations, in 1985 the Department of Education's *Follow-up Survey* noted that:

[HoDs'] concern was with the curriculum, for example writing of schemes and providing staff with guidance in implementing them. This involved them in staff training, visiting the classrooms of teachers and teaching classes of their own. The maintaining and

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<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

<sup>286</sup> *The HOD book*. Wellington; Department of Education, Teacher Education Division, 1981; *Handbook on school based inservice training in secondary schools*. n.d.

<sup>287</sup> Begg, A. *The HOD manual* (draft edition), 1984.

<sup>288</sup> Gillespie, J. and Spencer, N. *The HOD manual. A guide to middle management*. Dunedin College of Education Secondary Schools Advisory Services, 1990/1992.

purchasing of resources was also their responsibility. In addition to working with staff, HoDs were also expected to deal with students' academic problems. Very few schools involved HoDs in dealing with staff appointments, public relations, students' personal and social, or disciplinary problems.<sup>289</sup>

By 1986, the political spotlight had shifted again, this time to teacher 'quality', 'professionalism' and 'accountability', and the Education and Science Select Committee's Report on the Inquiry into the Quality of *Teaching*.<sup>290</sup> As far as HoDs and PR holders were concerned, this Report represented both continuity with the past and a new emphasis on holding HoDs and teachers accountable for student outcomes. The Report acknowledged, as the Thomas Committee had similarly done in 1943, that "teachers should not work in isolation. They must be part of a professional team within a school ... in a collaborative rather than 'top down' environment".<sup>291</sup> However, the Select Committee also maintained that positions of responsibility should be "awarded on the basis of limited tenure which can be renewed", that "teachers should be eligible for promotion only if they have undertaken relevant courses of training" and that:

... promotion opportunities for younger staff should be increased by establishing rotating PR's and senior staff positions, and increasing the numbers of limited-tenure PR appointments in secondary schools. Tenure of all positions of responsibility should be regularly reviewed and tied to performance.<sup>292</sup>

The call for greater teacher and management 'efficiency' was to grow more raucous through the 1990s. This resulted, first, in the gazetting of performance management systems, second, the introduction of fixed term management units, and third, the inclusion of 'professional standards' in the secondary teachers' collective employment contract.<sup>293</sup> Specific "standards of performance" to evaluate the work of PR holders were, in fact, initially developed by PPTA in 1986 for which work they were commended by the Select Committee. For PR holders, the four broad areas suggested at that time were 'area of responsibility', 'professional leadership', 'relationships with students' and 'resource management'. Moreover, it was claimed by PPTA that "these criteria cover all skills necessary for the management tasks of positions of responsibility".<sup>294</sup>

Somewhat intriguingly, then, the manual produced by the NZQA to support the implementation of the Qualifications Framework in secondary schools, contains no mention of heads of department or PR roles, despite having an entire section devoted to curriculum

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<sup>289</sup> Op. cit., 1986, p. 35.

<sup>290</sup> Op. cit., 1986.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., pp. 6&23.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., pp. 23&30-31.

<sup>293</sup> E.g. *Teacher performance management. A resource for boards of trustees, principals and teachers*. Wellington: School Labour Market Policy Unit, Ministry of Education, 1999.

management. Indeed, it argues that "the traditional subject/department structure may not be flexible enough to accommodate student-centred learning demands".<sup>295</sup> NZQA, though, was not alone in its thinking on this matter for, also in 1994, PPTA itself argued in its *Work in Progress* discussion document as part of the *Modernisation/Te Ara Hou* campaign that the HoD position was "currently organised on subject lines or at least in faculties somewhat different from the new fields of study"<sup>296</sup> and needed to change if the new curriculum framework were to be implemented.<sup>297</sup>

In December 1995, just before the fieldwork for this study began, a national survey of teacher workloads commissioned by PPTA<sup>298</sup> reported that HoDs and PR unit holders were working an average of 55.01 hours per week, compared with the 47.40 hours per week reported in the Working Party survey report more than a decade earlier<sup>299</sup> (which was in fact conducted in 1979). The 1995 survey also noted that those in positions of responsibility worked two and a half hours per day more than they considered reasonable.<sup>300</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, three questions were addressed:

1. What are the forms and origins of the various contemporary discourses of teaching, curriculum and management that exist within the New Zealand secondary school system?
2. What effects have changes in central curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policy had on teachers' work?
3. What is the role of the Head of Department in contemporary secondary schools in New Zealand?

Although idiosyncratic in terms of their historical, educational and cultural contexts, developments in New Zealand have clear parallels with the management, curriculum and teaching issues discussed in chapter two.

In the first part of this chapter, an analysis of professional, bureaucratic and popular print media sources from 1995-1997 (i.e. the years during which this study was undertaken) revealed a loose political and professional agreement around the ends of contemporary

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<sup>294</sup> Op. cit., 1986, p. 77.

<sup>295</sup> NZQA, op. cit., 1994, p. 49.

<sup>296</sup> NZPPTA, op. cit., 1994, p. 20.

<sup>297</sup> At the time of this study, 'professional standards' for those in positions of responsibility had yet to be introduced in New Zealand and as a result there was no evidence of official or scholarly interest in the work of heads of department per se (compare this with the situation in England from 1996 (chapter two, p. 21)).

<sup>298</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers. A national survey*. Final report. Massey University, Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December, p. 13.

<sup>299</sup> Op. cit., 1983.

<sup>300</sup> Bloor and Harker, op. cit., 1995, p. 11.

curriculum and assessment reform in secondary education. The durability of this accord was periodically tested by differences between government and teachers' representatives on a range of salary, workload and conditions of service issues (i.e the means).

In attempting to discover why such unlikely bedfellows as a leftist trade union, NZPPTA, and a new-right, National party government should appear to share a similar educational agenda with regard to curriculum and assessment reform, a brief review of the development of secondary schooling since the watershed Thomas Report was attempted. This showed that for much of the post-war period a broad, non-partisan consensus existed in major aspects of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment or credentialling. During these decades, idealised images of liberal-progressive secondary school teaching, curriculum and management took shape and were promoted as practicable and ethical solutions to the problems of delivering mass, compulsory schooling in an unstable socio-economic environment.

From the late 1960s PPTA, bureaucrats and politicians collaborated on a protracted review of the aims, objectives and practices of secondary education in response to demographic and labour market changes, issues of teacher supply and quality, and to increased student retention rates in the senior school. Changing emphases in curriculum, assessment and credentialling coincided with the articulation of a new discourse of a 'preferred teacher'; one who was both educated and trained, empathetic to the needs of an older and less compliant student population, and committed to the development of enquiry-based learning. This image of the ideal teacher as "adroit guide to the enquiry process"<sup>301</sup> epitomised a normative desire to modernise secondary schooling and its constituent processes of teaching, curriculum and management from a traditional subject-orientation to one of 'guidance'. Moreover, throughout the post-war period, the ideal type pedagogue was consistently portrayed as someone who worked closely with immediate colleagues as a member of a collaborative workgroup and of a like-minded profession. Yet, against this warm rhetoric of 'extended professionalism',<sup>302</sup> should be set the realities of increasing teacher workload and stress that appear in surveys of the profession in the 1980s and 1990s.

Over time, as secondary schools grew in size and complexity, the role of the 'preferred' HoD also became more clearly articulated, although in the case of the latter, by the 1980s, the predominant emphasis in both procedural manuals, Department of Education surveys and professional development was on the burgeoning administrative and managerial aspects of the role, rather than its 'leading professional' or 'teacher development' domains. Indeed, such was the extent of bureaucratisation of school organisation that, in addition to the historical 'Head of Department' role, secondary schools were entitled, on the basis of their student roll size, to

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<sup>301</sup> NZPPTA, op. cit., 1969, p. 31.

<sup>302</sup> Hoyle, E. and McCormick, R. *Innovation and the teacher*, E203 Units 29 and 30. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1976.

appoint a hierarchy of other 'positions of responsibility' (PRs) both for subject and, less frequently, pastoral and administrative responsibilities. Because of this it probably makes more sense to talk more generally in terms of all those with 'curriculum leadership' responsibilities, not just HoDs.

In the 1980s, consensual constructions of 'teacher' and 'curriculum leader' slowly unravelled as the legacy of a 'back to basics' controversy<sup>303</sup> prompted a new discourse (language and practices) of teacher quality, accountability and performance management within a shifting politics of curriculum, assessment and qualifications. By the mid 1990s it was clear that despite broad agreement on the need for reform, there were differences, both ideological and operational, between government and teachers' representatives. These differences were about how the reforms should proceed, and who should control the pace (i.e. workload issues) and direction (i.e. professional autonomy) of schooling change.

Having examined in some detail the historical, political and cultural context of secondary teaching since the 1940s, in the next chapter, I want first to define a clearer focus for the empirical phase of this study and then to consider the evidence available to us from analyses of secondary teachers' work in the period since the educational reforms of the late 1980s. I then attempt to locate this study as a whole within an appropriate research tradition and, on the basis of this, analyse key components of the research design.

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<sup>303</sup> Openshaw, *op. cit.*, 1980.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### REPRESENTING THE EXPERIENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING AND CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

This chapter theorises the approach taken in the study to analysing teachers' work within the contexts of policy and practice. The narrower focus for the empirical phase of the study is explicated. Following this, I review theoretical and empirical studies of secondary teachers' work that have been conducted in New Zealand since the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms were implemented in 1989. The problem of gaining access to teachers' thinking about their work and the location of this within wider historical, political and occupational discourses is discussed and several possible policy analysis approaches described. From this, the criteria within which the study was developed are enumerated, as are some of the tensions and issues encountered during the fieldwork and analysis of the data. Finally, the difficulties of plausibly representing teachers' work are discussed together with the implications of this for data selection, presentation and commentary.

#### INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a review of the discursive practices of secondary schooling from the 1940s to the 1990s revealed the manner in which enduring popular images of teaching, curriculum and its management or leadership evolved from the 1960s. These were, in part, a response to a crisis of secondary school teacher supply and quality during the post-war economic boom. Images and traditions became embedded through their articulation, adoption and promotion at several levels of the schooling system. They contribute to the production and maintenance of a hegemonic conceptualisation of how the ideal or 'expert' teacher or curriculum leader thinks and behaves, conceptualisations to which all practitioners are assumed to aspire. Thus, they serve a similar purpose to Beeby's concept of educational 'myths.'

A review of selected print media reports during the period of this study suggested that in the mid-1990s these popular images or traditions of teaching, curriculum and management remained highly influential among politicians, teachers' representatives, bureaucrats and sections of the community. Notwithstanding, since the mid 1980s, the broadly consensual liberal-progressive tradition had been interrupted and contested by counter-discourses. These had their origins in the Labour government's curriculum, qualifications and assessment reviews convened by Marshall and Lange as the Labour Ministers of Education. With a subtly different reading these same discourses came to emphasise, under National and Smith, the management of individual teacher accountability for improved student outcomes measured against benchmark curriculum standards in the interests of the national economy. In this regard, the analysis of popular and professional print media texts has limitations. It cannot reveal (a) which

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<sup>1</sup> Beeby, C. Introduction. In W. Renwick. *Moving targets. Six essays on educational policy*. Wellington: NZCER, 1986, p. xv.

among the competing discourses individual teachers and curriculum leaders ally themselves with; (b) the extent to which traditions of teaching, curriculum and its leadership are shared by groups of teachers or curriculum leaders within particular schools; nor, (c) the extent to which they endeavour to develop them in their day-to-day routines. In attempting to articulate a more precise focus for the empirical phase of this study, then, two areas of enquiry were of particular interest:

- a) To what extent and how do practising teachers define 'expertness' and work towards it?
- b) To what extent and how does the curriculum leader contribute to the collective development of teacher 'expertness'?

It is important at the outset to clarify the distinction between the terms 'expertise' and 'expertness', given that I have adopted the more arcane 'expertness' for this study. As I indicated in chapter two, 'expertise' appears routinely in discourses that relate to the 'professionalisation' and 'professionalism' of teaching. According to the Oxford English Dictionary,<sup>2</sup> the words have a number of similar but not identical usages. 'Expertise' is defined as "expert opinion or knowledge, often obtained through the action of submitting a matter to, and its consideration by, experts".<sup>3</sup> This I see as an abstract, normative and evaluative conceptualisation, in this case, of teaching or curriculum leadership. 'Expertness' is defined as "skill derived from practice; readiness, dexterity".<sup>4</sup> This I see as the gradual and personal realisation through day-to day practice of the craft or art of teaching and curriculum leadership. 'Expertise' on this interpretation may be determined from the periphery or even from outside the realm of practice of a particular group of social actors. In contrast, 'expertness' is constituted from within. Moreover, its purpose is 'pragmatic' in the sense that "knowledge must not be separated from practical affairs, that it gain[s] its only justification from its contribution to the resolution of human problems".<sup>5</sup> To use an anthropological distinction, 'expertise' is 'experience-distant', while 'expertness' is 'experience-near'?

An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone a patient, a subject, in our case an informant – might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience-distant concept is one that specialists of one sort or another – an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or and ideologist – employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> second edn., 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 567.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hammersley, M. *The dilemma of qualitative method Herbert Blumer and the Chicago tradition*. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Heinz Kohut, cited in Geertz, C. *Local knowledge. Further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Fontana, 1983, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Alternatively, using an occupational framework, 'expertness' might connote the "indeterminacy" aspects of professional teachers' practice "that are dependent on tacit knowledge. They are not susceptible to codification and representation as explicit rules or recipes".<sup>8</sup> 'Expertise' in contrast, would be similar to "technicality" which "characterizes knowledge and action which may be so represented and reproduced via explicit transmission".<sup>9</sup>

Thus in choosing to focus on 'expertness' rather than 'expertise', I am making a case for exploring the concepts or "cultural schema"<sup>10</sup> that teachers and curriculum leaders themselves might "naturally and effortlessly use [to] see, feel, think, imagine" and conduct their practice. Connelly and Clandinin call these "teachers' professional knowledge landscapes".<sup>11</sup> I shall return to the methodological implications of this stance later in the chapter. For now, it is sufficient to ask what, if anything, existing research in New Zealand tells us about teaching "from the native's point of view".<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding the scope and complexities of secondary school teaching as a social field, little research has been conducted in this area in New Zealand or on the practice of teaching in particular institutional and policy contexts, and even less on the management or leadership of curriculum areas by individuals or groups of teachers within secondary schools. Yet, it seems evident from the two previous chapters that, as a 'site of struggle', workgroups themselves are key arenas where teachers, as social actors, breathe life into normative historical, political and cultural models of curriculum through their day to day practices. It is, therefore, to this local context (in effect, a nexus of the 'teaching', 'curriculum' and 'management' themes discussed in chapter two) that we might usefully turn in order to uncover how teachers collectively respond to official curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policy, and the extent to which they seek to embody idealised traditions of teachers' work and 'expertness' in their lived practice.

In this chapter, I discuss previous research in the area of secondary school teaching, curriculum and management in New Zealand – both in order to document what has been studied and how, and also to "identify the structured silences in the research performed so far".<sup>13</sup> On the basis of this, I then consider the theoretical orientation chosen for this study and the criteria that informed the 'research design'. Finally, I discuss key elements of the research design itself.

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<sup>8</sup> Delamont, S. and Atkinson, P. *Fighting familiarity. Essays on education and ethnography*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, 1995, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Carspecken, P. *Critical ethnography in educational research*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Connelly, M. and Clandinin, J. Teacher education – a question of teacher knowledge. In A. Scott and J. Freeman-Moir (Eds.). *Tomorrow's teachers. International and critical perspectives on teacher education*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 2000, 89-105.

<sup>12</sup> Geertz, op. cit, 1983, chapter three.

<sup>13</sup> Smyth, J., Hattam, R. and Shacklock, G. *Pursuing a qualitative/critical research thesis in education*. Adelaide: Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching, 1997, p. 19.

## STUDIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN NEW ZEALAND

In the previous chapter I reviewed a limited number of historical analyses and contemporary accounts of post-war schooling in New Zealand, and a selection of official policy documents, discussion papers, reports and procedural manuals, together with data taken from comparatively large-scale departmental surveys of organisational practices across the secondary school sector as a whole. Other than the anecdotal or hearsay or the personal retrospective, there was little in all this of the nitty-gritty of teachers' own day-to-day practice.

In addition to work cited in the previous chapter, studies in New Zealand to date may be grouped under three general headings (a) larger-scale survey questionnaires of teachers' work, workload and organisational practices; (b) critical analyses of the effects of educational reform on teachers' collective professionalism; and (c) reports of teacher, classroom, workgroup or whole school practice.

### Larger-Scale Survey Questionnaires Of Teachers' Work, Workload And Organisational Practices.

Together with her report, *Realities of Curricula*, written for the Department of Education in 1978, E.M. Campbell published two papers on secondary school climate<sup>14</sup> and the responsiveness of schools to growing numbers of older students." In both papers, she compared the rhetoric of policy and discussion documents of the 1970s with the 'ideals' and 'realities' of teachers and students' reported experiences of secondary schooling. In terms of school climate Campbell noted that "[t]he dominant impression that one gains from the recent educational publications in New Zealand is that secondary schools should be 'humane learning communities'. On the other hand, the data presented here suggest that they are essentially subject-oriented, tightly structured and orderly, and clear in their specification and differentiation of teacher and pupil roles".<sup>16</sup> In addition to (a) ignorance of the dynamic of educational change and its management; (b) the constraining effect of school size and space, teacher workload and class size on the development of more liberal teaching and learning processes; and (c) the possibility that major restructuring rather than "patchwork operation" might be needed to fully implement the intentions of the Thomas Report, Campbell speculated on two further possible causes for the "considerable slippage" between ideal and reality that she found in her survey data; first, that teachers might lack resources, and second that they might lack the skills to implement these idealised pedagogies:

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<sup>14</sup> Campbell, E. M. A study of reality levels pertaining to the 'climates' of New Zealand state secondary schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies (NZJES)*, 1977a, 12(2), 97-108.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, E.M. The response of New Zealand state secondary schools to increasing maturity in their pupils. *NZJES*, 1977b, 12(2), 109-118.

<sup>16</sup> *Op.cit.*, 1977a, p. 106.

It has been claimed that typically the teacher is isolated in his classroom, with few opportunities to see what else is happening in his school, or how other teachers are meeting their problems. In this unhappy context, he is being exhorted to innovate, be imaginative, try out new ideas, and experiment with new materials ... [D]o the teachers lack the professional skills to convert fine ideals into actions that impinge upon pupils? We may be assuming that once the student teachers are told what to do, they can proceed to do it within the real world of the classroom.<sup>17</sup>

Further, from an analysis of 1883 student questionnaires, Campbell concluded that, in contrast with the thrust of political, professional and popular educational discourses, and despite a number of "special facilities and privileges", senior secondary students experienced many curriculum constraints; "fewer opportunities to undertake studies which they, themselves, choose; greater determination of course content by public examinations; increased amounts of time required for homework; and less involvement in relatively unstructured activities such as community surveys and group projects".<sup>18</sup>

Although more than twenty years old, the findings are intriguing not least because they suggest that the 'realities' of workload, class size and school design, together with the fragmented nature of educational change and the routine occupational isolation of classroom teachers, may act as significant barriers to the implementation of normative curriculum and pedagogical changes, even when, as in the 1970s, these appear to enjoy the active support of teachers and students.

More recently, the effects of the *Tomorrow's Schools* and *Today's Schools* administrative reforms were monitored over several years by a team of researchers based at Waikato University.<sup>19</sup> The project comprised case studies in 15 schools (including four secondary schools) and two national surveys of 48 secondary schools in 1991 and 1992. Some of the findings of the final report published in 1993 provide useful data from the years immediately preceding this study. Between the first and the second secondary school surveys, for example, there was a significant increase in the numbers of teachers who reported that curriculum change had taken place, although it was reported that principals "tended to leave responsibility for leadership in curriculum planning to heads of department".<sup>20</sup> Attitudes to the 1991 draft national curriculum document among teachers in the study as a whole were ambivalent. In contrast, attitudes to changing assessment practices among principals and teachers were positive overall: "Generally, they were doing more, and it took more time, but they could see benefits in having a

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> op.cit., 1977b, pp. 116-117.

<sup>19</sup> *Hear our voices*. Final report of Monitoring Today's Schools research project. Hamilton: University of Waikato, 1993, June.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-82.

better picture of individual children, and for shaping their programmes".<sup>21</sup> In the 1992 survey of secondary schools, "principals and teachers perceived changes in a number of school practices that were classroom-related, such as pupil assessment and evaluation, reporting on student progress, discipline and teaching methods".<sup>22</sup> In terms of management, the number of secondary schools that introduced staff appraisal schemes increased markedly in 1991. Almost half the teachers in the 15 case study schools approved in some measure of appraisal data "being used to determine teachers' retention, promotion or salary", but there was "considerable suspicion" about the principal purposes of appraisal with a variety of models being used by schools that were at different stages of readiness and organisation for undertaking appraisal programmes.<sup>23</sup> Finally, it was reported that more staff development was being undertaken, and that this was increasingly school-based. However:

Areas where staff development was noted as being urgently needed were in new curricula, new assessment practices, policy development, treaty of Waitangi issues and management training for senior staff. There was a feeling that staff development was not keeping pace with the rapidity of change ... Teachers were the main provider of their own in-service education.<sup>24</sup>

In the first half of the 1990s, two surveys of secondary teachers' workloads were undertaken on behalf of PPTA.<sup>25</sup> These were, essentially, replication studies of work reported by UK researchers, Campbell and Neill in 1994 (see chapter two) but which, for detailed comparison purposes, used the New Zealand Department of Education survey of the early 1980's as a baseline. A number of the summary findings from the Bloor and Harker survey of a random stratified sample of 556 secondary school teachers provide useful contextual data for the present study. Respondents worked an estimated average of 54.3 hours per week during term time, compared with the 40.3 hours that was considered reasonable. The total time spent on work varied according to seniority of position. Departmental heads and those in positions of responsibility worked an average of 59.8 hours per week, two and a half hours per day more than they considered appropriate; classroom teachers an average of 47.5 hours per week during term time, one hour per day more than was considered reasonable. Those in "middle management" positions were working eight hours per week more than their counterparts in

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers. A national survey. Final Report.* A report of a national survey of secondary school teachers, commissioned by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association. Palmerston North: Massey University Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December; Bloor, D. *The workloads of Maori secondary school teachers: a national survey: final report.* A report of a national survey of Maori secondary school teachers, commissioned by Te Huirarahi Maori Motuhake. Palmerston North: Massey University, Educational Research and Development Centre, 1996.

1981, classroom teachers, four hours. Workloads had increased from "moderate" in 1991 to "extremely heavy" in 1995 with those in middle management experiencing "an extremely large increase, relative to those in other positions". The increase was attributed to administration including curriculum and assessment developments. As a result, respondents perceived that the quality of classroom teaching, preparation and co-curricular activities had suffered. Lack of resources to support external change and diverse student needs were reported as problems as were physical intimidation and abuse from students, and the impact of increased workload on health, family and friendships. Not surprisingly, nearly two thirds of respondents expressed a desire to leave the profession. The researchers conclude by commenting that:

Overall, secondary teachers put in considerably more hours at work than their counterparts of fifteen years ago, and they are expected to work longer hours than they ought to, given their respective teaching position. An increase in duties associated with particular areas has taken place with insufficient accommodation of existing role requirements and responsibilities and with adverse consequences for the quality of teaching, commitment to the profession, and personal health and well-being.<sup>26</sup>

A further survey report on primary and secondary teachers' satisfaction, motivation and health completed after the fieldwork for this study, paints a similarly depressing picture of the profession's morale.<sup>27</sup> The researchers concluded that "student development" and various aspects of professional and collegial work provided most satisfaction to teachers; while "lack of support perceived from government and community, together with inadequate resources and excessive workloads" were least satisfactory aspects of the job.<sup>28</sup> Such findings are entirely consistent with our common sense assumptions about why teachers enter their chosen profession and, consequently, what the 'satisfiers' and 'dissatisfiers' are likely to be. Nonetheless, the analysis of the survey data also consistently identified working conditions, school climate and "teachers' beliefs that they are both genuinely supported and resourced"<sup>29</sup> as important correlates of "adaptability" (to change), health, and professional and personal well-being. This implies that a positive climate and its constituent social processes may make a significant difference to teachers' willingness to engage with curriculum and assessment change within particular workgroups in individual school settings.

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<sup>26</sup> Bloor and Harker, op. cit., 1995, p. iv.

<sup>27</sup> Harker, R., Gibbs, C., Ryan, H., Weir, K. and Adams, D. *Teacher 2000 Project: an international study of teacher satisfaction, motivation and health. The New Zealand report*. Palmerston North; Massey University College of Education, 1998, September. However, it has been pointed out that much of the evidence on teacher stress is based on self-reporting by teachers, not so-called "hard data"; Manthei, R. and Gilmore, A. Is stress among New Zealand teachers increasing? *NZJES*, 1994, 29(1), 73-87.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

In chapter two, I reviewed a range of scholarly analyses of schooling development and reform from non-New Zealand sources. Here, I look briefly at how the educational reforms in New Zealand have been evaluated in terms of their intended and actual effects on teachers' work (i.e. 'teaching', 'curriculum' and 'management') and professionalism.

In an early analysis of the ideologies and assumptions that informed the production of the *Tomorrow's Schools* and *Today's Schools* reports, Codd notes that the initial rhetoric of "partnership, collaboration, participation and professional leadership"<sup>30</sup> was soon overtaken by a managerialist agenda driven from within the apparatus of the state by Treasury and State Services Commission for the purposes of social control. For Codd, this agenda emphasised 'role definition, planning and control, [and] treats teachers as workers rather than professionals'. Moreover, the approach relies on the "specification of objectives, performance reviews and other management techniques".<sup>31</sup> In contrast, Codd conceptualises administration and teaching as value driven, moral enterprises. On this basis "educational administration should entail responsible deliberation and decision-making, enabling teachers within the school to have an active role in producing an educated community of individuals who will have the capacity to promote dynamic, democratic social order".<sup>32</sup>

For the purposes of developing an argument, Codd sets up a deliberately bi-polar representation of the two approaches and, indeed, has continued to use a similar heuristic device to analyse the effects of aspects of the New Zealand reforms on teachers' work and professionalism.<sup>33</sup> However, in the context of the fieldwork undertaken in this study, one of the issues we need to consider is the extent to which such ideal type approaches are accommodated, mediated, accepted, adapted or rejected by particular groups of teachers in idiosyncratic and complex institutional settings. We might speculate, for example, that with some people and some issues in some circumstances, a contractual-managerial relationship will be more evident, in others a professional educationist discourse may be emphasised.

Nevertheless, Codd's critical analysis<sup>34</sup> has commonalities of epistemology and axiology with the approach taken by a good number of domestic scholars and commentators since 1988. Typically, this approach presents competing views of teachers as workers or professionals, and the consequences of each for administration, curriculum, pedagogy and

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<sup>30</sup> Codd, J. Managerialism. The problem with today's schools. *Delta*, 1990, 44, p. 19.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> Codd, J. Educational reform and the contradictory discourses of evaluation. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 1994, 8(1&2), 41-54; Codd, J. Professional accountability and the education of teachers. *Delta*, 1998, 50(2), 149-162; Codd, J. Educational reform, accountability and the culture of distrust. *NZJES*, 1999, 34(1), 45-53.

<sup>34</sup> Smyth, J. (Ed.). *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. London: Falmer, 1989; Smyth, J. (Ed.). *A socially critical view of the self-managing school*. London: Falmer, 1993.

assessment. For example, Gordon has argued the damaging effects on teacher "empowerment" and autonomy of the Picot report and related policy making processes at both system and school community levels.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, in the area of industrial relations, Dale and Jesson have analysed the role of the State Services Commission in orchestrating contractual-managerial aspects of the school administration reforms<sup>36</sup> and Annesley, the potential effects on the profession of the anticipated introduction of performance-related pay for teachers.<sup>37</sup> Willis, meanwhile, has considered the ideologies that underpin different models of school based assessment, contrasting technicist, market-oriented approaches to assessment with those that are educative and rely on teacher judgement.<sup>38</sup> Equally, a number of active 'professional players' in various parts of the education system have written occasional 'insider' commentaries on the curricular, administrative and industrial aspects of reform, as they affect secondary schools and teachers.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, in addition to the *New Zealand Annual Review of Education* which contains several papers each year that analyse the specific effects of discrete education policies, in the 1990s several major edited collections of essays on the reforms, both curriculum and administrative, have been published in New Zealand.<sup>40</sup> For our purposes, however, there are two principal difficulties with all these publications. First, none are specific to the secondary school sector. Second, with very few exceptions, the primary focus of the analysis in the essays (in so far as these are separable) is on policy 'development' at the system level (and its anticipated effects), not policy 'implementation' by practitioners 'at the chalkface' (and its experienced effects).

The problem for us, then, is that while they provide a rigorous critique of the ideologies and assumptions that are argued to underpin the policy process, these analyses of the anticipated effects of curriculum and administrative reforms on teachers' work and relationships have not routinely been subjected to empirical investigation in the discursive domain of schooling

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<sup>35</sup> Gordon, L. Picot and the disempowerment of teachers. *Delta*, 1989, 41, 23-30; Gordon, L. The bulk funding of teachers' salaries: a case study of education policy. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education (ARE)*, 1991 1, 28-58; Gordon, L. Educational reform in New Zealand: contesting the role of the teacher. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 1992, 2(1), 23-42.

<sup>36</sup> Dale, R. and Jesson, J. Mainstreaming education: the role of the State Services Commission. *ARE*, 1992, 2, 7-34.

<sup>37</sup> Annesley, B. Performance-related pay for teachers; a policy prognosis. *ARE*, 1992, 2, 135-150.

<sup>38</sup> Willis, D. Educational assessment and accountability. A New Zealand case study. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1992, 7(2), 205-221; Willis, D. School-based assessment: underlying ideologies and their implications for teachers and learners. *NZJES*, 1994, 29(2), 161-174.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Capper, P. Curriculum 1991. *ARE*, 1991, 1, 15-27; Mann, D. Secondary schools after the Picot report. *Access*, 1988, 7, 56-66; Rae, K. Industrial relations for New Zealand teachers. *Access*, 1991, 10(1), 21-34; Capper, P. and Munro, R. Professionals or workers? Changing teachers' conditions of service. In S. Middleton, J. Codd and A. Jones (Eds.). *New Zealand education policy today*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1990, 150-160.

<sup>40</sup> Middleton, Codd and Jones, op. cit.; Lauder, H. and Wylie, C. (Eds.) *Towards successful schooling*. London: Falmer, 1990; Curriculum reform: the political context. *Delta*, 1996, 48(1); Curriculum reform: development issues. *Delta*, 1996/1997, 48(2)/49(1); Olssen, M. and Morris Mathews, K. (Eds.) *Education*

practice. Indeed, as we shall see below, empirical evidence on the nexus between teaching, management and curriculum is meagre.

*Reports Of Teacher, Classroom, Workgroup And Whole School Practice*

In 1992, Sullivan observed that among the *Monitoring Today's Schools* project reports "none of them deals directly with the effects of educational reform primarily from a teacher's perspective".<sup>41</sup> Several years on in the secondary school sector little has changed in this respect. Wylie's regular surveys of primary school principals, trustees, parents and teachers<sup>42</sup> continue to provide a valuable record of how a decade of curriculum and administrative reform has unfolded and been experienced, but there is nothing comparable for the secondary school sector, by way of either broad brush or fine-grained analysis.<sup>43</sup> Equally, among the studies we do have available to us, there is nothing that adequately brings together the study of teaching, curriculum and its management within idiosyncratic and particular workgroup contexts. As Adams pointed out in 1970, although his large scale international comparative study of the secondary teacher's role provided useful data at the time, "[its] usefulness for anyone concerned with understanding the individual teacher is minimal. It is largely confined to increasing (very slightly) the probability of correctly anticipating certain responses in situations where more individualistically germane information is lacking".<sup>44</sup>

Yet it is precisely such "individualistically germane information" that would appear necessary to an understanding of why individual practitioners and workgroups of teachers act the way they do in historically and institutionally specific sets of circumstances. Recognition of the mutuality of local context and local practice is important for, as Sullivan concedes in his analysis of the changing role of the primary/intermediate school teacher through the New Zealand reforms, "[i]f a case study were carried out with another group of teachers in another

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*policy in New Zealand: the 1990s and beyond.* Palmerston North; Dunmore Press, 1997; *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 1999, 34(1).

<sup>41</sup> Sullivan, K. The myth of partnership; educational reform and teacher disempowerment. *ARE*, 1992, 2, p. 157 (although the Curriculum Review Exploratory Study (CRES) by Ramsay and colleagues at the University of Waikato between 1987 and 1989 examined "collaborative decision-making between teachers and parents on curriculum matters" in a sample that included some secondary schools. Ramsay, P., Hawk, K., Harold, B., Marriott, R. and Poskitt, J. *Developing partnerships. Collaboration between teachers and parents.* Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, p. vii.).

<sup>42</sup> E.g., Wylie, C. *Ten years on: how schools view educational reform.* Wellington: NZCER, 1999.

<sup>43</sup> The study of Henderson High School by Levett and Lankshear provides some interesting insights of a school in a period of change in 1988 and enthusiastically anticipates the potential benefits of the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms. Levett, A. and Lankshear, C. *Going for gold. Priorities for schooling in the 1990s.* Wellington: Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1990.

<sup>44</sup> Adams, R. Some aspects of the secondary teacher's role: a comparative study. *NZJES*, 1970, 5(2), 83-93.

area, the roles and the teachers' specific issues would probably vary with those presented here".<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless, Sullivan's sets of interviews undertaken in the 1990s with teachers on their experiences of the curriculum and administrative reforms,<sup>46</sup> and the carefully theorised analysis that accompanies them, approximates more closely to the approach I wished to take in this study, for it is the way in which (a) the analysis is located in a specific political, cultural educational and historical context; and (b) a theory of teachers' changing ideologies based on teachers' own reported experiences of the reforms is elaborated, that brings the data and discussion to life.

That said, however, Sullivan's approach still lacks something in terms of what I wanted to bring together in this study. In his series of papers, he develops an explanation of how the structural reforms in education have affected teachers' collective ideologies through the manner in which the reforms lever changes to the practices of teaching, curriculum and management. We may see how these forces operate in the distilled experience of individual teachers or principals in his various samples. But, the context of social action and interaction that takes place within idiosyncratic institutional and workgroup settings in response to specific curriculum, assessment, pedagogical or administrative initiatives, is not included in his chosen 'depth of field'. Sullivan seeks, collates and analyses patterns of ideological change across groups of teachers in the profession as a whole, whereas my interest was more parochial and contingent on personal experiences within unique workgroup contexts. Amid the parochial and contingent, local issues and processes need to be taken into consideration.

Finally, in this section, I want to refer to a number of other recent studies undertaken in New Zealand each of which offers something, but only something, to the approach I was seeking in this study.

The two major longitudinal studies conducted in the 1990s of secondary schooling in New Zealand have been the *Smithfield* Project, by Lauder, Hughes and colleagues and the Progress at School study by Nash and Harker. Both employ a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. The former<sup>47</sup> is a study of zoning and school choice, the latter of differential student attainment. Although neither study deals with teaching, curriculum and

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<sup>45</sup> Sullivan, K. The great New Zealand education experiment and the issue of teachers as professionals. In K. Sullivan (Ed.). Education and change in the Pacific rim. Meeting the challenge. Oxford: Triangle Books, 1998, p. 157.

<sup>46</sup> In addition to the two papers cited previously: Sullivan, K. The impact of educational reform on teachers' professional ideologies. *NZJES*, 1994, 29(1), 3-20; Sullivan, K. They've opened Pandora's box. Educational reform, the new right and teachers' ideologies. In Olssen and Morris Mathews, 1997, op. cit., 251-282.

<sup>47</sup> See the capstone publication: Lauder, H. and Hughes, D. et al. *Trading in futures. Why markets in education don't work*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999.

management per se, among the numerous publications from the projects, several deal incidentally with issues germane to this study.

In his multi-site case study examination of the effect of 'school mix' or student composition on organisational and classroom practices, Thrupp, one of the Smithfield researchers, argues that in order successfully to engage students in the day to day processes of schooling, teachers (and students) in predominantly working class schools do different work from their counterparts in predominantly middle class schools.<sup>48</sup> Thus what Thrupp calls the "school mix effect" operates differentially in terms of reference group (i.e. peer) processes, instructional processes and organizational and management processes in middle class and working class schools.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, according to Thrupp, teachers in working class schools need to "negotiate" a curriculum with students who are less well disposed to schooling and, as a consequence, to restrict their work to the "art of the possible" as far as classroom and whole school practices are concerned.<sup>50</sup> Thrupp's research focus, however, is on the differential effects of school and classroom processes on "matched students" in middle and working class schools for the purposes of seeking an explanatory account of schooling effects, not, as mine is, on teachers' work in specific subject and workgroup contexts.

Like Thrupp, Nash and Harker are interested in why some students (including those with apparently similar backgrounds, initial attainments and dispositions towards education) should end up with very different experiences and outcomes from their secondary schooling. Rather than a case study approach, Nash and Harker opt for what they call a "numbers and narratives", realist sociology of education. They combine longitudinal, statistical data gathered from a series of questionnaires and information provided by the school, with individual student interview data on the basis that:

... there is no explanation without a detailed account of the socially structured human practices that generate observed statistical patterns (Archer, 1995). All social processes are, necessarily, made possible only by the material and symbolic resources which are the property of individuals and the social institutions they constitute by virtue of the social bonds that exist between them.<sup>51</sup>

Although my research focus here is teachers' work, not students', I am, nonetheless, particularly interested in the "socially structured human practices" which underpin teachers' work and relations in specific workgroup settings. In this sense, Nash's use of individuals' accounts of their personal experiences to explore "the social institutions they constitute by virtue of the

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<sup>48</sup> Thrupp's book brings together a number of papers published between 1995 and 1998; Thrupp, M. *Schools making a difference. Let's be realistic*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-124.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., chapters six and seven.

<sup>51</sup> Nash, R. and Harker, R. *Making progress: adding value in secondary education*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1998, p. 3.

social bonds between them”<sup>52</sup> seems to have some methodological potential for this study (I consider the analysis of interview data in more detail later in the chapter).

Neither Thrupp nor Nash and Harker consider the specifics of curriculum and assessment reform in their studies, yet, in theory, these have exerted the major discursive influences on secondary teachers' (classroom, subject and workgroup) collective work in the 1990s.<sup>53</sup> Some centrally funded evaluation studies of these aspects of teachers' work have been conducted. Gilmore and Absalom, for example, have reported to the Ministry of Education on the way in which (primary and) secondary teachers from a number of different subject areas have engaged with the requirement to introduce, teach and assess the 'essential skills' of the national curriculum, and on the contribution of centrally funded professional development programmes for teachers to this.<sup>54</sup> I think it is fair to claim, though, that these centrally commissioned and funded evaluations adopt an acritical approach and seek to identify general trends in teachers' implementation of curriculum and policy rather than to examine the complexities and politics of practice. Nonetheless, the larger point I wish to emphasise here is that contemporary secondary teachers work within centrally prescribed curriculum and assessment policy text requirements. Thus when we seek to document their lived experiences it must necessarily include the challenge of working through specific curriculum and assessment reforms.

In the same vein, teachers work in historically and culturally specific institutional, organisational and socio-economic "communities of practice"<sup>55</sup> which affect teachers' individual and collective work. For example, in separate case studies, Neville has shown how stable yet highly idiosyncratic school cultures develop over years to mould the day to day practices and aspirations of students and teachers;<sup>56</sup> Hawk and Hill have shown how teachers and school managers respond actively to the social and personal needs of students in disadvantaged socio-economic communities in order to remove 'barriers to education';<sup>57</sup> and Robinson and Timperley, how embedded institutional dynamics and occupational cultures in

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Of the 437 contract research reports published by the Ministry of Education in the decade between 1988 and 1999, 34 at most concern secondary school issues. Of these, only a handful deal specifically with the implementation of curriculum and assessment reform. See Burgon, J., Weenink, M and Nana, P. *Annual research report 1998-1999*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, September, 1999, pp. 46-59.

<sup>54</sup> Gilmore, A. and Absalom, I. *Essential skills in the national curriculum. An exploratory study of what is happening in the classrooms*. Christchurch; Education Department, Canterbury University, 1995, July.

<sup>55</sup> McLaughlin, M and Talbert, J. *Communities of practice and the work of high school teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming. The origin of the term is attributed to Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave and describes a theory of learning as social participation among informal communities of practitioners. Wenger, E. *Communities of practice. Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Neville, M. *The teachers know my name. Two case-studies of value-added secondary schools in New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1998.

<sup>57</sup> Hawk, K. and Hill, J. *Towards making achievement cool. Achievement in multi-cultural high schools*. Albany: Massey University Educational Research and Development Centre, 1996.

their view constrain teachers, managers' and trustees' ability to address issues 'rationally'.<sup>58</sup> These studies serve to reinforce the argument (made also in previous chapters) that in any analysis of practice, we need to attend closely to the contextual factors that influence the thinking and actions of groups of teachers.

At this point, it is appropriate to summarise the findings from research to date as they relate to the two areas of inquiry identified above. First, our knowledge of secondary teachers' routine practice and their experience of engaging with curriculum and assessment reform is minimal. In this sense, Sullivan's 1992 observation still holds true. There are a number of theoretical analyses of the anticipated effects of educational reform on teachers' autonomy and professionalism, but these have not been investigated in the field of practice. Our knowledge of practice is limited largely to survey data on the workloads, stress levels and attitudes of secondary teachers and curriculum leaders. We are also able to glean some general understanding of teachers' work from reports of centrally funded evaluations of professional development contracts to support the implementation of new curriculum and assessment policies. Among the 'boutique' case studies of secondary school practice that have been conducted in the 1990s, none focus specifically on the nexus between teaching, curriculum and management that might reveal how secondary teachers and curriculum leaders collectively respond to the demands of curriculum and assessment reform in local workgroup contexts. Equally, aside from the historical analyses reported in the previous chapter, we have no idea of how the culture and history of secondary teaching in New Zealand influence contemporary teachers' ideologies and practice. In short, our knowledge of how teachers collectively go about developing their 'expertness' in New Zealand secondary schools is inadequate.

In the next part of the chapter, I consider how, in this study, we might gain access both to the day-to-day routines of teachers' practice, teachers' and curriculum leaders' thinking and strategising, and the discursive traditions and ideologies that underpin these. As will become clear, neither the research orientation nor the design began with such an ambitious set of aims but, rather, they developed in this direction as I attempted over several years to deconstruct and "transform the unruly experiences"<sup>59</sup> that emerged from the field.

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<sup>58</sup> Robinson, V. and Timperley, H. Learning to be responsive. The impact of school choice and decentralization. *Educational Management and Administration*, 1996, 24(1), 65-78; Timperley, H. and Robinson, V. Workload and the professional culture of teachers. *Educational Management and Administration*, 2000, 28(1), 47-62.

<sup>59</sup> Clifford, 1983, in Opie, A. Transforming unruly experiences or qualitative methods and deconstructive strategies. In Davey, J., Laing, P., Neale, J., Opie, A., Pearson, D. and Toynbee, C. *Doing social research in New Zealand; methods, reflections and sources*. Occasional papers in sociology and social work No. 9. Wellington; Victoria University of Wellington, 1994, p. 60.

## ORIENTING THIS STUDY

Quite late in this study, I encountered Opie's reflexive<sup>60</sup> discussion of the "complex, unordered recursive, contradictory and suppressive processes"<sup>61</sup> she experienced in her small-scale investigation of joint custody arrangements following separation or divorce. Her account seemed to echo closely my own experiences of researching secondary school teaching. Thus:

In one sense my research followed the well-worn path of literature review, interviewing, analysis of data and writing up. But those stages were neither discrete nor neatly completed prior to my moving onto the next stage, Instead I was engaged in a much more recursive, spiralling process, where, for example, the literature provided a starting point for writing and for interviewing, yet the interviews permitted a further interrogation of the literature and re-conceptualising what I had thought and written, so that all aspects of the study continued to inform, question and review each other.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to make this point as otherwise it might appear that the study proceeded smoothly from conception to execution and conclusion. Far from it. With the benefit of what Robert Pirsig calls "twenty-twenty hindsight", it has been possible to write an edited version of the research process that logically and neatly links literature review, methodology, data presentation and analysis. However, to use a field-archaeology analogy the reality of the research process for me resembled much more the excavation and tentative re-assembly of one piece of stylised medieval saltglaze pottery from a mix of shards in the knowledge that some pieces may be missing or buried more deeply than I had reached, and others belong to quite different pots. In this sense, I want here to avoid writing a sanitised methodological discussion that treats the study as "a 'technology', as simply a set of methods, skills and procedures applied to a defined research problem".<sup>63</sup> Instead, I want to:

... try to make explicit the intentions and procedural principles that we put into the research project, the findings of which we present here. The reader will thus be able to reproduce in the reading of the texts the work of both construction and comprehension, of which they are the product.<sup>64</sup>

I began this study in 1995 with the idea that I wanted to investigate secondary teachers' professional development and the ways in which 'curriculum managers' contributed to this. I was clear at the outset that I wanted to capture "the teacher's perspective" as Sullivan puts it and to research the topical areas of practice they considered important and were attempting to develop. Having been a secondary teacher myself, I was confident in my ability to empathise

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<sup>60</sup> Usher, R. Textuality and reflexivity in educational research. In R. Usher and D. Scott (Eds.). *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge, 1996, 33-51.

<sup>61</sup> Opie, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>63</sup> Usher, R. A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In Usher and Scott, op. cit., 1996, p. 9.

with the research participants and I assumed that the occupational detail of what I was told and invited to observe would be reasonably familiar to me. I was also quite happy at that stage to consider using some of my new work colleagues' suggestions of suitable, phenomenological research instruments that seemed to offer the enticing prospect (for a part-time researcher) of the straightforward gathering and analysis of experience data. As I became caught up in the "recursive, spiralling process", however, the vital importance of 'multiple embedded contexts' - individual, workgroup, institutional, systemic, historical, political and cultural - became increasingly apparent. These teachers' and curriculum leaders' work was informed both by local norms, traditions of secondary school teaching practice and the requirements of centralised reforms in curriculum, teaching and management all of which were in some respects highly specific to New Zealand secondary schooling. As such, the nuances were unfamiliar to me but I clearly needed to discover more about them if I was to understand the subtleties of what I was being told and invited to observe. As a recent immigrant I was disadvantaged inasmuch as I had not myself lived these traditions and was not aware of or attuned to their significance for teachers' conceptualisation of their practice. In contrast, I was advantaged by the fact that, as a consequence, I was unlikely to take for granted, unquestioningly, these aspects of quotidian practice and policy development. In due course, it became clear to me that if I were adequately to represent and theorise the rich complexities of teachers' practice, from their perspective, I would need to adopt an approach that united the contemporary, historical and cultural strands of schooling. Achieving this would locate teachers' own voices (values, positions, experiences and modes of analysis) within the broader discursive practices of secondary school teaching in New Zealand since the 1940s.

Having conducted only one or two early interviews, I realised that to do justice to the experiences of the teachers involved, I would need to gather and analyse data in a manner that would articulate what Olsen calls the enduring "folkways of teaching" and the "tacit dimension of practice"<sup>65</sup> but within a topical context of educational policy reform. In addition, given that I wanted to focus on the "particularity of individual situations", I would need to examine carefully the way in which I constructed representations of practice that purported to depict the idiosyncracies of local workgroup context and the voices of the research participants. As Opie points out, gathering, analysing and representing data in this manner is a difficult juggling act:

... with its reference to the multiplicity of often contradictory sites, voices and ideologies to which researchers have access and which are themselves embedded in the subjectivity of the researcher; of the experience of analysis of the data itself where a close reading of the texts or transcripts of interviews may often result in a modification and re-evaluation of what initially appeared to be a clear analytic framework; and of writing where not only

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<sup>64</sup> Bourdieu, P. Understanding. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 1996, 13(2), p. 18.

much of the detail and particularity of individual situations which have contributed to the interpretation are suppressed, but where the choice of one interpretation suppresses or marginalizes others.<sup>66</sup>

### *Analysing Educational Policy in Context*

A number of educational researchers have attempted the analysis of contemporary practice within its lived political, cultural and historical contexts. Common to almost all the examples discussed below is a consideration of the relationship between knowledge and power: how historical practices and their constituent power relations constitute contemporary social arenas within which certain forms of language, knowledge and practice are conceptualised, articulated, allowed, preferred, and regulated, while others are marginalised, silenced or excluded.<sup>67</sup>

### **Policy scholarship**

Grace, in his study of school leadership, makes a sharp distinction between what he calls the 'policy science' and the 'policy scholarship' approach.<sup>68</sup> Applied to the domain of educational leadership, the former is concerned with the identification and generalisation for use in educational settings of specific leadership behaviours through supposedly value free and objective research. The latter, in direct contrast, seeks actively to understand the practice of leadership in its historical context on the basis that "many contemporary historical problems or crises in education are, in themselves, the surface manifestations of deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in education policy".<sup>69</sup> In advocating the importance of policy scholarship, Grace argues that what is "relevant here is a commitment to locate the matter under investigation in its historical, theoretical, cultural and socio-political setting and a commitment to integrate these wider relational features with contemporary fieldwork data. In this sense policy scholarship is used as an essay in wider and deeper understanding".<sup>70</sup> In sum, Grace chooses to eschew a reductionist, predictive science of individual leadership behaviour in favour of a complex, historically grounded critical analysis of how, in his case, English headteachers engage with enduring moral, ethical and practical dilemmas amidst a shifting, interventionist policy terrain.

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<sup>65</sup> Olson, J. *Understanding teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1992, p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1994, pp. 60-61.

<sup>67</sup> Foucault, M. *Power and knowledge: selected interviews and other writings*. New York: Pantheon, 1980, chapter six.

<sup>68</sup> Grace, G. *School leadership. Beyond education management. An essay in policy scholarship*. London: Falmer Press, 1995, pp. 1-4. In a later paper, Grace observes that policy scholarship is simply "shorthand" for critical policy scholarship. See Grace, G. Critical policy scholarship: reflections on the integrity of knowledge and research. In G. Shacklock and J. Smyth (Eds.). *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer Press, 1998, 202-217.

<sup>69</sup> Grace, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

In a subsequent paper, Grace<sup>71</sup> elaborates his understanding and commitment to a critical scholarship approach based on the work of Fay in the 1970s.<sup>72</sup> Fay suggests that a critical social science must (a) uncover the historically embedded nature of flaws in the social order; (b) develop theories which demonstrate the structural contradictions that underpin these flaws; (c) produce theories that speak to and in the language and experiences of the social actors involved; and (d) be illuminative and educative for the social actors involved rather than manipulative of them.<sup>73</sup> Grace points out that contemporary scholarly work and research are severely constrained both through the political control of research agendas by fundholders; the intensification of the formulation, conduct and reporting of research projects; and, the "commodification of research outcomes".<sup>74</sup> Hence there is a pressing need for researchers to be reflexive about their work. Reflexivity, for Grace, is part of the process of evaluating the integrity of the research, intended to ensure that it has "soundness of methodology and analysis, probity of scholarship and comprehensiveness of perspective".<sup>75</sup> Such research, he claims, is more likely to be both critical and humane. For example, in a refreshingly candid, reflexive commentary on his "oppositional position" to the educational reforms in New Zealand, written soon after his appointment as Chairperson of the Department of Education at Victoria University, Grace concedes that his own scholarship may not have met all of Fay's criteria:

In reflexive relation to Fay's (1975) four imperatives for critical social science, cited earlier, the most serious omission is 'must be grounded in the self-understanding of the actors'. In fact, because of the constraints of time, the analysis was conducted largely from documentary sources and at a distance from those directly involved in or affected by the reform process. In other words, the research process was not participative and the 'voice' of those involved in the reforms was not an integral part of the analysis unless it had been mediated in written form. This must be regarded as a weakness in work which claims to be critical and humane.<sup>76</sup>

### **Policy ethnography**

Using a distinct but complementary approach to Grace, Smyth and Shacklock have recently analysed the regulative effects for teachers of the accreditation processes they must go through to secure 'Advanced Skills Teacher' (AST) status in Australia. The authors identify four competing discourses of teaching "on and about" the AST initiative which they call 'official',

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<sup>71</sup> Op. cit., 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Fay, B. *Social theory and political practice*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975.

<sup>73</sup> Grace, op. cit., 1998, p. 206.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 202-203.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

'preferred', 'resistant' and 'indigenous'.<sup>77</sup> Their case study sets out to examine "the clash" between these. Moreover, the authors "consider it important that teachers have the opportunity to access discourses about their work which counter the constraints by drawing upon language and conceptual apparatuses different to those that see teaching primarily as economic work".<sup>78</sup> To facilitate this, they set out to "develop a conversation between the macro-forces shaping teachers' work and the specific micro-forces as lived and experienced by teachers in their everyday lives as workers".<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the axiology of the study is explicitly and avowedly political in that the authors "believe there is a pressing need for accounts of what is happening to teaching that enable teachers to reclaim the voices/discourses/practices of schools".<sup>80</sup> In attempting to meld together topical, localised teachers' accounts with a critical analysis of the macro forces of structural adjustment as these shaped, in this instance, the development of the AST initiative, the authors describe their work as an exercise in "policy ethnography". On the basis that policy development is always "a contested struggle over 'representation' and 'exclusion' of particular viewpoints and sets of interests culminating in temporary truces or uneasy settlements",<sup>81</sup> they wanted to explore:

...what happened when authorities sought to impose a (well-meaning) policy on teachers from which they had been excluded during formulation. We were also interested in the response of teachers as they came to understand what this policy meant for them in the context of their work, and how much they were prepared to tolerate a redefinition of their teaching.<sup>82</sup>

### **Policy sociology**

Smyth and Shacklock draw on Ball's studies of "policy sociology" in which he construes educational reform as a complex discursive struggle for ascendancy. For Ball, this complexity demands that we conceptualise more clearly what 'policy' is if we are to study its constituent processes, contexts and effects.<sup>83</sup> He makes a basic and important distinction between policy as text and policy as discourse. Policy texts, he argues, are "interventions in practice". Although they encourage certain readings and reactions, texts vary in the degree to which they intentionally allow for local interpretation and adaptation. Those who produce policy documents cannot directly control how policy as text is read, interpreted and responded to locally because

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<sup>77</sup> Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Remaking teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994. (See also, Ball, 1990, below.)

"there may often be key mediators of policy in any setting who are relied on by others to relate policy to context or to gatekeep".<sup>84</sup> There are, then, complex processes at work in policy mediation and, given its relevance to this study, Ball's description of these is worth quoting at length:

Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localized and should be expected to display ad hocery and messiness. Responses must be 'creative'; but I use the term carefully here and in a specific sense. Given constraints, circumstances and practicalities, the translation of the crude, abstract simplicities of policy texts into interactive and sustainable practices of some sort involves productive thought, invention and adaptation. Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, offset against other expectations. All of this involves creative social action, not robotic activity. Thus, the enactment of texts relies on things like commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations, cooperation and (importantly) intertextual compatibility. Furthermore, sometimes when we focus analytically on one policy or one text we forget that other policies and texts are in circulation, and the enactment of one may inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of enactment of others.<sup>85</sup>

The mediation of policy texts in localised contexts is, evidently, a social process that hinges on language and communication. To reflect this Ball articulates a conception of policy as discourse wherein policy texts circulate in social (or educational) spaces as one 'voice' in a cacophony of competing claims for power and influence in the shaping of practice. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Ball notes that discourses are "about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relationships".<sup>86</sup> Discourses, then, articulate, shape and constrain what may be thought, said and done. Educational policies as textual interventions are attempts to change the ways in which teachers, or curriculum leaders, or students, as "subjects" think, act and interact. Thus, argues Ball, ideally, we also need to study 'policy trajectories', ie their discursive effects over time in what he calls the contexts of 'influence', 'policy text production', 'practice', 'outcomes' and 'political strategy'.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>86</sup> Ball, S. *Politics and policy making in education. Explorations in policy sociology*. London: Routledge, 1990, p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1994, pp. 26-27.

### **Policy archaeology**

Also drawing liberally on a Foucauldian framework, Scheurich takes the methodological application of this policy 'trajectory' notion a stage further in his postmodernist "policy archaeology".<sup>88</sup> Scheurich criticises what he calls traditional positivist and newer postpositivist approaches to policy studies. Both, he argues, take for granted the construction of social problems (real or symbolic) as if they were 'medical diseases' for which solutions, in the form of policy, are proposed. Yet for Seurich, both approaches fail "to question or critique the 'natural' emergence of social problems".<sup>89</sup> Scheurich asks us to consider why and how is it, for example, that certain aspects of social or educational practice become identified and named as problems in the first place, and others not? This becomes the first of his four "arenas of study or focus", namely "the study of the social construction of specific education and social problems".<sup>90</sup> The second, and most abstract, he calls the "social regularities arena" in which he seeks to identify the tacit networks of "regularities" and "rules of formation" that constitute the historically specific conditions which allow a range of education problems and policy options to be identified. Third, is the policy solution arena that similarly "involves the study of how the range of possible policy choices is shaped by the grid of social regularities".<sup>91</sup> And, fourth, is a critical examination of the social regularities that constitute policy studies itself as a field of practice. In order to demonstrate the practicability of the approach, Scheurich then applies each of the stages to some real educational 'problems', for example, the development of integrated health, welfare and social services as a policy solution to the perceived problem of underachievement among 'target groups' of poor, ethnic minority and single parent children.

### **Critical discourse analysis**

However, Luke claims that "many educational analyses have difficulty showing how large-scale social discourses are systematically (or for that matter unsystematically) manifest in everyday talk and writing in local sites".<sup>92</sup> In his review of the literature on critical discourse analysis, Luke argues that "every waking moment is caught up in engagement with text of some kind".<sup>93</sup> Texts for Luke are forms of "language in use". Language (meanings, statements, words and concepts) infuses social institutions such as schools, the media and government. It is language that constitutes discourse. The language of discourses makes possible different ways of being, thinking and acting for individuals: "texts position and construct individuals, making available

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<sup>88</sup> Scheurich, J. *Research method in the postmodern*. London: Falmer, 1997, chapter five.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>92</sup> Luke, A. Text and discourse in education: an introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 1995, 21, p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

various meanings, ideas, and versions of the world".<sup>94</sup> Texts serve both to liberate and constrain the range of possible identities and behaviours:

In other words, critical discourse analysis tends to begin from a poststructuralist skepticism toward the assumption that people have singular, essential identities or fixed cultural, social class, or gendered characteristics. It assumes that subjectivities are strategically constructed and contested through textual practices and that they are crafted in the dynamics of everyday life.<sup>95</sup>

A key point is that, on this argument, individuals' freedom to take up positions within such discourses is constrained on the basis of "their prior experiences with language and texts, their available stock of discourse resources".<sup>96</sup>

### **Interactionist ethnography**

In addition to providing a complementary reading of the meaning of discourse, Luke's discussion helpfully focuses on the exercise of individual and collective human agency. This, clearly, is fundamental to any consideration of how teachers define and develop 'expertness' in particular workgroup and school contexts. That said, some of the exemplars discussed may appear to shift our orientation too far from schooling and the 'context of practice' that is a central concern of the empirical phase of this study. I shall attempt to redress the balance using Hammersley's description of 'interactionist ethnography':

The emphasis of interactionist ethnography in education is on researching the experience, perspectives and actions of those involved; teachers, children, students and others. This is to be done not in abstract fashion but by treating perspectives and actions as socially grounded, both in the immediate contexts in which people live and work, and within the wider framework of global society. The interactionist idea that people construct their perspectives about the world and build lines of action on the basis of these, rather than simply responding to events in a passive way, has recently been reinforced by the influence of feminism and postmodernism with their heightened concern for the role of the self and their stress on the social construction of cognition, motivation and action. These changes in focus and orientation have occurred over a period when, from many points of view, the conditions of work for teachers in Britain have worsened. The result is that recognition of the constraints imposed by recent education policies has been complemented by an emphasis on the ways in which these policies have been read, and often reinterpreted and adapted, by teachers. In particular, the stress has been on the ways in which teachers have not only managed to sustain their emotional survival, but have

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

also kept open some space to make available crucial opportunities for learning by children and young people.<sup>97</sup>

In one sense, the difference articulated here is merely one of perspective, focus and balance. Interactionist ethnography, like the other approaches discussed above, has figure-ground elements. In Hammersley's definition, the emphasis is on the subjective and intersubjective way that teachers read, and implement policy. In this case, teachers and their practice 'figure' against a 'background' of policy. In other approaches discussed above, historical, cultural and political contexts have been foregrounded rather than the more immediate and localised context of practice. Clearly, all these discursive strands of social experience exist and interact. The issue is clarifying the criteria against which decisions may be made about which elements of the phenomena being studied to foreground, which to background, which to include, which to exclude, which to choose to give voice to, which to silence; or in Grace's terms, how do we endeavour to promote the integrity of the research?

#### CRITERIA OF INQUIRY

Carspecken argues that all researchers of social practice are interested in "the same basic things", namely; "social action (and its patterns)"; "subjective experiences"; and "conditions influencing action and experience".<sup>98</sup> However, our "social ontology", the way we view existence, and the consequent assumptions we make about the social world, suggest particular ways of approaching our research. According to Carspecken, qualitative researchers have a greater need to make these social ontologies explicit because of the variety and diversity of options for studying social experience. Below, I set out the criteria of inquiry drawn from the discussion in the previous section that over the course of several years' fieldwork, reading and thinking became clarified and adopted for this study. In the final section of the chapter I provide an account of how the research was designed, undertaken and reported with these in mind.

First, my early contacts with secondary teachers and curriculum leaders whose experiences, beliefs, actions and understandings were occupationally similar but culturally different from mine encouraged me to seek a "wider and deeper understanding" of their practice. To achieve this the study of contemporary teaching practice and its localised challenges in specific work sites needed to be contextualised in the history, politics and culture of teaching in this country.

Second, if the research was to be "humane" these teachers' voices and experiences needed to form an "integral part of the analysis". I was concerned to ensure also that their own

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<sup>97</sup> Hammersley, M. Introduction. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Researching school experience. Ethnographic studies of teaching and learning*. London: Falmer Press, 1999, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Carspecken, op. cit., 1996, p. 26.

accounts of practice, and of what was important in that practice, rather than my a priori theories, shaped the study.

Third, I wanted to document teachers' "creative social action" in response to central reforms and to assess the extent to which they "were prepared to tolerate a redefinition of their teaching". In this regard, it was important to identify the various overlapping discourses of teaching, curriculum and management that were in circulation, the "clashes" between them and teachers' reading of them.

Fourth, the study as a whole would need to examine the origins of selected contemporary educational policy texts, why these were deemed to be important, the discourses they variously interrupted and engendered and their effects over time, on practice.

Finally, through the articulation and examination of "language in use" in local sites, it would be possible to explore with these teachers their individual and collective identities and positioning; and how these were "crafted in the dynamics of everyday life". A related area of interest here was how teachers "managed to sustain their emotional survival" in order to be able both to maintain existing practices and respond to (read, reinterpret, adapt) the demands of new curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) and management texts in circulation.

We turn now to an account of the study that attempts to demonstrate how these criteria of inquiry were put into practice.

## **ESTABLISHING AND DEVELOPING THE STUDY**

I wanted in this study to explore teachers' and curriculum leaders' understandings of their day to day work – that much at least remained consistent throughout the study. Initially, as I indicated above, and in order to make the study manageable, and to allow me to complete my occupational 'rite of passage' as smoothly as possible, I intended to gather, synthesise and analyse interview data over the course of a school year using two data analysis methods (the one statistical, the other qualitative) within a broadly phenomenological tradition. Together, these would allow generalisations to be made about teachers and curriculum leaders' conceptions of 'expertise' and changes in these over time from a pool of approximately twenty five self-selecting informants in a small number of schools.

### *Gaining Access*

In my application to Massey University's Human Ethics Committee in 1995, prior to the fieldwork, I addressed a number of ethical concerns regarding the potentially sensitive nature of the research, gaining access to and consent from potential participants, and privacy, confidentiality and anonymity issues (appendix one).

I knew that schools were busy places and, on the basis of previous studies, that it can be difficult to gain access to teachers' thinking and action unless an exclusively positive stance is taken from the outset.<sup>99</sup> I made it clear in my approach to principals and to the groups of staff with whom I talked about the research project that (a) I wanted to ensure that the project was not too demanding of their time; (b) I was interested in using aspects of practice that they identified in order to generate data and my approach to analysis would be non-judgmental; and (c) I wanted their voices, thinking and experiences as teachers to be 'heard' in the public, policy and scholarly domains.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, even though I asked colleagues to suggest possible schools to approach, it was difficult to raise much interest beyond the principal. In order to provide an incentive and some reciprocity for the time they were contributing, and to elicit some contextual data on each school, in my approach I had offered to investigate issues of practice where they felt they would benefit from having evaluative data gathered by an intermediary from outside the school (and which would also help my study). Here I had in mind two or three days fieldwork on behalf of each participant and a report of what I had found in the style suggested by Rudduck's "school profile study – a label we use to denote a form of focussed, school-based enquiry in which researchers are commissioned by a school to investigate an issue that is important to the school and which involves the use of condensed fieldwork".<sup>101</sup>

#### *Establishing The Study*

After several polite rejections, I eventually gained a positive response from one, then two, then four principals all of whom alerted their staff to the research (and the incentive) on my behalf (see appendix two for details of the schools and participants). One arranged for me to make a presentation to a whole staff meeting (attended by over fifty) and another, after a preliminary discussion with him, to the weekly HoD and PR holders' meeting (approximately twenty five). In the other two schools the principals offered to participate with a small number of colleagues and we met only as individuals or a small group. I met with those staff in each school who expressed an interest, explained the procedures, gained their consent to participate and to have the interviews recorded for transcription (appendix three).

I arranged a first, group focused interview that would begin by talking about their ordinary, personal teaching routines or "normal desirable states of activity"<sup>102</sup> and then move on to priorities for development. I felt that the group interview would be less stressful and an initial focus on mundane classroom routines less threatening and awkward. A focus on concrete events

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<sup>99</sup> Brown, S. and McIntyre, D. *Making sense of teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993.

<sup>100</sup> Elbaz, F. Knowledge and discourse: the evolution of research on teachers' thinking. In C. Day, M. Pope and P. Denicolo (Eds.). *Insight into teachers' thinking and practice*. London: Falmer Press, 1990, 15-42.

<sup>101</sup> Rudduck, J. The theatre of daylight: qualitative research and school profile studies. In M. Schratz (Ed.). *Qualitative voices in educational research*. London: Falmer Press, 1993, 8-22.

also coincided with the interview approach recommended in phenomenography, one of the two methods I had planned to use to gather and analyse data.<sup>103</sup> In the event, discussion of these routines took up all the time I'd allowed for the sessions. It was clear from the preliminary discussions that the offer of a 'free' evaluation was a major incentive to participation. All of the volunteers had some form of curriculum leadership or administrative responsibilities, ranging from a temporary PR unit for curriculum development, to Assistant Dean, Head of Department and Assistant Principal. It was clear also that each participant had a number of important and urgent personal priorities (curriculum, management) they were grappling with but which they preferred to broach in the privacy of one-to-one interviews.

### *Developing An Empathetic Focus*

After the first of the group interviews, the depth of these mostly mid-career teachers' thinking and strategising about their classroom practice began to dawn on me. After the first of the individual interviews I was taken-aback by the extent to which (a) local workgroup (not school) context, national curriculum and assessment prescriptions, professional philosophy of teaching and personal biography influenced what was being attempted. I was more than a little concerned that the phenomenological methods that had been suggested to me by enthusiastic colleagues paid little heed either to the histories and working contexts of individuals or to the processes and reasoning that underpinned what these teachers were attempting to do. This presented me with some dilemmas. The intended data analysis methods I had discussed with my research participants appeared redundant, and the 'condensed fieldwork' was clearly going to take longer than I had anticipated. But, there were also opportunities. The interviews with the participants about their thinking and routines were producing unexpectedly rich data and the condensed fieldwork was turning into a series of case studies.<sup>104</sup> These would allow me to examine in greater detail the dynamics of some of these individual teachers' priorities and gain a more complex understanding through the experiences of their colleagues and students.

The pattern of data gathering that fortuitously emerged, but which, to my mind, was considerably more appropriate for a research focus on individual and collective agency within particular workgroup contexts was one of (a) group focus interview to discuss classroom teaching routines, followed by (b) individual interview to identify priorities followed by (c) fieldwork and (d) a final interview at the end of the 1996 school year (appendix four). As we

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<sup>102</sup> Brown and McIntyre, op. cit., 1993.

<sup>103</sup> Marton, F. Phenomenography – describing conceptions of the world around us. *Instructional Science*, 1981, 10, 177-200.

<sup>104</sup> Walker, R. The conduct of educational case studies; ethics, theory and procedures. In M. Hammersley (Ed.). *Controversies in classroom research*. Second edn. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993, 163-195; Yin, R. *Case study research. Design and methods*. Second edn. Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 1994; Stake, R. Case studies. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Second Edn. Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 2000, 435-454.

went through the rounds of interviews and fieldwork, I discussed the changes in my thinking about the research with each of the participants and they seemed unconcerned with the different approach to the analysis of the data. To be frank, there was no great urgency on their part to know the findings. Their busy lives proceeded irrespective of the state of the research and although they all regularly assured me that they welcomed my appearances in the school and the periodic opportunities I provided for them to reflect on their practice, the reality was that in most instances I remained an occasional, fleeting visitor and that many of them were already working on a range of other, more urgent priorities with their immediate workgroup colleagues.

Like Grace,<sup>105</sup> I was a part-time researcher with other teaching and administrative responsibilities and looking back, was naïve and overambitious in thinking that I could simultaneously satisfy the fieldwork demands of a host of disparate initiatives in four school sites using an eclectic array of data gathering instruments agreed with my research participants. Unlike Grace in his reflexive analysis of his 1995 headteacher study, I like to think that this study was 'collaborative' in the narrow sense that participants suggested priorities they were prepared to allow me to evaluate. We also agreed both how it should be done and the specific aspects of practice I would initially focus on. Moreover, the data gathering instruments (interview, questionnaires, evaluation instruments, meeting and classroom observations) were quite specific to each priority identified by the participant and designed to meet their knowledge needs, rather than imposed by me from the outset.<sup>106</sup>

However, as the chart of the study reveals (appendix four) in a number of cases either the participant decided to take no further part in the study (Lillian), or the priority had already been addressed and the participant moved on to other work by the time I got round to it (Ruth), or ERO was due to review the school (Ivan) or I simply did not have sufficient free time to gather adequate data in the way that I had been asked. Nevertheless, several pieces of (condensed) fieldwork were completed. The data and my analysis of these were discussed with the participants. Where this happened reasonably quickly, the data and comments that were fed back were well-received. Three of the priorities were analysed in greater depth, written up as case studies and, as with all the chapter drafts, were fed back to the participants so that they could make any additions, deletions or comments they wished. The three case studies appear in chapters eight, nine and ten.

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<sup>105</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1998, pp. 212-213.

<sup>106</sup> Separately and together, they served the purposes of the 'intrinsic' or 'instrumental' case study approaches described by Stake (*op. cit.*, 2000, p. 437). They were not intended to provide a "collective case study" for the purposes of theory building or generalisation to a larger collection of cases (*Ibid.*).

### *Representing Lived Experience*

Towards the end of the first year of the study, I had managed a preliminary content analysis of all the interview data reported in chapters five (on routines) six (responsibilities) and seven (on development priorities). A number of common administration, management and leadership themes or "distinctive descriptors of major elements of what is being said"<sup>107</sup> were identified and I felt that it would be valuable to explore whether and how particular curriculum leaders addressed these over the course of a whole school year rather than within particular initiatives. I showed the list of themes to four of the participants (one from each school) with whom I felt I had developed a particularly good, open relationship and whose leadership work had proved unusually complex (to me). I asked them if they would be prepared to continue to discuss their work with me using the themes as an interview schedule,<sup>108</sup> at the end of each term during the following year; all four agreed (chapters eleven and twelve).

All the while the interviews and subsequent fieldwork was underway, I was reading voraciously in two areas, secondary school teaching, curriculum and management; and the history of secondary education and curriculum policy in New Zealand. I wanted to understand much more about as many of the multidimensional, embedded aspects of complex teaching and leadership practice that I could identify from the data. As I read, the data I was gathering began to make more sense and I felt that I was gradually becoming attuned to the cultural nuances of what I was observing and being told. I was beginning to work out what it actually was that these teachers were attempting to achieve with their practice. In turn, this reading, thinking and engagement with the empirical data suggested that the assumptions I had made about how the data might be represented phenomenologically were quite mono-dimensional and, as such, distorting of the lived experiences of the participants. I then began to look for approaches and methods that might allow me to incorporate my emerging understandings of the cultural, historical and political context of secondary schooling in New Zealand with my new knowledge of how secondary school subjects and workgroups operate, teachers' responses to new curriculum and assessment policy prescriptions, and the local development of expertise by teachers and curriculum leaders that was still the focus of the research.

The data were integrated around generic themes to which I added my commentary. The draft of each chapter (i.e. the selected data together with my interpretation) was then sent back to the participants for comment and feedback (appendix four). The rationale for each theme is explained within each of the eight data chapters. It is important, however, to justify the selection of data and the way the data are presented, and to comment on the way in which the chapters

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<sup>107</sup> Powney, J. and Watts, M. *Interviewing in educational research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987, p. 159.

<sup>108</sup> This was modelled on an experience-sampling method suggested by Kitwood, 1977, In Cohen, L. and Manion, L. *Research methods in education*. Third edn. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 247.

were received by the participants, not least because my claim is that the data chapters provide a convincing, "plausible story"<sup>109</sup> of their experiences during the course of two years' data gathering.

In the discussion so far I have tried to accept Grace's invitation to be reflexive in order to promote integrity of research methods, conduct and analysis. As far as the analysis of empirical evidence was concerned, my purpose was, again like Grace's, to provide an analysis of the participants' reported experiences (and my observations) that was illuminative "rather than definitive or generalizable".<sup>110</sup> Indeed, hopefully, as Grace puts it, "what the data lacks in numbers, it compensates for in the richness and range of the personal accounts from the workplace".<sup>111</sup>

What came to interest me most in gathering and analysing the data was these teachers' talk (explanations, reasoning and strategising) about what they were attempting to do and why. To use an art analogy, I was more interested in the cartoons or preparatory drawings made by the artist and the various workings detailed in them, than I was the finished picture (Figure 4.1). The value of basing one's analysis on individual teachers' own texts (words, meanings, beliefs, nuanced modes of expression) was harshly reinforced for me after my first individual interview, with Nina. I listened spellbound as Nina talked almost continuously for forty five minutes about her introduction to teaching in a radical-progressive secondary school in Australia some twenty years earlier, which she loved, and her juxtaposition of this against the more traditional pedagogic environment and workgroup culture she worked in at the time of the interview. She articulated what she was hoping to do with her 'accelerated learning' initiative and how she was hoping to engender the enthusiasm for science among her current students, in the way that she used to enjoy in her early years of teaching. As I returned to work I rewound the tape, desperate to listen to the discussion again, only to find that the machine had not recorded anything. I was distraught and spent the next two hours trying to recall as much as I could of the stories, words and logic of Nina's account. Like Coleridge, my head was full of partial images, sentences and words that, try as I could, I was mostly unable to record on paper. I rang her to explain and sent four or five pages of reconstructed dialogue back the same day for comments, additions and corrections.

The pages came back with the odd scribble here and there with a comment to the effect that it was a reasonable representation of what she had said. But to me it was not. What I had reconstructed was an impoverished representation of the largely monological account she had constructed for my benefit.

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<sup>109</sup> Melia, M. Producing 'plausible stories': interviewing student nurses. In G. Miller and R. Dingwall (Eds.) *Context and method in qualitative research*. London: Sage, 1997.

<sup>110</sup> Op. cit., 1995, p. 70.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.



Figure 4.1 Cartoon for St Anne, Leonardo da Vinci

Her account was rich, polychromatic, improvisational, and dynamic. My hurried reconstruction of it almost immediately afterwards was, in comparison, lifeless and monochrome. My account simply did not recapture "the caring and the conflict; the convictions and contradictions; the tensions and contentments; the hopes and fears; and the exhilaration and exhaustion that are embodied in teaching".\* I realised that an understanding of what these teachers did, were attempting to do, and considered important to attempt, could only be achieved by using these teachers' own stories about their work as the basis for generating insights about teachers' agency. Smyth and colleagues conceptualise this approach as 'work-story' research; the stories teachers tell as work stories, and the portrayal of these as work-storied accounts.<sup>113</sup>

#### *A Reflexive Approach to Validity*

With regard to the data gathered in the two areas of inquiry in the empirical part of the study, and the appropriateness of the approach, Hammersley's validity criteria for qualitative studies seem helpful here.<sup>114</sup> To satisfy Hammersley's criteria, the research should, first, be plausible and credible to its audiences. Here I take this to mean both the research participants, other practitioners from among the educational community and educational researchers. Second, the evidence presented should "cohere" with the argument being made. Third, a study should be judged on the basis of its intentions (and the plausibility and relevance of the evidence presented to satisfy these) not its substantive contribution to theory.<sup>115</sup> Although Scott finds problems in this formulation, it does seem to me to provide appropriate criteria for studies, such as this, that are provisional and illuminative in character and which seek through meaningful questioning to more precisely define further areas of inquiry, rather than to build definitive, generalisable theories of practice.

With regard to data gathered within the course of a study (in her case, interviews with student nurses) Melia finds the pursuit of sociological validity either in terms of triangulation of data or confirmation of findings by participants to be problematic in that "all data are shaped by the circumstances of their production, and different data produced by different research procedures cannot be treated as equivalent for the purpose of corroboration".<sup>116</sup> Melia suggests that these techniques should still be used, however, because they serve a valuable reflexive purpose:

Triangulation and member validation both allow the researcher to reconsider his or her analyses from a novel standpoint; it is not just that additional data are available for study,

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<sup>112</sup> Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London: Falmer, 2000, p. 114.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. pp. 111-112.

<sup>114</sup> Hammersley, 1992, in Scott, D. Making judgements about research. In Usher and Scott, op. cit., 1996, 74-87.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.

but also that these additional data may alter the researcher's perception of the initial data. Since one important aspect of this reconsideration is an enhanced awareness of possible methodological biases, it can be seen that these so-called validation techniques may be potent agents for reflexive awareness, for an enhanced understanding of how research findings are constituted in the creative process of the research, rather than being pre-existent and simply awaiting discovery.<sup>117</sup>

In this study, I was able to compare reported experiences within interview sets and across schools and with other sources of data from the fieldwork that contributed to the case studies. In addition, the review of print media coverage of teaching, curriculum and assessment issues in the years of the study and in particular the realisation that teachers' representatives and politicians were articulating a similar reform agenda, made me seriously question my preconceptions about the capture of teachers' work from without.

On the basis of further reading engendered by the data, I was forced to revisit my preliminary readings and analyses of the data. Equally, when the data, together with my commentaries, were fed back to the participants I received two very different sets of responses. These made me re-examine the basis of the texts I had written. I received only positive and complimentary responses to the synthesis of individual classroom and leadership routines and priorities reported in chapters five, six, seven, eleven and twelve. In contrast, from a number of those to whom the drafts had been sent (see appendix four for details of the accompanying letter), the three case studies in chapters eight to ten provoked concern, questioning, hostility or, in one case, further data gathering by the participant to refute my comments. A mixture of further assurances on my part about the status of the drafts, telephone or face to face discussions, clarifications, e-mail correspondence and rewriting to take into account of these concerns resolved the issues in all cases. At times I was unsure what to do about those criticisms which at first glance struck me as unwarranted. After all, I had already omitted some interesting but potentially sensitive material on the basis that it might damage relationships within workgroups or schools, or that it made individuals or schools or 'Rivertown' identifiable, a particular problem in small societies like New Zealand.<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, the process brought home to me that these drafts as texts were in some instances read quite differently by me and some of the participants, all of whom had emotional, psychological and occupational interests in the "identity claims" that were being made by me about them.<sup>119</sup> They variously disagreed with my record of what had actually occurred or been

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<sup>116</sup> Op. cit., 1997, p. 38.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>118</sup> Tolich, M and Davidson, C. Beyond Cartwright: observing ethics in small town New Zealand. *New Zealand Sociology*, 1999, 14(1), 61-84.

<sup>119</sup> Carspecken, P. and MacGillivray, L. Raising consciousness about reflection, validity and meaning. In Shacklelock and Smyth, op. cit., 1998, pp. 186-187.

said (an objective validity claim),<sup>120</sup> my interpretation of the meaning of what occurred or was said (a subjective validity claim), or what was seen as a judgemental claim about the appropriateness of what was said or occurred (a normative-evaluative validity claim).<sup>121</sup> When I came to edit and rewrite the texts of these case studies (and the other data chapters), I tried to do so in a manner that engaged with the concerns articulated. Following Carspecken and MacGillivray's formulation, I re-read the data and the behaviour and talk they represented by imagining myself as the participants engaging in the same acts and talk, and the range of possible responses to them; by reflecting on the meaning of these actions, talk and responses from the participants' point of view or position; and attempting to articulate explanations and descriptions of the talk and actions, again from the participants' position. And finally, I examined the human motivations behind the actions and talk, again as if I was the participant.<sup>122</sup> Having done all that, I knew that, at the end of the day, what I was representing was in many respects a version of what the participants allowed me to see and hear. Nonetheless, I was satisfied that I had done as much as I could during the course of the study to enter these teachers' worlds on their terms in order to explore issues they considered meaningful.<sup>123</sup>

There are any number of ways of constructing qualitative representations of social experience - it depends what style of picture we want to paint, in this instance of teachers' and curriculum leaders' experiences. The majority of data represented in the eight chapters that follow comprise extracts from interview data. The conventions I adopted attempted to address the validity issues just discussed. I want to draw this account of the study to a close with a detailed discussion, justification and illustration of the approach I took to interview data selection, presentation and analysis in order to develop a plausible story or portrait of these teachers' work. I think the level of detail is justified given that the credibility of the empirical phase as a whole hinges largely on the quality of the interview data analysis.

## **REPRESENTING THE WORK OF TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM LEADERS**

There are a number of questions we need to consider when attempting to paint a plausible, representative picture<sup>124</sup> of the "workplace mentality"<sup>125</sup> of the participants in this study. These questions are fundamentally about power and the authority of voice, and in this context, about who may legitimately describe and evaluate what these teachers do:

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 185-187.

<sup>123</sup> Bourdieu, op. cit., 1996, p. 22.

<sup>124</sup> Lightfoot, S. *The good high school. Portraits of character and culture*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

1. How can we capture the thinking that underpins individual action?
2. To what extent do we attempt to portray idiosyncracies of local context?
3. How do we decide which elements to include in the picture?
4. Is our portrayal representative?

Each question is addressed in the following discussion.

### *1. How Can We Capture The Thinking That Underpins Individual Action?*

Drawing on Gilbert Ryle's distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' analyses of human activity, Gronn criticises the tradition of what he calls neo-Tayloristic, time-and-motion studies of (in his case) school principals at work.<sup>126</sup> In the eight such studies he reviewed, the focus of analysis was on the quantification of what individuals do and when (thin), rather than on attempting to document and understand why these individuals made the decisions and choices they did (thick). As Gronn argues, "the transition from thinness to thickness, or from a list of bodily movements to an interpretation of what they are for, is accomplished by reference to what the person had in mind".<sup>127</sup> To achieve this, individual events must be seen in context, as part of a saga or episode of connected administrative activities, the purpose or thread of which is revealed only when one understands where it leads. For Gronn, talk is central both to administrators' work and its analysis, thus in order to build the thick description "observations are necessary, but for sufficiency, observations must be interspersed with dialogue and some critical analysis of that dialogue".<sup>128</sup>

### *2. To What Extent Should We Attempt To Portray Idiosyncracies Of Local Context?*

Similarly, Bates has been utterly scornful of the distorting effects of positivist approaches to the analysis of educational phenomena (comprising as they do complex forms of individual action and social relationships) in which "the compilation of data [is] produced simply by the aggregation of individual cases".<sup>129</sup> A particular target for Bates' disapproval is educational research in the area of role theory:

Role theory is premised on the assumption that differences in organisation and position relate to differences in role perception and performance. Virtually all methodological studies of role, however, employ techniques of data aggregation which obscure the effects of differences in organisation and subsequent differences in the perception and

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<sup>125</sup> Bruckerhoff, C. *Between classes. Faculty life at Truman High*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1991, p. xiii.

<sup>126</sup> Ryle, 1971, In Gronn, P. Neo-Taylorism in educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 1982, 18(4), 17-35.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>129</sup> Bates, R. Educational policy and the new cult of efficiency. In Middleton, Codd and Jones, op. cit., 1990, p. 50.

performance of particular roles. The individualised, decontextualised data is typically then aggregated and factorised. The fascinating exercise of speculation about the meaning of the factors is then engaged in, totally free of the contextual clues which would allow more or less appropriate explanations to be provided.<sup>130</sup>

For Bates, actions, and differences in action between people and settings, may only be properly understood when 'contextual clues' are taken into account. In contrast, the tendency to disaggregate events from the contexts (cultural, political, socio-economic) in which they take place implies that it is possible to reduce 'practice' to generic, abstracted forms of 'performance' which may be enacted in any educational setting in the narrow pursuit of a science of educational management and the 'cult of efficiency'. The difficulty with the resultant pristine (and often anodyne) models of practice, is that they rarely accord closely with practitioners' own views of reality, nor, indeed, do they provide practicable guides to action.

### 3. *How Do We Decide Which Elements To Include In The Picture?*

In thin, mono-dimensional portrayals of teaching or curriculum leadership activity, which focus exclusively on the visible features of practice, decisions about the composition and content of the picture are invariably made not by practitioners themselves but by their detached observers - researchers, bureaucrats, politicians, inspectors - on behalf of teachers. Choices about what to include, and what to exclude, and about what is 'good' or 'bad' are generally made in the interests of generalisability and transferability - for example, the search for a generic taxonomy of competencies applicable to the evaluation of teachers' work in all establishments within a school system, or a synthesised set of 'effectiveness' factors which researchers can use to compare school with school and department with department across the country.

In seeking to understand the "broader principles" which inform teaching and, in our case, administrative action, Smyth argues powerfully for a reflective discourse informed by teachers' own practical concerns and theories about their work with a view to developing critically informed and "concrete action for change".<sup>131</sup> Historically, however, the control of teaching, and decisions about what is significant in teachers' practice, has resided far from the classroom:

The problem, then, is primarily a political one of who has the legitimate right to define what counts as knowledge about teaching. While teachers may have been reluctant in the past to be seen to be publicly exercising that claim, others outside of the classrooms have been far less reticent.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>131</sup> Smyth, J. *Teachers as collaborative learners*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993, pp. 114-115.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

Smyth cites Herbert Kohl who claims that unless teachers take on this theory-making responsibility themselves, the "vacuum" will be filled by "academic researchers and other groups".<sup>133</sup> On this argument, we need to ensure that our portrayals of practice honestly represent teachers' own concerns and theories about their day-to-day practice. In the same vein, as researchers, we perhaps ought to be humble enough to recognise "the power of the direct quotation to capture succinctly and vividly what could only be expressed dully and less economically in the researcher's own words".<sup>134</sup> Thus, in constructing our portrayals of practice, it is important both that the elements we select for analysis, and the words we use to describe them, provide a representative, empathetic and holistic picture of what is going on and why.

#### 4. *Is our portrayal representative?*

Our written accounts of the complex human action of others and the thinking which informs it are unlikely ever to be complete, or completely accurate. Indeed, rather than seeking to create a single authoritative or "declarative" version of events, some accounts (as stories) purposefully encourage and allow "readers the freedom to interpret and evaluate the text from their unique vantage points".<sup>135</sup> Arguably, the most we can hope for is a picture of a teacher or curriculum leader at work that is a representative, plausible and relevant rendering of the concerns and experiences of the person concerned.<sup>136</sup> In striving for this we might usefully acknowledge that even in studies which purposefully set out to give an authentic conception of teachers' thinking and voice, "much of the search for terms by means of which to conceptualize teachers' knowledge is a series of compromises in which the researcher proposes terms that do some justice to teachers' knowledge while still being acceptable in the academic context with its requirement of context-free rational discourse".<sup>137</sup>

Our discussion thus far has suggested that educational researchers as a group, for a number of reasons, may not have the best of track records in producing accounts of practice which meet these criteria. Yet it is possible, at least, to open up the way in which we have constructed our accounts to closer scrutiny than is customary in qualitative work and to enable the reader to challenge the 'validity' of our interpretation of the data.

For example, in making a distinction between observation and interpretation, Habermas asks the reader to consider the three conditions which are necessary for us to understand what someone is trying to tell us about their social world. First, he suggests, "interpreters relinquish the superiority that observers have by virtue of their privileged position, in that they themselves,

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<sup>133</sup> Kohl, H., 1983. In Smyth, Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Rudduck, op. cit., 1993, p. 18.

<sup>135</sup> Barone, T. Persuasive writings, vigilant readings, and reconstructed characters: the paradox of trust in educational storysharing. In J. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (Eds.). *Life history and narrative*. London: Falmer, 1995, p. 67.

<sup>136</sup> Melia, op. cit., 1997.

are drawn, at least potentially, into negotiations about the meaning and validity of utterances".<sup>138</sup> Second, the interpreter cannot simply assume that he or she shares the same "background assumptions and practices" as the person speaking. In this sense, interpretations are 'context dependent'. Third, the most we can hope to achieve is not the "truth" but an interpretation that is "correct", one that fits or suits what we are trying to understand.<sup>139</sup> And, in order to achieve this, argues Habermas, the interpreter must shift from a position of observer, to participant in the construction of "a common understanding or a shared *view*".<sup>140</sup> Thus the process of constructing an interpretative account based on a common understanding, is one in which the interpreter, or researcher, actively engages with the person providing the information to ensure that meanings of words and practices become explicit and shared through dialogue. Like Gronn, above, Habermas urges us to explicate the tacit meaning on which visible action is based. This is less straightforward than it may seem. Bourdieu, for example, discusses how a number of respondents in his interviews subtly resisted their "objectification" by the interviewer, while others used the interview as an exceptional opportunity to explain themselves and to have this put in the "public sphere".<sup>141</sup> There were occasions during this study when I was aware of this happening, for example in my interview with Eric about his inability to cope. On other occasions, areas of discussion were more obviously closed off by my participants, notably with regard to teacher competence and discipline issues. On others, particularly with Isadora, the impersonal pronoun 'One' rather than the personal 'I' was used in parts of the interview.

The possibility of arriving at representative, plausible and relevant interpretations or understandings of teachers' work is, I would suggest, enhanced if both the account of the event or action, the thinking which underpins it, and the interpreter's own thinking are presented for scrutiny together. Just such an approach to the presentation and analysis of qualitative data has been adopted recently both by Nash in a series of detailed ethnographic analyses of young people's experience of secondary schooling,<sup>142</sup> and by Bourdieu.<sup>143</sup> Briefly, Nash uses lengthy extracts of carefully selected interview data to which he adds an analytical commentary as he sets out to "offer explanations of social events, phenomena, and processes ... through a close investigation of the everyday lives of individuals ... [with a focus] on the processes by which

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<sup>137</sup> Elbaz, op. cit., 1990, p. 18.

<sup>138</sup> Habermas, J. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Trans. C. Lenhardt and S. Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990, p. 26.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>141</sup> Bourdieu, op. cit., 1996, pp. 25-27.

<sup>142</sup> Nash, R. and Major, S. *'We have to know it ... ' Concepts of knowledge and education. Voices from a New Zealand sixth form*. Volume 1. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1995; Nash, R. *Inequality/difference. A sociology of education*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997.

<sup>143</sup> Op. cit. 1996. And, Bourdieu, P. et al. *The weight of the world: social suffering in contemporary society*. Trans. P. Pankhurst Ferguson. Oxford: Polity Press, 1999.

students come to form their conceptions of what they can learn from school".<sup>144</sup> In each extract he allows the discourse to develop, occasionally over several pages, as the young person explains his or her ideas, emotions, experiences of schooling and life. His commentary provides a sociological interpretation of what the young person is saying but the crucial point is that this commentary is itself open to interpretation and critique on the basis of the raw data presented. Because the data and the commentary are given equal prominence, and the students' voices are allowed to be heard, as Nash puts it, the reader is placed in the unusual position (at least for qualitative educational research) of being able to develop alternative readings of the text, and also to see how Nash has arrived at the analysis he presents. This is important because although, as Jean Rudduck rightly argues, "some statements carry a remarkably rich density of meaning in a few words",<sup>145</sup> this does not abrogate researchers from their obligation to demonstrate how they have arrived at an interpretation of those words, their meaning, and the context in which they were uttered.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Nash's approach to data presentation and analysis has been strongly attacked (by one fellow sociologist of education) for presenting the reader with "a mass of words, transcriptions full of jumbled sentences, insights, fantasies, jokes, uncertainties, ironies, stretched out on the page ... You expect the authors to digest it, put it all in order, make some sense of it, give it meaning. Nash and Major refuse, largely".<sup>146</sup>

But, this criticism completely misses the delightfully simple, heuristic virtues of a mode of presentation which sets out "to privilege the students as authors rather than to imprison their voices within the confines of an academic discourse sounding an overriding authority of its own".<sup>147</sup> The mode of presentation thus encourages the reader to engage with the text, puts the reader in a position to be able to develop his or her own reading and understanding of the student's words, and, most unusually, allows the reader to come to an informed position on Nash, the author's, own commentary.

Although novel in the domain of qualitative educational research, the rationale behind the approach was applied with notable success and for broadly similar purposes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the French post-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat, through his experimentation and refinement of the technique of 'pointillism' (Figure 4.2). Seurat eschewed contour, there are no definitive lines and immediately recognisable objects in his painting, only an assemblage of carefully arranged coloured dots the purpose of which is to encourage the viewer to actively strive to make sense of what he or she is seeing: "In Seurat's canvasses, what happens is that nature loses its readily decipherable aspect. It is not possible to observe in a single glance what

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<sup>144</sup> Nash, op. cit., 1997, pp. 3-4.

<sup>145</sup> Op. cit., 1993, p. 19

<sup>146</sup> Jones, A. A book review of 'We have to know it ...' Concepts of knowledge and education. *NZJES*, 1996, 31(2), p. 209.

<sup>147</sup> Nash, op. cit., 1997, p. 5.

the artist wants us to see. [Thus] the elusive elements of reality can be grasped only intellectually".<sup>148</sup> By using careful selection and placement of tone and colour to create shape, shadow and movement, Seurat was able to demand that the viewers themselves bring the canvas to life and vest it with a meaning. Similarly, in our case, the careful use of interview data avoids presenting readers with a single definitive interpretation of events and their meaning but allows them to construct their own interpretation, to in effect: "look closely at both the broad influences and the local actions that shape the contexts for teachers and students [and] to theorize carefully the relationships between them".<sup>149</sup> So how did this approach look in practice?

Below, to emphasise the hermeneutic potential of this 'pointillist' approach to data presentation and interpretation, I provide (1) a brief quotation from an interview undertaken with William, a newly appointed HoD in a large mathematics department (11 staff) at Totara, one of the schools in the study, (2) a longer extract from which the quotation was lifted and which allows William's thinking to develop, and (3) my reading of William's thinking.

(1) A lot of my time off I need to spend on building relationships with the teachers in my department so that I can more or less convince them to do things they really don't want to. [William, newly appointed HoD Maths]

(2) I've got a big department that's going through a lot of changes in terms of the educational requirements. Over the last few years we've had a new curriculum and new assessment thing and I guess what I see my main role is to make sure that those things happen. ... I spend a lot of time building relationships with the people in the department. The nuts and bolts of the testing or the filing of resources, all those nuts and bolts sorts of things I can't physically do by myself, not [and] look after ten teachers. So I have got to have their help. I quite like a flat structure so I need to delegate jobs because we've got so many courses on. ... A lot of my time off I need to spend on building relationships with the teachers in my department so that I can more or less convince them to do things they really don't want to. And it's nice. They can feel it's positive, they have ownership of what's going on. ... In this curriculum change the form is partially theirs because they were involved in doing it. It's not something that's being imposed upon them. That takes a lot of time. You spend a lot of time talking to people, you always have to listen too. Mathematics is a subject which kids tend to either love or hate. Unfortunately, there's an awful lot of hating. A lot of the time I spend time listening to the teachers about kids who are not doing the right thing. They're either passed on to me from the teacher or the dean as in the case this morning. And of course that takes up all your interval and things like that. But I see my role as being the slightly bigger stick than the teacher before we get to

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<sup>148</sup> Redon, *Seurat and the symbolists*. London: Bloomsbury Books, 1970, p. 6.

<sup>149</sup> Siskin, L. and Little, J. The subject department. Continuities and critiques. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1995, p. 17.

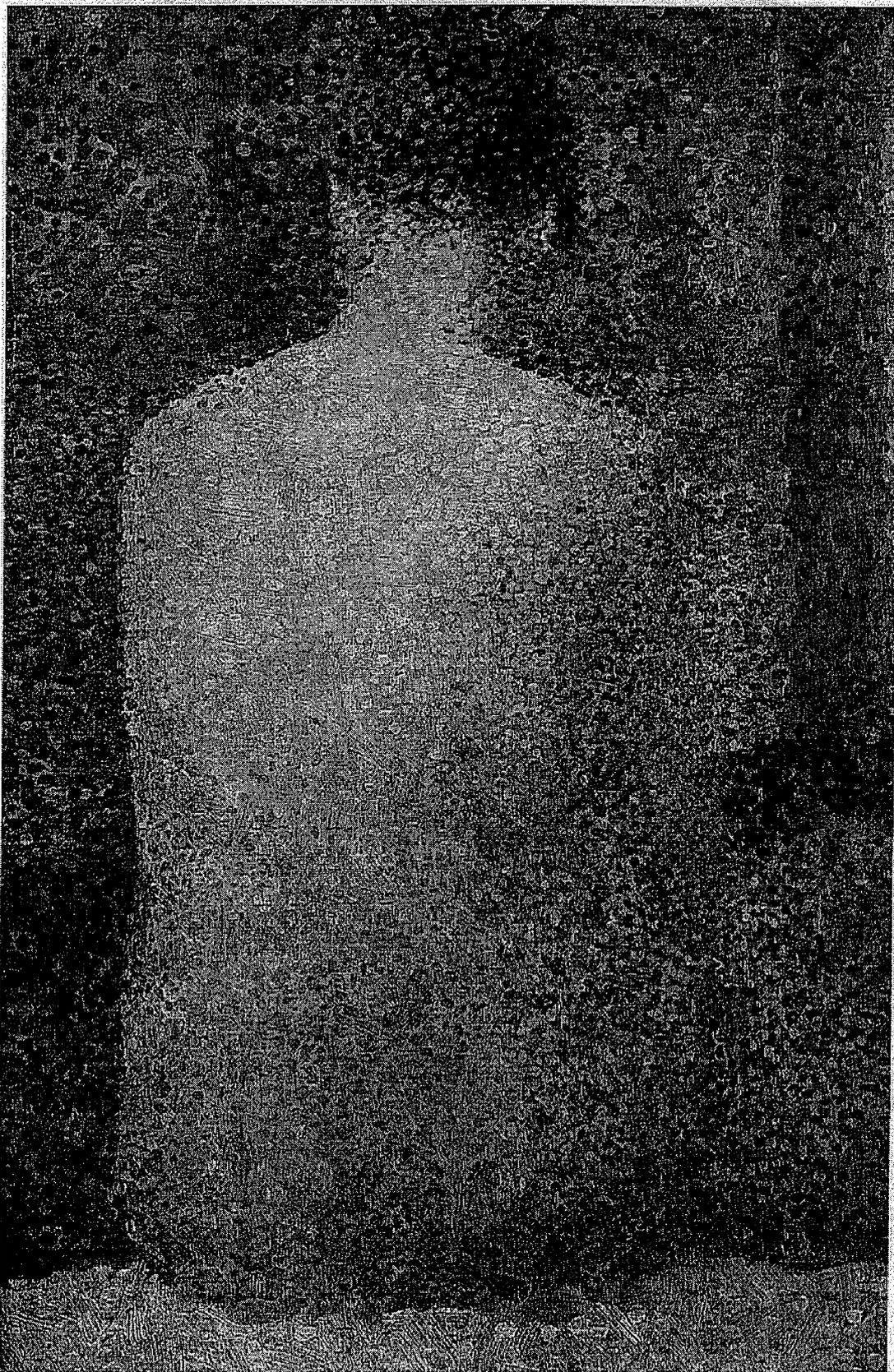


Figure 4.2 Study for Les Poseuses, Model from Behind, Georges Seurat

the end bigger stick of the top three sort of thing. So there's certainly that. But I think for me to be most effective I've got to take a lot of information that comes into the school about curriculum change, read it. I think well this is a load of rubbish but we're going to have to do it so how can I turn this to the people who work with me to make it as positive as they possibly can so it'll get done. I have to turn things around. ... Try to really take the positives out and accentuate them and **downplay** the negatives. Because we are aware of them, and I have to find a lot of [information]. How do we do this? ... I'm working both on getting information for them ... and I'm the one that tries to go and find and answer to questions and look in the documentation. But I guess my main role is, I need to do that for the whole team together, because otherwise we just won't get the job done as individuals. And if I can do that, all the little nuts and bolts will fall into place because people will want to do it and their motivation's higher. And they feel if their being a teacher in the classroom is better and they don't have as many discipline problems and they don't have as many keeping up to date problems because they're involved in the process. And if I don't do that, I don't have those relationships with those people, all the other things will fall down. You can't make them happen if the teachers don't want to do it. [William, newly appointed HoD Maths]

Taken at face value, the brief first quotation implies something of a Machiavellian and fairly instrumental approach to the management of colleagues on the part of William (and this, in fact, is precisely the response provoked among groups of teachers to whom it has been shown): the way to get things done effectively is to "build relationships" with the members of the workgroup in order "to convince them to do things" they probably would not do of their own volition. In as much as I am reworking the actual words used by William, this is an accurate reading of what appears on the page. And this, in many regards, is precisely what we read month by month in published research reports of teachers' practice in secondary schools: a theme is identified and elaborated by the researcher and suitably meaningful gobblets of interview or observational data are incorporated to exemplify the theme. With increasing frequency, we are told that the data and analysis have been fed back to the research participants for comment but, at the end of the day, what is presented is still largely, to use Nash's words "an academic discourse with an overriding authority of its own".

However, as the second extract reveals, once we begin to attend to the meaning given to the actions, using the available contextual clues, with the intention to more completely present an account that demonstrates understanding of the 'situated complexities' of the context in which William works, and, as Carspecken and MacGillivray urge (above), on his or her terms, our understanding of why, in that mathematics department, at that time, in the context of those external imperatives and among those workgroup colleagues, William was choosing to act in the way he did.

(3) In an earlier discussion, as we were negotiating a specific focus for this part of the study, William told me that he was in only his second term at the school and that he had been appointed to the HoD position at the end of a year-long selection process over an older and more experienced acting HoD who was extremely well regarded by her

colleagues. William had come from another school, was less experienced than a majority of the other teachers in his new department, all of whom were very well-qualified teachers of mathematics and, on William's assessment, a number of them he saw as better classroom practitioners than he was. The mathematics workgroup, like many others in the school had a core of settled, long-serving and high achieving staff. Prior to the arrival of a new principal just after William's appointment, the school had operated along quite traditional hierarchical lines with an expectation of deference to the formal authority of the HoD at departmental level. In addition, a new national mathematics curriculum prescription had been published in 1992, with which the workgroup was still coming to terms, and a form of competence based assessment was being trialled nationally in a number of subjects, including mathematics. Thus the context in which William had taken up his post was fraught with potential difficulties and uncertainties at both workgroup, subject, school and system levels. Significantly, as we read through the longer extract, we see that his working context reflects most or all of the manifold subject, occupational and social issues raised in the review of the literature earlier in this paper and it is through this complex web of relationships, responsibilities, accountabilities and epistemic concerns, that William has to negotiate a workable path.

The sheer complexity of this task comes through in William's own tentative reasoning where he feels obliged to see that the curriculum and assessment changes are implemented throughout a large department. He also sees a number of practical workload expectations made upon him as HoD by his colleagues, from the "nuts 'n' bolts" of resource management and organisation, to student discipline, to liaison with external agencies of the state. This, he suggests, is too much for him alone if he is also to do the necessary talking and listening, build interpersonal relationships and the self-esteem of others and secure the confidence of his colleagues with the efficient management of student discipline. Certainly, William does say that part of his role is to get people to do things they may not want to, but, he also aims to "take the positives out and accentuate them, and downplay the negatives". It is clear from what he says that he and his colleagues have identified some shortcoming in the new curriculum and assessment frameworks and that in order to make sure these are fully worked through, as HoD he has to minimise any unwarranted resistance the innovations might engender among colleagues. Nevertheless, what strikes me about the longer extract, and William's reasoning behind his various connected actions is that he is attempting to build a collective commitment to and experience of successfully responding to imposed educational change. In order to do this, he cannot afford, like the stereotypical, overloaded subject HoD, to be left himself with responsibility for all the basic departmental, resource and course administration. Rather, his colleagues have to be

prepared to take on a share of the administration and to contribute to curriculum and assessment development. In the second extract, for me, what William is talking about is not so much getting people to do what they do not want to do, but about demonstrating and persuading them of the value of adopting a flatter structure of shared administrative workloads in order to provide the essential space for the more important professional, collegial discussion of pedagogically demanding curriculum and assessment change.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I adopted a reflexive approach to the analysis and justification of the research approach taken in the study as a whole. In previous chapters, the various embedded contexts within which secondary teachers work were identified. In this chapter, the emphasis has been on developing criteria of inquiry that allowed for the study of contemporary teachers' day-to-day strategising within the broader historical, political and occupational discursive practices that shape this work. In order to uncover the thinking and decision-making that informs teachers' action and interaction, the concept of 'work-story' research appeared to offer the possibility of gaining insights about teachers' work on their terms and through the conceptual frameworks they use themselves. Some of the practical difficulties of gaining access to, analysing and representing the complexities of these teachers' work were discussed.

In the chapters that follow I provide work-storied accounts of (a) the day-to-day-routines of their work and what they were attempting to achieve; (b) the 'practical' development priorities that informed their curriculum leadership work; (c) three of these priorities in greater detail; and (d) the 'saga' of four curriculum leaders' work over the course of a school year.

In chapter thirteen, I draw the data chapters together and theorise these teachers' work to the wider discursive practices of secondary school teaching and curriculum leadership in New Zealand secondary schools since the 1940s.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ROUTINE WORK

This chapter provides a commentary on selected 'work-stories' of routine teaching taken from semi-structured group interviews with some of the teachers in the four schools in the study. These teachers conceptualised their teaching and its development in three ways: the attempt to be responsive to students and their needs; the organisation and delivery of the subject curriculum in a way that made sense to students, and the processes of becoming an experienced and empathetic teacher.

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter, begins the process of sensitising us as outsiders to the minutiae of secondary teachers' work using these teachers' 'work-stories' derived from semi-structured interview data. I focus, for the purposes of illumination, on some of the variety of general classroom routines and strategies, accumulated over time and through experience, reported by the participants in the study and which we might reasonably assume have largely become sedimented within and integral to their day-to-day teaching practice. The selection documented here is intended to be neither representative nor exhaustive in its range. The aim is, first, to allow us to enter these teachers' occupational worlds, on their terms, and understand, in concrete, anecdotal fashion how the participants in this study conceptualised what they were attempting to do day in, day out as run of the mill, mid career classroom teachers who also had a range of wider curriculum and organisational responsibilities; and, second, to give us as readers a comparatively lengthy exposure to the routine occupational language and reasoning (in effect the discursive texts) by which these teachers talked about their work. The intention here is to follow Spinoza's precept: "Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate – understand".\*

The data extracts used are unconventionally long. More than half the chapter comprises extracts from the interview data. However, this is considered to be essential to challenge the preconceptions we may be tempted to bring to the reading from our own experiences of learning and teaching in secondary schools. The reader is thereby introduced to the professional, social world of the teachers in the study, in as far as it is possible, through the teachers' own conceptual frameworks rather than those of the researcher.<sup>3</sup> The balance of data and commentary is also consistent with the logic and axiology of the discussion in the previous chapter. To have consigned the participants' work-stories to an appendix or to mediate them

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<sup>1</sup> Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London: Falmer Press, 2000, pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu, P. et al. *The weight of the world. Social suffering in contemporary society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 1.

through an overriding academic discourse<sup>4</sup> would have been to marginalise their experiences and voices as practitioners.

In secondary schools in New Zealand, the boundaries between curriculum and administrative areas typically are denoted by the appointment of designated people with formal responsibilities (i.e. head of department, dean, PR/MU unit holder) for the organisation, delivery, evaluation and administration of the curriculum; for supporting the professional development and day to day work of immediate colleagues,<sup>5</sup> and for the advising, counselling, monitoring and disciplining of students. In this regard, I intend to examine, in the next chapter, how these people conceived their own wider management role, and how this work was reportedly mediated both by curriculum and administrative changes, the specific characteristics of the curriculum and management group(s) to which they belonged, and by the subject and institutional sub-cultures within which they worked and socialised.

Such responsibilities and individual or collective responses to them are not fixed in time and space; hence, I want, also, to explore both of the above in the context of some of the immediate priorities (i.e. content, pedagogy, evaluation) that were faced by these functioning groups of people in each of the four schools in the study (chapter seven). Teachers do not seek to improve their classroom and workgroup practice in arbitrary ways. Their work and development priorities are generated by and intended to address the classroom, curriculum, administrative, personal and interpersonal challenges they encounter in the tapestry of their daily, seasonal, annual and career long work patterns. Whereas preferred personal teaching routines and strategies are derived from a process of trial and error over time, and may remain transferable and comparatively stable across career, classroom and school contexts, this is not necessarily true of collective routines, procedures and processes, which by their very nature are a product of agreement, compromise and accommodation.

Changes to collective teaching, administrative and curriculum practice within established, subject based or cross-curricular work groups often take place when curriculum and associated assessment schemes or prescriptions change in specific ways, in response either to particular initiatives from senior staff, school-wide committees and working parties or external accrediting, validating, and inspection agencies, thereby creating the expectation that the practice of teachers within the curriculum group as a whole will change, and will do so more or

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<sup>3</sup> Carspecken, P. and McGillivray, L. Raising consciousness about reflection, validity and meaning. In G. Shacklock and J. Smyth (Eds.). *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer Press, 1998, pp. 186-187.

<sup>4</sup> Nash, R. *Inequality/difference. A sociology of education*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> In small secondary schools such as Rimu and Kauri, as we shall see in the next chapter, the notion of hard divisions between curriculum areas is problematic. In these schools boundaries are soft not hard because curriculum areas are frequently taught by non-specialists. Teachers have multiple curriculum, pastoral and administrative responsibilities that in a larger school might be taken by more than one person. Departments, even in the high status curriculum areas of English, mathematics and science, are often small and many staff teach in more than one subject area.

less consistently. Workgroups and their priorities change over time as individual staff (who bring or take with them particular areas of interest or expertise within the subject domain) and groups of students come and go, curriculum prescriptions and local schemes of work change, administrative structures mutate, and as accountability demands intensify.

Unlike personal pedagogy or lesson repertoires and classroom management strategies which are tacitly agreed to belong to the largely private world of the practitioner's own classroom, any proposed group changes are likely to be scrutinised collectively and, arguably, the changes become more threatening and demanding for individuals and their practice as a result. To begin to understand why and how, and, indeed, the extent to which, groups of teachers seek to modify and develop their collective practice, we need to locate our analysis both in the historically specific (and, these days, ever-changing) demands made upon them as a group of colleagues and in the emergence of their individual and collective responses to these demands.

Within the study as a whole, then, this chapter provides some essential preliminary, grounded insights on some of the idiosyncratic working patterns and priorities of these particular secondary school teachers, all of whom were engaged, during the period of the research in (personal and) collective curriculum related initiatives and had specific institutional responsibilities for these. In later chapters, we examine in greater detail the unfolding of several of these initiatives, the nature of the personal and collective development of practice that takes place within them, and the diverse ways in which curriculum leaders attempt to lubricate these context-specific processes. And, following this examination of specific curriculum initiatives, we focus more sharply on the trajectories of four heads of department, and on the ebb and flow of personal, curriculum and institutional demands made on them during the course of one school year. We begin, however, with a broad-brush depiction of some of the ordinary pedagogical routines and classroom strategies employed by secondary school teachers in the practice of their craft.

## **ROUTINE TEACHING**

In order to gain entry to these teachers' worlds without creating, as it were, too many ripples on the surface of the pond, qualitative data were gathered in semi structured group interviews on teachers' conceptions of lesson structure, preferred teaching approaches and the control-education<sup>6</sup> dilemmas routinely faced by them in the classroom. These issues were then elaborated in one-to-one interviews when their current curriculum and management priorities were identified and a more precise context for the research was developed from the teachers'

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<sup>6</sup>Connell, R. *Teachers'work*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985, p. 174.

own immediate curricular, interpersonal and administrative priorities. Despite the common opening gambit, each of the exploratory group interviews proceeded to focus on quite distinct issues. The first group focus interview at Totara was varied and wide-ranging, and from this I synthesised a number of themes around which to organise the discussion of conceptions of teachers' routine work as a whole:<sup>7</sup> (1) responsiveness to students; (2) scaffolding the curriculum; and (3) the experienced teacher. Data that illustrate each of these themes are presented and discussed in turn.

### *Responsiveness To Students*

In this part of the chapter, we consider the basic routines of teaching in both hospitable and less hospitable pedagogic contexts.

### **Teaching at its smoothest**

**Nina:** I'd prefer a seventh form last period.

**Lillian:** I think they're not easier, but different. Seventh form watch the clock much more, I find. At the end of the day they're probably as physically stuffed as we are. Whereas third and fourth may be getting to the discipline, trying to keep them motivated. That's my view.

**Adam:** I'd prefer not to have a seventh form at the end of the day because I think

**Lillian:** They don't learn.

**Adam:** It's not as productive time and the distance you cover in any one period with the seventh form can be so much greater than the last - because I have mine last period on a Friday, and it takes a period of a week away, in some ways, they're a bit focused on the weekend, and they've had it.

**Lillian:** I have one - my seventh form class first period on a Monday, which is nearly as bad, because they have to catch up on the gossip. Interesting creatures in seventh form.

**Interviewer:** So how do you get round that? Do you just go with the flow?

**Nina:** Well, I don't - like on a Tuesday I would never introduce a new topic. I would do something like I did this afternoon, they're all very much on task and working busily, because it was hands on, building, sketching, learning a lot. We just covered it the previous day, so I think that they were probably as involved as they would be because of the type of work that it was. It wasn't a lecture type situation. I'd avoid that, wouldn't you? On the last period?

**Adam:** I would tend

**Nina:** Introducing something new?

**Adam:** To give them things that they could work at their own pace, and finish later.

**Nina:** Motivate them to work quickly.

**Adam:** So that if they're full on, they can be full on, and nobody's holding them up, and if they're not, then they can choose - they can choose to approach it whichever way they see fit. And also if they're on task you can go and talk to them as well. So that the things you want to teach as a whole class you tend to do in the morning.

**Interviewer:** So you do divide up the day - the sorts of things that you do.

**Lillian:** But on Mondays I'm usually fresher than I am on a Tuesday. And it's much easier to be scintillating and to make things more interesting.

**Nina:** I thought Tuesday morning was supposed to be the most productive time of the week.

**Lillian:** Yes. That's because you've got the weekend completely out of that system.

**Adam:** Well I have my biological science, which are the hand picked ordinary fifth formers for science, and I have them first period on Tuesday. And yes, you can actually do the theoretical stuff then which you can't at any other period of the week, to any where near the same extent. You can keep them with you for a period, and they can actually understand and respond, as a

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<sup>7</sup>The ways in which the two participants at Kauri discussed teaching were quite situationally specific and are discussed in chapter six as part of their priorities for action. The extracts in this chapter are taken from group-focused interviews with teachers at the other schools between March and May 1996.

group still, whereas if you try it after lunch, you'll get some, but never all. And you're setting yourself up and setting them up for it not to go well, if you try hitting the theoretical in the afternoon.

**Nina:** Worst period is Thursday six, because at least Friday six you've got the weekend to look forward to. Thursday six (laughs) you're at the end of the week and you've just got another day.

**Lillian:** I have that double period Thursday afternoon - with my seventh - and I find that really quite good. I know group work and economics works really well in afternoons with junior classes, even fifth form. They're much more productive as a group in the afternoon than they are as individuals - and they gain a lot, it's not a wasted period. They just seem to be able to motivate each other to get on with doing the stuff, whereas if they were doing something in isolation they flag a bit.

**Nina:** One of the strategies that I've used when that double period is - at the end of the break, give them a quick break, two minutes, to go to the loo, or whatever, and then play a theme song, like I've got 'Step right in'. Play that, really loud, so they can hear it wherever they are. As soon as it's over you stop - you're into it again. And just a bit of paper there - jot down the names of any that come in after - it's not an issue, not a big issue - and they stay behind later. I only had to get them to stay behind a couple of times. It's just a really fun way of making, what can be a real drag, especially I found with that Thursday - I had a period with seventh form last year - getting them to come back was quite difficult, some of them, the chemistry lab is just opposite the common room. You'd have to go in there and get them out, and all this sort of thing, so -just this blaring music.

The extract possibly depicts secondary school teaching at its idyllic best ("a fun way of making what can be a real drag"), its smoothest and its most relaxed, in the sense that these three experienced classroom practitioners at Totara were sensitive to the rhythms of the segmented, timetabled week for students and had worked out the most productive ways of packaging curriculum content and pedagogy to take advantage of the subject time they had available to them. Lillian, Nina and Adam 'know' from experience that, for example: mornings were more productive than afternoons, that on Fridays students' attention was focused firmly on the weekend, that the older students, at least, needed to catch up on gossip after the weekend, that students were likely to be physically tired towards the end of the afternoon and that in younger students, this may increase the likelihood of discipline problems. Experience had taught them that all days and periods were not the same. The teachers did not simply abandon their curriculum objectives for large parts of the week however; they appeared to have acknowledged the difficulties of the conventional secondary school curriculum and developed common but precisely targeted routines and approaches, modified to compensate for reduced student attention, motivation and, occasionally, co-operation at certain times of the day and week. For example, new concepts were generally introduced using whole class teaching in the mornings, at the beginning of the week and were followed by after lunch periods of application and consolidation to allow students to work at their own pace; organising students into groups in the afternoons could help them to keep each other focused and on task; this allowed teachers to monitor individual progress and understanding and the nature of the assigned work affords students the opportunity to catch up after the lesson, in their own time.

While much of this productive yet relaxed busyness may no doubt be attributed to the experience and intuitively exercised classroom orchestration skills of the three practitioners, an

image of what appeared to be the generally unproblematic nature of teacher-student relationships and curriculum delivery at Totara was reinforced in the language used. Adam, for instance, talked of students choosing to study "whichever way they see fit" as if there was a partnership, a genuinely shared commitment to learning, to which students brought the necessary study skills and sufficient motivation to get themselves through the more tedious parts of the afternoon or week. Similarly, Lillian organised groups so that students could motivate each other and get on, while Nina felt confident enough to include a 'comfort break' with her oldest students on Thursday afternoons and to call them back to work with the innovative loud rock music. As she said, getting the class back on task "isn't an issue" and her objective was to make the one hour forty minute block "fun", not "a drag".

The stereotypical control, discipline and motivation of student issues that permeate the schoolteacher literature were barely perceptible here and, where they existed, they were seemingly just the sort of basic foibles of physical tiredness, wandering attention and lethargy that might be seen in any group of adults working together in a busy, non manual occupational setting. There was no sense of resistance, active or passive, to schooling, learning or the curriculum in this passage. That is not to suggest that these teachers did not occasionally encounter issues of control and discipline in their teaching; indeed such challenges did exist with particular groups of students within the wider institution at Totara (see, for example, William, Isadora and Julia's extract below). The point is that the talk here was premised on the assumption that not even a single period was "wasted", that all the time available was productive teaching and learning time, and also "fun", and that students as a group were expected to be increasingly self-motivating and self-monitoring with age.

This was certainly not the case at Rimu (or, indeed, more graphically, at Kauri) where teaching and learning strategies were mediated principally through teachers' awareness of and responses to the chronic effects of poor levels of student motivation within a culture of creeping and progressive large scale student alienation from the demands of day to day learning and the school-long processes of credential acquisition.

### **Motivation and control**

The following extract gives some indication of the nature of these challenges. It opens as Ruth compares her current experience at Rimu with that in her previous school in a largely professional, commuter populated, Wellington satellite community.

Ruth: **Huge** differences. [At] the former school the students are much more tolerant of each other and quieter in the classroom. If you ask them to be quiet usually they are, you don't have the management problems that you have here. They're also very used to doing co-operative group work because a number of the staff do it, whereas they're not used to it here so to introduce it is a major thing, it can't be used a lot. Day to day management: a lot more backup here as far as management problems go in the classroom. If you do have a problem you'll find

there's a lot of staff willing to help you whereas at the former school you didn't, it was seen as your problem and you were a bad teacher if you had a problem in the class. [...] Very easy here, you just have to ask someone and basically they help you out. A definite structure with the Deans. If it's serious, Ivan, Dennis, Alice help you out.

Interviewer: It's just OK to say "I'm having this ..."?

Ruth: Yeah, totally acceptable which gives you a lot of confidence. So it definitely seems like it's not your problem,<sup>8</sup> it's the student's problem which is nice and reassuring. And even the teachers around you, if you need a break just shove them into the classroom next door and it's quite OK.

Interviewer: Tim: you've been here considerably longer.

Tim: Yes, 16 years I think, 1980 I started here.

Interviewer: If somebody was to ask you what it's like teaching at Rimu, what sorts of things would you say?

Tim: I'd say that it's very challenging that you have to be very aware of the consumer, the student, because we have a very well defined clientele and I'd say that teaching has to be very clear in its expectations. But while different styles are possible and are to be celebrated, the styles must always be focused on the realities of the students who are the recipients of those styles. So I would say go cautious, go steadily, make sure that you have a very clear idea yourself of what it is you're trying to achieve within each time frame, moving from the longer term to the specific start of the longer term and then come back to the specific - what does that mean in terms of today? And convey that clarity to the students, make it structured, make sure there's variety. The concentration span even of senior students at this school is limited. And somewhere in there do well by the more able who can too easily be the casualty of this environment.

Ruth: That lack of motivation in the senior school is a problem, having just marked the seventh form exams, they aim far too low and they are capable of much much better than what they do.

Ivan: That's one of the things that people who've come to the school fairly recently notice, There's the potential out there but the kids often don't believe in it themselves. The kids at this school are as bright as any that I've seen in any other place, not as many of them of course. Just getting them to believe that they can do it.

Ruth: And put the effort in.

Ivan: Clearly, when you think of some of the backgrounds some of them come from, plus this student loan business now. They can't even think about perhaps getting a job these people much less think of going on to further education when they leave school and building up a huge debt. It's getting harder and harder and harder.

Interviewer: The picture I've got so far is teaching being challenging in terms of classroom behaviour, management and also in terms of motivation.

Ruth: Motivation is the biggest thing, I think, that we face here, always having to motivate the students.

Interviewer: How does this lack of motivation manifest itself, is it apathy or something more active than that ...

Ruth: Work not done in the classroom. Just getting the pen on the paper sometimes is a major feat<sup>9</sup>.

Tim: But you know that if you expect homework done and in on time, that you go into that class knowing there's going to be quite a chunk of that lesson, it's then that preparation well in advance, where you're just going to have to make sure the rest of the class can do what they

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<sup>8</sup> In her feedback on the draft chapter, Ruth elaborated this point: "Staff are still reflective and try different strategies/analyse if they have done something to cause a problem, but colleagues do not initially blame the teacher, they support the teacher".

<sup>9</sup> In his analysis of a number of individual students' educational trajectories in the senior forms of secondary schools, Nash writes poignantly of those who 'get tired of trying' when they feel they have been educated enough and give up the struggle. I thought the tone of Ruth's comments here suggested something similar going on; that many students did not rebel at Rimu, they simply got tired and gave up the struggle. In her comments on the draft of this chapter, Ruth disagreed arguing that some "often very capable" students did "rebel". Ivan also commented on a general "lack of motivation and desire to succeed in exams from all but the top few" in each of the four schools he had taught in. See Nash, R. assisted by Major, S. *Inequality difference. A sociology of education*. Palmerston North; ERDC Press, 1997, p. 4; Nash, R. assisted by Major, S. *A year in the sixth form*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997, p. 32.

can and are as much on task as possible, you're then going to have to go through the whole ritual, you haven't done yours here's your consequence, you haven't done yours, here's your consequence, and it is quite a ritual, just that process of getting in assignments and getting in homework because a lot will simply not have done it and if we're going to react to that as we should then that takes quite a bit of time to react and the consequences they face. Then of course, the days that follow where you've got to make sure the consequences are followed through.

Interviewer: And is there a proportion of students that you can apply that to, off the top of your head? Is it the majority of students or a significant minority?

Ruth: No, it depends what level you're talking about. At the start of the third form you'd get just about a hundred percent of them doing their homework. During the year it seems to slacken off, and by the fourth form, what would it be?

Tim: Interesting because I've found it to be about a third in third form, are just bewildered or claim to be by this time so different experience there. [...] That really struck me, generally my experience has been yours, that they're good, they're keen to learn and so on. But yeah, John, I suppose a big number especially in the third and fourth form certainly, there's quite a number. So much so that the school's responded by having a form letter now, which tries to make this as painless for the teacher as possible. We always used to devise our own which takes time and trouble and individualise each one, so there's now a form letter. So we're letting the home know, and I think that's a really important part of the process, is making sure that home is accepting some of the responsibility here too, cos' home is often the first to say that these students are not getting homework, it's very important that they know that these students are not doing the homework.

Ivan: The most common complaint that I hear about in relation to the school, is the lack of homework that's set especially in relation to primary school, it comes from certain areas, the South area where they obviously seem to give them more homework. The problem is the fourth form as well, where the students are resisting the staff and I think it's really important that we let the parents know that we do set the homework. I wonder whether sometimes we give up a wee bit too easily too. As Tim said it's a huge battle through the period, we lose a lot of teaching time just by going and doing that. Unfortunately we've got to just make sure the lowest common denominator doesn't operate.

At Ruth's former school, control was less of an issue. In the typical classroom environment students were quieter. They had been taught and were used to enacting a structured form of co-operative learning in classes throughout the school and classroom management issues were individualized. That is, on the occasions when they arose they were attributable to poor teachers. In contrast, and in addition to an explicitly behaviourist assertive discipline policy that operated in the school's classrooms,<sup>10</sup> Rimu had developed a professional culture and discipline procedures that provided tangible mutual support. Teachers could gain immediate breathing space (Ruth's use of the word "break" implied that conflict exists as an ever-present but latent classroom norm within the school) by asking colleagues in the next door classroom to take individual students, while, outside one's classroom there was a network of deans and, beyond these, senior management staff who could be called on when the need arose. Ruth felt reassured by the assumption that control issues were conceptualised as the student's problem not the teacher's. Classroom management difficulties were, it would seem, omnipresent and a characteristic feature of teaching at Rimu, hence people were always "willing to help you" out.

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<sup>10</sup>Tim's rather self-mocking description of his standard lesson opening: "I stand up at the front in the centre of the room with my felt pen hovering by the assertive discipline corner, defensively! (laughs)... I've got a couple of quite strong philosophical views on that one and ... this view that you always catch

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Further, Ruth's opening comments suggested that the students at Rimu were typically less tolerant of each other in the classroom. To what extent, though, is "the problem" actually viewed as the student's?

Ruth's discussion on another occasion of her social studies programme and its assessment revealed her as a deeply thoughtful and knowledgeable teacher, concerned to structure teaching and assessment closely to the needs of students and unlikely to pathologise the behaviour of students who challenged her authority in the classroom. Equally, she appeared happy to have made the shift from a comparatively relaxed teaching environment of her former school, to the occupational environment that Tim after sixteen years described simply as 'challenging'. The rest of the extract (above) suggested that Ruth, Tim and Ivan, the principal, not only had a high degree of empathy with the students and their social and educational needs but also a clear understanding of the particular forms of teaching and organisational support structures that were required to attempt to capture and maintain student motivation levels throughout their high school career at Rimu.

The prospects for success were not auspicious. While (most of) the students arrived keen and receptive to learning in the third form (and there was, in the junior school, an extension class in each year for the 'more able' students), motivation and persistence dissipated over time. Ivan's comments suggested that recent shifts in education policy, notably the student loans scheme, and the shrinking youth labour market, materially affected the school's approaches to productively maintaining students in the academic credentialling process. That this problem was endemic to the school was underscored by the fact that Rimu had developed a photocopied letter to send to parents for homework not completed. There was a constant struggle to effectively communicate with and inform parents about school policy and to secure their recognition of and support for the school's stance. Equally, students' low educational aspirations and consequentially poor attainment levels were a cause of much frustration to these staff. All of this, of course, had a major effect on teaching and learning processes and relationships in the classroom. Tim suggested that lessons and expectations had to be highly structured, hinting at a certain institutionally specific conservatism (albeit with "variety") of pedagogical approach in which "the styles must always be matched to the realities of the students who are the recipients of those styles" (my emphasis). There was little sense of the student self-discipline, motivation and group co-operation here that was expected and could be demanded at Totara.

Ruth's experience was that new approaches had to be introduced to potentially unreceptive students very selectively, i.e. they also were conservative in their pedagogical expectations. There was a tension between insisting that homework was set (and seen to be set

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the good kids first so you start with some good marks even if you have to look very hard to do that."

by parents) and completed by students who were increasingly unwilling to do so as they progressed through the school; and having to give up precious lesson time to pursue the consequences of such a policy. This was undoubtedly debilitating and frustrating for teachers such as Tim, yet it had become an officially endorsed and essential part of the daily control and enforcement paradigm if the school was to ensure that "the lowest common denominator doesn't operate" and that it continued to attract sufficient numbers and quality of students" to remain viable. Indeed, Tim conceded that in order to accommodate this highly stylised policing ritual, lesson preparation had become an exercise in ensuring that those who had completed and handed in their homework had something to keep them occupied while the teacher's time was taken up with spelling out the consequences of non-completion to the rest of the class on an individual basis. Tim's difficulties were further exacerbated by the reality, as Ivan noted, that some fellow teachers may simply have given up the struggle and thus the homework policy was not enforced consistently across the school.<sup>12</sup>

Thus far in this analysis I have attempted merely to show that as they endeavoured to anticipate, respond to and support students' attention and motivation needs, these teachers pursued a variety of objectives within their classrooms which varied according to the demands of the particular institutional and social circumstances within which these teachers work. It is highly probable that most or all secondary school teachers are aware of and responsive to student needs at different times of the day and week, and that they will modify their approaches to teaching, learning and assignment completion in accordance with student, school-wide and local community expectations and custom and practice. Although different circumstances and working environments create very different opportunities and constraints, the realities of teachers' working situations are not dictated solely and in deterministic fashion by socio-economic circumstances. What teachers seek to do and are able to achieve in the secondary school classroom is shaped also by the hegemony<sup>13</sup> of the subject curriculum and its associated assessment regimes and by the experiences and skills they draw on as they engage with the fluid dynamics of student and peer work groups.

### **Assessing and accrediting diligence**

William: They're students for whom mathematics is not a strength. It's been a frustration for most of their lives and they usually didn't sit School Certificate. It's about fourth form level

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<sup>11</sup> In particular from influential areas, such as "the South", where parents, in a de-zoned educational market, may elect to send their children to other secondary schools.

<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein to the comments made by Ruth, Tim and Ivan here, Thrupp provides an extended analysis of the highly differentiated policy compliance, discipline and administrative pressures faced by secondary schools in high and low SES communities in the Wellington region and the differential effects of these on teaching and administrative practices. Thrupp, M. *Schools making a difference. Let's be realistic*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Connell, op. cit., 1985; Hargreaves, A. *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989.

mathematics, and there's a mixture of students ranging from those for whom they can't be bothered making the effort, to those who are lovely students who are very sweet, and are just thick - as far as mathematics goes. Very good at lots of other things, but can't see the wood for the trees sometimes. They work their tails off and at the end of the day aren't going to end up with very much. But fortunately, this course doesn't have a number, like a percentage associated with it. I think it's really good, because it has three marks which reflect their ability, that's a key skills mark, a communications mark, and an applications mark - on a one to five scale. It has two other marks, and they are social and co-operative skills, and study and work habits. And so you look at the students in the class, and whether they're self motivated and show initiative and get on with it, and try their hardest, and they could bomb out in everything else, and get five - the best mark in those because - and that's what an employer wants to know - they want to know that if they hire this person, they'll get on with anybody, and they'll work in a team well, and they'll try their hardest at whatever you give them. They won't take the opportunity to slope off and talk about what they're going to do in the weekend.

Isadora: Are they sitting School C, or are they going for a sixth form grade?

William: No, it's not even a sixth form level. It's not even at the fifth form level.

Isadora: Who is it recognised by?

William: It's a New Zealand National Certificate - it was designed by the New Zealand Association of Maths teachers. And there's three courses; one, two and three. Three is in seventh form. We don't have it here because we don't have the students to run it, but when unit standards comes in, by the time you have - if you do all the unit standards that are in those courses - that would be the same in three years as if you'd sat School Certificate in one year. You get the same unit standards at the same level.

Isadora: So, today, how did that lesson go, and do you think the students exhibit feelings of onward progress?

William: They're feelings of extreme pressure at the moment, because I set them a whole lot of work to do, and to - it will enhance their co-operative skills because there aren't enough text books to go round (laughing), so on Monday - there are one between two - when I handed them out, I said, "If you take a text book home early on in the week, you've got to cough it up later on in the week for those who haven't had the opportunity to take it home". So of course, there's a little bit of infighting, which is part of the fun in the sense they've got to learn that, "If I have it now I've got to give it up later, right. 'cos that's fairness". And often on Friday last period we'll do other things - we'll do geometrical things, we've been making some rotating rings of tetrahedra, which are a geometrical figure that requires quite a lot of precision in making out the net, and quite a lot of skills cutting it out and putting it together, and it's quite fun. So I love doing fun things like that last period. Nobody even said 'why aren't we doing this?', because they know that by Monday they've got to finish all this work, and some of them have been stuffing around all week, and they just say 'well, we won't finish'. I said "well, that's not my problem". And I keep on harping back to "I'm your employer, and I'm not interested in hearing that"; "I'm your employer, don't speak to me like that"; "I'm your employer don't interrupt me when I'm speaking".<sup>14</sup>

Isadora: These are students at level

William: They're sixth form students

Isadora: And I've got your equivalent, cos' I've got a whole class of English students, who are form six students repeating form five English. They are sitting School C again - and they got a class median of about three or four, for a common exercise we had.

Julia: Out of ten?

Isadora: Out of ten. And it's quite heartbreaking. Today one little girl came out, I gave her back some work. We've done twenty marks worth of reading and writing assessment, and we've practised. We practise before we assess anything, we practise it - they hand in samples, I give it back with feedback, so that they feel that they're being given opportunity and most of them can see that they're going somewhere. They might only be only half a mark up on what they were, or something like that, but one little girl came to me today and said "I think this is really unfair - I didn't get marks like this last year". She got four and three quarters by the time you computed all the jolly marks. Four and three quarters out of ten was the final mark for this particular piece of work, cos' it was a composition of two bits, each marked out of ten and then running down the middle. I said "well, what sort of marks did you used to get last year?", and she said "I used

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<sup>14</sup> Arguably, there is little curricular or pedagogical difference between this and "I'm your *teacher*; don't interrupt me when ...".

to get six. Six out of ten". I said "OK, and at the end of they year, what did you finally get for School C?" She said "Thirty eight percent". You see this is the problem we face, teachers who feel sympathetic towards the child as they're marking the work, and they think, "Oh God I can't disappoint this child. I cannot give her three. If I give her five she'll feel better". And then of course they sit the moderation test, the national reference test, and they do all the other things and it does this to them, and then they get the final mark and just about die. So the policy is we have to be realistic markers. And so I was saying "Well, Anne-Marie you're already got 8 marks up on what you were then. You are four and three quarter percent. You're more than you were at the end of last year", but she was just feeling so down because it didn't matter in a way. Right at that moment it mattered that the final mark was 38 percent, it mattered that the nice marshmallow things that happened through the year - yuk - you don't feel very - you know, it makes you feel ick pooh - cos' you've got next year's lot of that. We've got to stop making them sit School C Julia, we've got to

Julia: Except in that group I have a couple of students who just might get in the good forties. And they are actually working. But laughing and joking about the shape of the lesson today. My lesson today had absolutely no shape. I received the students who came. One came in very late with a note from Mrs Smith. Somebody said it was the first time we've seen you at school all day - and it would be right. The first bit of talk I heard was "the policewoman said you didn't have to go to court before you were seventeen" and

William: God are they that stupid? (laughs)

Julia: There was a sort of little knot of interested group at the back. I got somebody up to read to me, so that broke that knot up a little bit but these two students did stuff all last period. There were two students who were working with the utmost diligence, but I had this terrible pang of conscience, in a way. I don't want them to work diligently because I can't give them marks that are really above three out of ten. And so they're going to do this pile of diligence, cos' I do want them writing - stuff School C - I want them to actually do writing for me, and I want them to be able to know they can read a book, and so I am wanting to give them marks based for their effort - effort based marks, that recognise, and yet I know...

Interviewer: That's why you're interested in what William was saying?

Julia: Yes.

Isadora: Oh absolutely. Because there's the horns of a most uncomfortable dilemma on which we find ourselves. The other thing we can do though Julia, through this year, is with kids like that, we can give them an ideas mark, and a craft mark, and then we can give them an effort mark, which they need to know isn't an assessment mark, but it will count for things like ROAs, Records of Achievement. So that they feel that there's one digit on that damn bit of paper, that rewards the diligent.

Julia: I loathe my last period on Friday. Last week I went beautifully prepared, I actually made two crosswords, because they're working on two books. We don't have enough of simple level books to do the whole class - not that it's a big class. I was really pleased because they looked quite good crossword cribs and was really pleased cos' all the words had come from the chapters. And presented it with some enthusiasm cos' after all it had taken me about three hours to do these two crosswords - and then somebody sensibly said "but if we do this, it's time taken from our getting through what we're writing about the chapters. I'd like to do the chapters". And of course that was a different matter - that was fine. But at the moment I've got free flowing (inaudible) just going to let them all do what they can, and then stop them after the three weeks, take in what they've got and assess that. But this particular class - very very difficult class, to have all together.

Isadora: And socially difficult.

Julia: Oh, they hate each other. They sit in polarised parts of the class and four letter word each other if they think they can get away with it.

Isadora: One of the ones from my class about three weeks ago, who actually throws fits because of a physiological complaint, she also throws emotional wobbles. She just heaved a chair across the room and she aimed it at another girl. Luckily at the last minute - and I started to walk down, cos' I'd already stopped her hitting another girl over the head with a book. I stood in the middle of that and I've received a few blows along the way. When she explodes she just

Julia: Really hard to control.

Isadora: She has no control. And the kids know it. And we tend to be able to head her off before she gets violent, but when she picked this bloody chair up I thought "right". So I just started to walk down the room - going in the direction where I knew the chair would hit, and at

the very last minute – cos' I thought "it mustn't hit a kid - I don't care if it hits me, but it just mustn't hit a kid" and at the last minute she heaved it at the wall instead. Oh, it was a relief.

Julia: These are the excitements of the lesson!

Isadora: And do you know, I've got to say this for these kids who are sixth formers, that after it had happened, they went back working, while I went and found the kid who was sobbing and L then took over with the distressed child - and I dealt with the girl who had been sort of the victim, but who provoked verbally and needled and all that gunge. But somewhere in that - they actually are producing this work - this as you say - this quantities of ruddy diligence. And they love coming into the room. Mine are a much more cheerful homogeneous bunch, and they tolerate this other child's eruptions like Ruapehu and they're just such lovely people. You feel as though you are not serving them. I feel as though I'm failing them, cos' I have to offer them this damn curriculum. Makes demands that they can't do.

Interviewer: It's actually the curriculum that's the straight jacket?

Julia: I'm really angry with it.

William: Well this is why

Julia: I'm angry with it.

William: This is why this course is really really good, because it was designed to meet a need, and the need you usually identify - it doesn't come up with a single mark. So it doesn't insult the intelligence by saying that the whole of the sum of the learning of a student for a year can be broken down into one mark. It gives them a total of five marks for different things - two of which are not academically based, two of which are more - the make up of the individual. It makes a different teacher of you, cos' things I'm looking for - I'm looking not for me to say "righto guys, we're going to get started". Even last period, I'm up there and of course you get a lot of them will feed off you and they need you. They want to come up and see you right at the beginning of the lesson. And I'd just talk to them and say "yes, you can do this one", and "yes, I'll show about that one"; "yes, you can take this pair of scissors"; or "yes, I've got a pen to borrow you". Then you look around, and you can see the ones that haven't got their books out and chatting, and you can see the other ones who are already - and you jot those down, and you say, "listen, these are the things I'm watching for team, I'm looking to see whether or not you can come in here and get on with your work, without being told to. You're sixth formers now". The work that we're doing - it doesn't really matter what it is, when you go into the job - it doesn't really matter what you're doing - there are still certain skills in the work place that the employer is going to expect - unfairly or not - they will still expect you to show a little bit of initiative and they will reward that. I like this course, because the curriculum is very loose, in the sense that there are a series of learning objectives in five areas, and there are about five learning objectives in each area. And how the course is delivered, how the course is assessed, and how the course is taught or what pedagogical techniques you use, is completely up to you to teach it. I specifically designed the curriculum to be very loose in the sense that there's a period of work which is specifically what I want to do - and then I'm going to ask them what sort of areas they're interested in, and I can link the learning objectives in the areas and get the mathematics out of that. It's not like you must do Pythagoras - it's - there's one on finance procedures - they must be able to use every day monetary calculations, including GST calculations. The number of different ways you can get that is many and varied. So they might want to do it 'Oh, I'm really interested in travel'. Okay, well, 'we had a trip to Christchurch'.

This extract reveals much about the nature and effects of the hegemonic, competitive academic curriculum in contemporary secondary schools in New Zealand because the exchange of experiences was explicitly structured along what Connell calls "the two major axes of 'ability' and 'disruptiveness'".<sup>15</sup> The extract chronicles the difficulties faced by these three teachers at Totara when they attempted to put together suitable programmes for those significant numbers of students for whom the prescribed syllabus and its assessment criteria presented apparently insurmountable cognitive challenges in their last few years of their schooling, and scant acknowledgement of any effort or commitment they may have contributed

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<sup>15</sup> Connell, op. cit., 1985, pp. 174-175.

along the road to School Certificate examination. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how students' motivation could continue to be maintained in a situation where several weeks of intensive practice, draft, feedback, and final assignment lead to "half a mark" improvement. No wonder then that Isadora's student called this pitiful reward "very unfair". For her part, Isadora complained bitterly about the "heartbreak", the damaging effects, witnessed year after year, of examination failure on students; about the constraints she and colleagues faced when assessment was linked solely to national attainment norms; and how the pedagogic priority of maintaining motivation among low achieving students ("the marshmallow thing") both conflicted with the demands of national assessment criteria and created unrealistic expectations of credential achievement among those same students.

Nevertheless, the discussion aptly demonstrates the all pervasive, normalising influence of examinations such as "School C". Year levels linked to external accreditation benchmarks provided the common ground on which these mathematics and English teachers could talk about both students and courses.<sup>16</sup> Although there were alternatives discussed in this exchange, these were piecemeal and problematic.<sup>17</sup> Isadora suggested that records of achievement provided some opportunity to recognise effort and non-cognitive attainment on the part of students. However, even in countries such as England and Wales where Records of Achievement have been mandated and promoted by national governments, their acceptance has proved extremely difficult among employers and tertiary education providers.<sup>18</sup> The alternative course described in detail and with enthusiasm by William enjoyed the advantages of a structure that would conform with unit standards requirements and national level recognition. Notwithstanding this imprimatur, the course had been developed in isolation by one professional subject association. Criterion referenced unit standards were at the time of the interview still some way from coming fully on stream, and, to judge by the reactions of Julia and Isadora, there was nothing similar then available in the English domain.<sup>19</sup>

Even though William was clearly hamming up his script as teacher-assessor-employer, in a conventionally organised curriculum and assessment hierarchy of distinctly vocational and

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<sup>16</sup> E.g. "**Isadora**: Are they sitting School C, or are they going for a sixth form grade? / **William**: No, it's not even a sixth form level. It's not even at the fifth form level."

<sup>17</sup> Implicit in the discussion was the expectation, at the time of the study, that a universal unit standards based assessment regime (the National Qualifications Framework) would soon be introduced via NZQA in all subjects, from seventh form through to fifth form and would completely replace Bursary, Sixth Form Certificate and School Certificate within a few years. As we saw in chapter three, PPTA lobbied for the abolition of 'School C' in favour of unit standards based assessment and accreditation. In 1996, several departments at Totara and in the other schools were taking part in the voluntary NZQA funded trials for unit standards and were developing and running unit standards in tandem with traditional examination formats.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Hargreaves, *op. cit.*, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> In her feedback on the chapter draft, Julia commented that by Easter that year, she "had bought into the NZ certificate of English for my class though I kept two students concurrently being assessed for School Certificate. It was much more satisfactory for my very limited group. A specialist non-SC class has existed each subsequent year doing Unit Standards work".

academic programmes this type of course runs the risk of relegating those students who enrol (many of whom, according to William, "feed off you and need you") to the status of manual or semi-skilled and compliant labour market fodder ("there are still certain skills in the work place that the employer is going to expect - unfairly or not"). The survival and future status of William's course was reliant on the proliferation of unit standards as the agreed and accepted replacement for the current hegemonic academic curriculum. In 1996 and 1997, this was by no means assured, despite widespread professional, political and community exasperation with "this damn curriculum [which] makes demands they can't do"; hence the "horns of the dilemma" to be faced in the short term by the two English teachers. That is, how to recognise effort and non-cognitive attainment and provide students with evidence of this within a restrictive national assessment regime that did not cater for their comparatively minor rates of progress.

The solution provided by the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Mathematics was highly pragmatic: develop a course which allowed students, within an embryonic National Qualifications Framework to attain the equivalent of School Certificate mathematics over three years in a structure where course delivery, pedagogy and assessment were in the control of the teacher and could be matched, as William attempted to do, to both the 'real world' needs and immediate interests of the students, "and get the mathematics out of that". The alternative was that faced by Julia and Isadora in this case and by teachers of alienated students throughout the country. It was the acute moral dilemma or "pang of conscience" that an anachronistic national, summative assessment regime, designed to categorise many students as failures, produced among conscientious teachers: "in a way I don't want them to work diligently because I can't give them marks that are really above three out of ten". Indeed, for all but the one or two students in Julia's group who would, possibly, get marks "in the good forties", the sixth form year would prove to be another futile attempt to gain accreditation of attainment in English. Moreover, their "diligence" would also go unrecognised and unaccredited and would, therefore, fail to provide the sort of attitudinal information that "employers want to know" and that the alternative mathematics course did incorporate.

The images Julia used to depict her class (a period she "loathes" at the end of the school week; students sitting in atomised groups exchanging obscenities; the "work" that simply "flows" with students "doing what they can" over three weeks which will then be "taken in" to be assessed alone by the teacher; not enough "simple level books" to meet students' needs; laboriously prepared teacher materials that fail to spark any enthusiasm from students; and, an irredeemably frustrating complex of teaching-learning-assessment dilemmas that forced this plaintive "stuff school C - I want them to actually do writing for me, and I want them to be able to know they can read a book") all suggested a resigned recognition on the part of both teacher

and students that, for many of the participants, this was a lifeless classroom charade being played out weekly with no real purpose or direction.

The image was markedly different from Julia's description of her other classroom teaching, which she loved. It provided a stark contrast too with the shared sense of purpose and the determination to avoid even "a wasted period" that characterised Adam, Lillian and Nina's talk above; and even the admirable persistence of Tim at Rimu who insisted on homework being handed in amidst burgeoning levels of student anomie. For Tim, the ritual was one that was enacted daily in many or all of his English classes and was necessary to his sense of achievement or progress in his own work and in English throughout the school as a whole. For Julia, the Friday afternoon slot was only one "loathsome" lesson with a "very, very difficult class" amidst all the English teaching that she relished.<sup>20</sup> In the example she recounted, the resource she had meticulously prepared over three hours was discarded unseen by students. In such circumstances it is understandably tempting to reach an unspoken agreement in which one or two students who have maintained sufficient enthusiasm and determination to continue to struggle for successful accreditation will do so, while the others simply go with the "flow".

We have seen, then, that the hegemonic, competitive academic curriculum creates dilemmas, anger and frustration for teachers with regard to those students who are marginalised and repeatedly categorised as failures by current assessment and accreditation mechanisms. Nevertheless, the traditional secondary school subject dominated curriculum persists, changing only slowly over time, and it provides the basic framework of content, pedagogy and evaluation within which teachers exercise their daily craft. Clearly this is only sustainable if teachers are able to create structured programmes of learning which provide a majority of students with opportunities to learn successfully and to have their progress recognised in tangible ways, year by year to the point where their attainment is validated through external national examination and accreditation. How then, did these secondary school teachers structure their teaching so that students learned and made progress through schemes of work developed at school site level within prescribed national curricula?

### *Scaffolding The Curriculum*

In this part of the chapter, we consider the basic structure of the subject curriculum and its attendant pedagogies.

#### **Curriculum basics**

Adam: I think what they value, is if you can put together the basics, you know that if you can explain the fundamentals of what's going on, then they don't have any worries about the fact

<sup>20</sup> In a subsequent interview, Julia commented: "Teaching - I just love the classroom. I really like the classroom and so I really do want to teach well, want to make my lessons fun. I love English. I want to make sure that the students don't hate English cos' of my bad lessons." (22.5.96)

you don't know the little tiddly bits around the edges. [...] In biology you've got basic principles, so that if you go for things like protein synthesis, - I think it's harder to go through the book and understand the detail of that, or if you take structure of DNA - they want the explanation of the structure, and once you've given them that background, they don't mind filling in the bits onto the actual basic understanding. They don't mind if you don't know the peripheral bits. They're quite happy, they enjoy showing off and they go out and come back with a question cos' if they have understood it enough to actually go away and ask the difficult question and find the bit - they actually quite like that. And that's the bit they want taught. The rest of it they can actually find themselves.

Interviewer: And you've identified by now these basic bits?

Adam: Yes.

Interviewer: And is that how you structure the programmes of study?

Adam: That's the bit I would target. Yes. They're the bits that I teach. You go through biology and things like osmosis and diffusion, you target cos' if they can understand those they can understand surface area to volume ratios, they can understand osmosis, and understand DNA, you can understand most biology, and with the juniors, if they understand what a force is, what energy is, and the particle nature of matter, you can work out most science from there. And that's the bits you target. And the rest is just - you know, you enjoy it.

Interviewer: Is that the same for economics?

Lillian: Oh, very much so. With economics we're dealing with concepts the whole time, and we're looking at theory and how it applies to the real world, and so I find if you teach the concept well, and they say "Yeah, okay, I understand that", and then you pull in an example, and they can hang on to that, then they're right. They can then apply that to a whole range of situations and things and quite apart from whether you know things or not, I think that the kids need that foundation of knowledge, don't they? And once they've got that they're empowered to explore and make links and things. Most of our concepts are totally interwoven from unit to unit in economics. We're doing elasticity at the moment. It basically is how consumers and producers react to price changes, and, obviously a businessman needs to know how a consumer's going to react if they put up their price, or if they lower their price or whatever. It cuts across almost everything we do. We were talking about tax yesterday, and the Government needs to know what reactions they're going to get and whether it's going to hurt the consumers more than the producers and so on. So, they're starting to see the linkages by the time they get to the sixth and seventh form." Which is quite exciting. It's like a little eureka in economics.

In the latter part of the 1990s, students encountered a secondary school curriculum that was bewildering in terms of its size and specialised knowledge bases both across the curriculum as a whole and within each subject area. This begs the question as to how teachers organise their programmes to make their subjects manageable for and intelligible to young people. The New Zealand Curriculum Framework documents are written to a common format that organises knowledge in hierarchical, linear sequences within eight levels. Learning in each subject area is expressed as clutches of achievement objectives within these eight levels in terms of knowledge, together with essential skills and values that run across the curriculum as a whole.

It is apparent that the general discussion in the above extract was mediated not through the official discourse of learning objectives, essential skills and values but by Lillian and Adam's understanding of the epistemology of science and economics. Both teachers identified subject specific conceptual building blocks on which the curriculum in each of these areas was based. Their essential role as teacher in developing students' subject specific knowledge was to

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<sup>21</sup> Rudduck and colleagues argue that secondary students' success at school depends partly on their ability to understand the 'coherence' between the various parts of the official curriculum. Rudduck, J. Harris, S. and Wallace, G. 'Coherence' and students' experience of learning in the secondary school. Cambridge

put together and explain "the fundamentals" in such a way that students could then apply and elaborate their own understanding. In the case of both senior biology and junior science these were discrete concepts which Adam could readily enumerate and which, for him, held the key to understanding the principles on which scientific knowledge is premised. In economics, Lillian suggested that these basic concepts were "interwoven from unit to unit" and, by the time they reached the sixth form, students were beginning to make the necessary linkages themselves. For Adam, his experience as a teacher had led him to isolate and target these core concepts while, for Lillian, they constituted a foundation of knowledge which, if taught well, "empowers" students to apply the concept to real situations. Lillian unraveled the essential theoretical concept, helped students to find examples from "the real world" and then provided opportunities for application and consolidation.

The discussion, then, provides two insights on the ways in which these teachers organised subject specific programmes of study. First, the knowledge base was conceived almost as a scaffold made up of basic conceptual building blocks. These needed actively to be taught and interpreted for students.<sup>22</sup> Once students grasped these, "they're right" and could then apply and elaborate their understanding in a range of contexts, but these concepts had to be grasped if students were to make sense of the subject. The importance of such "basic understanding" for the learning of the class as a whole explains why Lillian, Nina and Adam (above) carefully chose the times of day or week when they attempted to introduce new topics or concepts.

Second, what was being explicated here was a dynamic conception of teaching and learning which placed the teacher at the centre of the process, among dependent students, rather than peripheral to it – "that's the bit they want taught".<sup>23</sup> For learning to be successful the teacher needed a detailed understanding of the epistemology of science or economics but also had to be able to present complex yet fundamental principles in ways that students understood and could then begin to apply independently across a range of settings. This conception of the subject specific teaching process closely resembled theories of practice which constitute teaching as a judicious combination of subject knowledge, and craft or pedagogical knowledge,<sup>24</sup> i.e. the strategies teachers use to convert their highly specialised knowledge of essential science or economics concepts into forms that students can understand, take and use. Lillian and Adam's analysis of their approaches appeared to be not so much a case of identifying and meeting specific, neatly defined outcome or achievement objectives at certain

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Journal of Education, 1994, 24(2), 197-211.

<sup>22</sup> Both Adam and Frank, below, dispensed with text books at the beginning of a new curriculum unit.

<sup>23</sup> Nina, in contrast, conceptualised science rather differently, in a way that emphasised process over content (see the Totara science department case study in chapter seven).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Grimmett, P. and Mackinnon, A. Craft knowledge and the education of teachers. *Review of Research in Education*, 1992, 18, 11-50.

levels of the official, gazetted curriculum document (although, clearly, they would have to work to these for planning, reporting, accountability and accreditation purposes), but of engaging students, at a more generic or abstract level of understanding with the structure of knowledge in the subject in question.

That they talked in terms of a separation of conceptual understanding and its application ("filling in the bits") was another consequence of the mutual sense of purpose they appear to share with their students in this particular institutional context, where the academic curriculum had meaning and purpose for students and where successful accreditation or credentialling was, for most, the expected outcome of eleven years and more of schooling.

The extent and durability of any sense of shared purpose will, clearly, vary considerably both within and across schools while particular conjunctions of teaching context and student peer group dynamics will create idiosyncratic curricular and pedagogical demands on teachers. Nevertheless, having identified that secondary school teachers may conceive of their subject as, essentially, an amalgam of basic concepts which has to be decoded for students, we can, perhaps, now usefully explore in greater detail how these teachers specifically went about developing teaching strategies and organising work to help ensure that students acquire and retained the subject knowledge and skills needed for successful learning.

### **Selecting the appropriate teaching styles**

Frank: Cos' I'll tell you right now, it's the beginning, I don't know if it's turning my teaching practice round, but it's beginning to turn my thinking round a bit anyway because this student teaching via Don Brown they're heavily into co-operative group learning, and I'm not. I've traditionally been real old-fashioned, chalk and talk, and I'm not ashamed to say that (laughs). Because it's worked for me, I can see some merit even in this last lesson in group work, although this student teacher she is born again co-operative learning isn't she? She's real bloody intense. (Nick: 100%) Oh a zealot man, a real bloody zealot. I just had a discussion with her there earlier on, and I asked her does she see any merit in the old-fashioned approach, in the chalk and talk approach, because she did two lessons, one, period four a fifth form group. It went OK but I think it'd have been better if she'd at least done part of it in a fairly old-fashioned way and less discovery, and she seemed to think that there probably was some merit in the old-fashioned approach, not a hell of a lot. [...] Well I see some merit in it, I'm not so staid that I'm not open to new ideas, although I'm still prepared to question it but I could actually see me using that style in certain circumstances, only in certain circumstances. [...] - where the curriculum area lends itself to it. The second lesson she did this afternoon went better than the first because the kids had some basic knowledge and they had to research some books together and work together and say well you do that and you do this job, alright, so that whole scenario lent itself to group activity, but the first lesson was an initial lesson and I think that's better being taught, I think you've got to teach the kids certain things and then maybe say: "use that knowledge you've got now and apply it to this situation". [...]

I think I'm more traditional maybe than a number of other teachers. With a normal lesson I tend to work on a very broad basis. Once the class gets in I tend to get them to write something down, anything, it can be bullshit, it could be just crap, it could be a heading, anything. Then I would tell them what we're going to do for the day or for that part of an hour or whatever and then we go about doing it. Whether that's kids doing a bit of a research or working from a book or whether it's me teaching a bit and then them doing a wee bit of work, or whether it's an interactive thing. And so when I say chalk and talk I'd hate to think I'm a boring old fart but it's traditional in the sense that I'm standing up the front a lot of the time and I tend to involve myself a lot in my lessons.

Interviewer: Is that the same for the different subject areas, because you teach different subjects don't you, and presumably you teach different age groups?

Frank: Certainly the accounting lends itself more to ... this is how you do this, go and do fifteen examples, it's sort of mathematical. I should imagine maths, I've never taught maths but I've been taught maths – here's a book, come back when you've finished the bloody thing, so I find that accounting is less interactive whereas economics by the very nature of it is a much more descriptive, interactive situation. [...]

That was interesting, with this just complete antithesis of what I've been doing in the last two or three days [i.e. the co-operative learning style introduced by Frank's student], it's only been with me for the last two or three days ... and I just feel that the kids didn't bloody like it, now whether they didn't like that style because they just, or say maybe they just didn't like her ... but she's good at what she does with this type of work, maybe the kids are so intuned in to this: "give me notes, teach me a lesson and give me notes" unless you're actually standing there. I actually found that when she had put them into groups that they rebelled; the kids just didn't want that, whether it was because they weren't used to that particular style or not. That can be really bad in a sense as well, you know that if you've been working as a relieving teacher ... I've had a bunch of kids that behave a certain way for me and I'll go maybe two lessons later to somebody else's classroom to give the relieving teacher work, and that same bunch of kids have behaved poorly. Now they would never have done that if they were sitting in my room in accounting, but because this was bloody chemistry or something like that - music was the latest disaster. Kids behave differently in different situations and react to different styles of teaching and learning. I think they certainly crave stability. Ray Davis, would be the most old fashioned in a sense teacher I've ever seen in my life, in as much as he stands up there, he teaches graphics, and he'll lecture exactly and precisely how he wants it done and the kids will go and do it. Now I don't know if there's a different style that it could be done better but his median School Cert marks are up in the sixties aren't they? He achieves astounding results that way.

Interviewer: How do you know when the lesson's going well or going badly, the clues?

Frank: I had this third form first period today - outstanding lesson, shit hot, kids went out of there just, this man's a genius, this man is a god (laughs). It's one of my favourite lessons, it's one I've taught a thousand times before but they're not bored with it the kids so I still find it quite exciting and it was great. Whereas if you'd been sitting here a week ago when it was my last lesson, with my last group of third formers: this man's crap, he's hopeless (laughs). And it's early morning, your lessons and delivery especially. See again with economics sometimes the kids will take you away, take me off, something will spark, and a kid will take you away into a different plane so it's new, and it's exciting, and the kids can genuinely relate to something and they'll get into it, and I think they relate to you as well. You know if you go in there, no doubt about it, you know yourself, you go in there and you've been on the piss the night before, a bad curry (laughs). The kids know that, so if you're up with the things I think, if you're genuinely excited by it, it'd be a fairly stink class that didn't react back to that and give you something back.

Nick: I had one seventh form class and you can talk about electrons or this theory or that theory and we started talking about the wall of death, where the motorbike rider goes around that and how does he stay there, and how it's related to what we were doing. I suggested something and someone contested it, and we had this real interaction of minds. it was amazing. He came up and he was drawing diagrams on the board and the class was watching.

Frank: And you can't legislate for it. When I have fifth form classes one lesson there was outstanding, the next group comes in and you teach the same lesson, pfff Led Zeppelin stuff! Disaster. You cannot legislate for it, it's group dynamics isn't it, something to do with you, something to do with the individuals and it's something to do with the group that you've got as well, and the weather and the time of day. There's just so many variables.

Interviewer: Do you use the material resources a lot? Textbooks you mentioned before, they're a big part of teaching accounting?

Frank: Accounting yeh, very much so and again it'll depend on the, early doors introducing a new topic, it's very much me. I want to deliver certain information to the kids and want them to grasp it and then we'll talk about it and then that's probably where the textbooks come in, to be able to then say having got this information let's apply it now, let's use it. The textbooks we use in accounting tend to be graduated questions, so more difficult. In economics junior level again it's very much, it's only a 13 week course at third form so it's great, you're [inaudible] with the kids a lot, so not a lot of textbooks. Going up in the school, there's more reliance on it because again you're teaching towards that examination, so you're trying to achieve two things, you're

trying to achieve an economic knowledge in kids but you're also trying to get them to maximise their score in an examination at the end, in economics at the end of the year, now the two aren't mutually exclusive but they're not one and the same either [...]

I just think that, you know, getting back to your original idea about what was good teaching practice. Even though in the last couple of days I've sort of been challenged myself, my way of thinking, I don't think there is a good teaching practice. Kids respond to honesty, by honesty I'm talking in the wider sense, you know that if you as a school teacher are honest with yourself and with them I think kids respond to that and kids at all levels and all ages and all ability groups. I think kids more than anyone else can spot honesty and weakness. By weakness I mean weakness in character perhaps, and they don't like it, and they can smell it, and they can sniff it, and they just don't bloody like it. I think you can be old fashioned in that sense of delivery, and as long as you're honest about it, and honest in your task of delivering the message you're trying to deliver ... I think kids react to that, and I think if you're honest in an experimental way, then the kids react to that as well. Honesty's important. I just don't mean honesty in not bloody stealing things, you know what I mean when I say that, honesty in a much wider sense, you know yourself as soon as you meet somebody sometimes you just don't feel ... and that's what I mean by honesty and I think if you're not honest with yourself you can't be honest with the kids.

Interviewer: So the kids won't mind what the style is, they won't mind what the delivery is, within reason as long as it's you being honest and ...

Frank: I think they mind to some extent but what you must have is some sort of structure, kids hate lack of structure, they crave structure. With this co-operative learning thing there's a structure, I'm not saying that structure, that co-operative learning structure, and I think maybe my kids would get used to that after a wee while, I think they'd get it. You can almost see it on a daily basis or a minutely basis, the more they were doing it the more they got used to that structure. And say Ray Davis's very rigid structure, not fearful structure but rigid structure, kids like it. You show me a stink teacher, I'll show you a teacher with hardly any structure in their classroom, kids don't like it.

Pedagogical preferences are highly personal and accumulate slowly and painfully through trial and error over time into an idiosyncratic and limited repertoire<sup>25</sup> or tool kit of strategies. These are deployed in support of a complex range of short and long term curriculum objectives in order to maintain what Brown and Macintyre<sup>26</sup> term the personally defined 'normal desirable states of activity' in which the teacher believes learning can take place. While, as Louden puts it, these lessons are polished like pedagogical jewels through refinement and repetition,<sup>27</sup> teachers are understandably reluctant to abandon or make wholesale changes to these and, in fact, during their career may experience very few direct or indirect challenges to anything in their repertoire from other adults.

Over time, Frank had come to rely on what he called his proven "traditional" or "chalk and talk" approach. In discussion, this preferred approach was elaborated and seen to be considerably less "staid" than he first implied. Indeed, in many ways, it is perhaps typical of the "broad approach" adopted by many secondary school teachers who are faced with having to complete a prescribed, content heavy academic curriculum that is increasingly reported in terms

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<sup>25</sup> For example, in his engrossing participant ethnography of a single, deeply reflective, teacher's work, Louden identifies only seven different basic lesson types employed by Johanna across a number of subject areas with more than one class in a middle school. Louden, W. *Understanding teaching*. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, S. and McIntyre, D. *Making sense of teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993, pp. 110-112.

of externally specified achievement objectives, with limited timetable space and students whose levels of motivation, energy and participation vary considerably according to "group dynamics", "the weather" and "the time of day". Frank was only questioning his preferred approach, and this only during the previous few days, because a pre-service student who was wholly committed to co-operative group work approaches had taken over his classes, relegating him to the unaccustomed role of observer with time to reflect on<sup>28</sup> and witness the effect of this novel pedagogy on classroom dynamics. Frank thus had the opportunity not only to evaluate an extreme example of the "style" in action as used by "a real bloody zealot" but, more typically for an experienced, mid-career teacher, to assess where the approach might be used productively in his own teaching and what the likely impact would be on his students.

This informal cost-benefit analysis by Frank is entirely consistent with what we know about teachers' responses to educational innovation,<sup>29</sup> where new curricula and pedagogies are evaluated against existing practices to determine whether or not the anticipated benefits of selectively adopting the strategy ("I could actually see me using that style in certain circumstances [...] where the curriculum area lends itself to it") might outweigh the costs in terms of initial disruption ("maybe the kids are so intuned in to this: "give me notes, teach me a lesson and give me notes" unless you're actually standing there. I actually found that when she had put them into groups that they rebelled; the kids just didn't want that"), be trialled and eventually become embedded within his classroom routines ("You can almost see it on a daily basis or a minutely basis, the more they were doing it the more they got used to that structure").<sup>30</sup>

The two overarching and perennial objectives for Frank were an explicit lesson structure and honest interpersonal relations with students because his own experience and observations of colleagues, both good and not so good, had taught him that "kids crave structure" and "respond to honesty", beyond which distinctions between traditional or progressive teaching *per se* become irrelevant. Taught well, co-operative learning also has a structure and, therefore, a possible place in Frank's repertoire. The important thing is that it should be used selectively, as merely another variant to complement what we may now consider to be a typical (if only slightly oversimplified) sequence of: introduce new topic, establish and check for understanding, use real life examples and textbook or teacher produced resources for consolidation and application in a range of interactive group activities. A single, unchanging

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<sup>27</sup> Louden, *op. cit.*, 1991.

<sup>28</sup> Schon, D. *The reflective practitioner. How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

<sup>29</sup> For a brief review of the literature on classroom level change, see Galton, M. Teaching, learning and the co-ordinator. In J. O'Neill and N. Kitson (Eds.). *Effective curriculum management. Co-ordinating learning in the primary school*. London: Routledge, 1996, 13-19.

<sup>30</sup> This initial filtering process has been called the 'practicality ethic', Doyle and Ponder, 1977, in Galton, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 15.

form of 'good practice' did not exist for Frank, after all Ray Davis and his enthusiastic student teacher taught at opposite ends of the pedagogical spectrum but both knew what they are doing and thus secured his endorsement.<sup>31</sup> Of his two overriding requisites, it was notably easier for him to articulate a conception of "structure" than the more nebulous, but equally important "honesty" through a detailed exemplification of his own 'normal desirable state of activity'.<sup>32</sup>

Frank clung tenaciously to an enduring mantra of classroom management among secondary school teachers, handed down from generation to generation ("once the class gets in I tend to get them to write something down, anything, it can be bullshit, it could be just crap, it could be a heading, anything") and which for Frank provided the unfussy mechanism through which he established order and focuses student attention. From this point, the lesson unfolded through a basic, consistent structure that incorporated a number of minor variations according to whether he was teaching accountancy or economics<sup>33</sup> and which made specific allowance for the needs of students at particular stages of the curriculum unit being taught. To this point, Frank's description of his routines was standard classroom and curriculum management fare and might arguably have been found in many of the classrooms in any of the four study schools.

The fifty minute lesson limits the range and number of activities that is likely to be attempted in the typical secondary school classroom and Frank's options, once the lesson's objectives were set out, was no different, "whether that's kids doing a bit of a research or working from a book or whether it's me teaching a bit and then them doing a wee bit of work, or whether it's an interactive thing". Teaching at third form level for Frank was fun – a new class every thirteen weeks. As one progressed up through the school, however, examination content dominated in the form of textbooks. This both constrained him and created tensions – the acquisition of "economic knowledge" and examination preparation demands were not completely aligned.

Nevertheless, if successful teaching – either progressive or traditional – is commonly characterised by an explicitness of structure, irrespective of subject content, and kids respond to both of these equally, "within reason"; and if it is only something which cannot be "legislated for" or predicted that sparks off one of those rare and memorable lessons that all teachers treasure,<sup>34</sup> then it seemed that, for Frank, the less tangible dynamics of the classroom

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<sup>31</sup> This view misses the important point that in an institutional or departmental context dominated by conservative teaching styles such as Ray Davis' that are 'successful' in terms of external examination results, it becomes more difficult to introduce alternative pedagogies at the classroom level.

<sup>32</sup> Brown and Macintyre, op. cit., 1993.

<sup>33</sup> For Frank, the secondary school student's experiences within his two subject areas are quite different. Accountancy is concerned with the practice of specific and discrete competencies or skills in 'mathematical' fashion, while economics is more the acquisition of 'economic' knowledge gained through discursive interaction.

<sup>34</sup> Huberman, M. The model of the independent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In J. Little and M. McLaughlin (Eds.). *Teachers' work. Individuals, colleagues and contexts*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1993, 11-50.

*relationships* between teacher and students were much more of a distinguishing feature between those classrooms where students learn effectively and those where they did not. Frank chose to dwell on this notion of "honesty" (which others have labeled *integrity*)<sup>35</sup> and his use of the concept allowed for some important observations on the quality of relationships within the classroom, and the consequences of this for teaching and learning.

Honesty was an almost unexplainable component of his practical professional knowledge<sup>36</sup> but was nevertheless the central factor in teacher-student relationships. Ultimately, for Frank, it was this 'quality' that students responded to positively. Honesty, enthusiasm and structure together provided something that students could "react back" to and appeared to be the common characteristics of what Frank considered to be effective teaching, irrespective of the specifics of curriculum content, pedagogy and evaluation in a given classroom.

The process of developing one's teaching practice in secondary schools while at the same time establishing oneself within a puzzling and unfamiliar matrix of professional and personal relationships, and of establishing control and gaining confidence in one's ability to demystify complex curricula for tens of students at a time who exhibit a range of very different learning needs and who bring with them disparate prior knowledge, constitutes an stressful introduction to the occupation of teaching. This induction is remembered often in terms of the 'horror stories'<sup>37</sup> that teachers subsequently recount (having survived their rite of passage) with some relish. As teachers gain in experience, they also appear to discover detailed occupational insights into the specific ways in which relationships with students are established and maintained, and which, over time become part of a sedimented repertoire of teaching strategies in much the same way as favourite lessons and pedagogical styles. This emerging professional understanding of classroom dynamics and associated power relations, or the gradual development of "authority by stealth" as Adam called it, is the focus of the final section of the chapter.

### *The Experienced Teacher*

This final section of the chapter discusses the processes of developing an identity as a teacher.

### **Learning the act of teaching**

**Adam:** I think it's the trick - I think it's the breakthrough when you realise that the whole thing's an act, and that it's not you, that you go in, and you as the teacher act, and then the shots that are fired too, particularly early on in your career. You know that the shots are not fired at you, that your act's wrong. So you go away and you work out how to fix up the act ...

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<sup>35</sup> In a different context, Drucker argues that integrity is the essential prerequisite for good management and is something which cannot be taught. Drucker, P. The spirit of performance. In C. Riches and C. Morgan (Eds.). *Human resource management in education*. Buckingham, UK : Open University Press, 1989, 155-161.

<sup>36</sup> Connell, op. cit., 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Lillian: I think that part of that recognition of it being an act, is actually recognising that you don't know everything. When I think back to how I first started teaching, I am appalled at how arrogant I was. I walked into a classroom, I knew everything, they were mine, and this, that and that

Adam: You came to spread the word!

Lillian: It was very much like that. Adam: That's economics though! (laughing)] And it wasn't till I'd had kids - I wasn't teaching economics then Adam: oh sorry!] no, I was teaching science I have to say. After I had kids and went back to teaching, I thought "oh, there's a lot to learn in this game". Well, I became a lot more humble and I think probably a much more effective teacher, as a result.

Interviewer: So how do you cope with it now then, just quite straight forward "don't know"?

Lillian: Oh, yeah, I have no problems at all now, saying, I know where to look it up. I don't say I don't know, I say I know where to look it up.

Nina: It's not really an issue with me (laughs). Like just in that last lesson, the seventh form chemistry, the students had made a model and the student - I've got a [pre-service] student at the moment - she thought it was a particular kind of isomer, and I didn't think it was, and the students didn't think it was, but they didn't think it was because of the way I've taught them...

Lillian: Infiltration.

Nina: Yes. But then I was thinking about what she was saying, and I wasn't certain, I wouldn't have staked my life on it, so we were just discussing it, and they were discussing it, and they were arguing with her, and she looked it up in some of the books on the shelf and she was none the wiser - but they're going to go home and look it up tonight. We've since asked another chemistry teacher who came down very firmly on my side as well, so that was nice, but for the student it was a bit of a good lesson for her. It wasn't a big deal that she was wrong. No one's going to go "nah nah nah nah". But you feel more vulnerable when you first start teaching, don't you, you think that they won't think that you're a very good teacher whereas in fact it means that you're just learning things like that together - it makes them feel in control, I mean there's a limit - you have to know something (laughs). Yeah. There is a limit. They'll accept a bit. [...]

Adam: Well, I just started, it was survival. I walked into Kauri school, had four third forms and two fourth forms. And that was it. Away you went. Well my first term at Kauri - that was 1974 - thirty five members of staff left. I can remember one guy donated a tree to the school and said he thought this would be a nice tradition to build up, this vision of a forest flourishing (laughs). I think you develop strategies to survive. And that's where you learn that you've got to entertain. But vastly different from now because as you gain experience you know what to target, and your ability to handle them as kids is different. The training comes in the wrong place. I think you need teacher training about three years, four years in where you can really go away and look, and that's where, you know, the learning styles that Nina started with, that most of us are then ready for, but we're still in survival mode.

Nina: Yes, young teachers try it and it doesn't work, it's bedlam.

Adam: Yes. Cos' you haven't got the other ...

Nina: Authority.

Adam: Yes, you haven't got that authority by stealth (all laugh) that you get as you become more experienced. The Training College students who come round and watch have got no idea how it's happening, really.

Nina: But they try it themselves.

Adam: I think the biggest problem still is that you're very much alone. We have a weekly meeting where we share what we do, I think we actually gain a lot from that, but that's not been a common thing throughout my teaching. Just here, and for the first part of my teaching career, you taught, you went into the staff room and complained about what had gone wrong, and seldom talked about much about what went right, just about what you had to cover, and there's not that exchange of strategies to the same extent.

Interviewer: And that happens on a weekly basis and it's positive?

Adam: Oh, quite positive, yes. It's a show and tell, this is what worked, and this is what I've developed and the way we run the scheme now. If you get a bright idea it just goes straight in the folder. So it's not bound up as a book, there's no page one, page two sort of thing, whatever came in next, has a slot. I think that's worked quite well. I've found it quite successful...

One of the many paradoxes of learning to become a classroom teacher derives from the priority given in both schools and pre-service establishments to teachers' 'classroom

management' capabilities, in effect, the need to gain and maintain control. Teachers are invariably judged by students, parents, colleagues, senior staff and external surveillance agencies on their ability to maintain order first and foremost. The paradox is that while beginning teachers are constantly told how important this is, it is a skill or 'act' that is learned through experience and, beyond the implementation of a few fairly crude behaviourist rubrics, cannot be taught. Student and beginning teachers may well recognise a class that is or is not well managed but the problem is that they "have got no idea of how it's happening". Similarly, teachers' subject specific expertise gained over ten or more years of specialised study may well lead them, at the beginning of their careers to seek to "spread the word" on the basis that, unlike their charges, they "know everything", and consequently grasp for the explicit authority or control that curriculum expertise appears to offer in order to help to help assuage personal feelings of 'vulnerability'.

Conversely, the early years of teaching in subject specific secondary school classroom contexts, for Adam, Nina and Lillian at least, involved two parallel processes; first, learning to recognise and manage the elastic nature of the tension that exists between the teacher, the class, groups of students and particular individuals; and second, understanding that disciplinary subject knowledge and secondary school subject domains are not one and the same, that the former needs to be adapted and transformed<sup>3</sup> to suit the latter, as Adam puts it, in a period when novice teachers have to learn "what to target".

The barriers to achieving such insights are exacerbated by the ubiquitous occupational isolation that is experienced by generation after generation of teachers and: "the problem *still* is that you're very much alone" (my emphasis). However, as Nina comments, the solution is not simply to expose neophytes to the teaching strategies of their more experienced colleagues ("young teachers try it and it doesn't work, it's bedlam"). The metamorphosis undertaken by student and beginning teachers is disorienting in this regard: part learning "the act"<sup>39</sup> and how to change it, part acquiring a sense of humility and part acceptance of one's fallibility. Although survival is the major objective of the first few years, with greater confidence, experience and acceptance by students comes the opportunity to experiment. In the end, however, it is the attainment of implicit control together with the ability to present subject knowledge in forms that are accessible by students that constitute the tangible results of teachers' on-the-job apprenticeship.

The conventional image of teacher development has it that teachers mature in a fairly predictable, hierarchically organised, linear sequence in a number of discrete stages from novice

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<sup>38</sup> Shulman, L. Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1987, 57(1), 1-22.

<sup>39</sup> As Nina puts it, below, the difference between "pretending to lose it and really losing it".

to competent and, eventually for many, to expert classroom practitioner status.<sup>40</sup> It is significant that, for a number of the women in this study, their emergence as self-confident practitioners was not as straightforward as the empirical, cognitive-affective models suggest. Career and life trajectories for women are at the very least closely linked and, in many senses, completely interdependent. Both in their interviews, and in informal chat at either side of these, many of the women spoke of their teaching in images that intertwined both personal and professional priorities in one lived experience. Their partners and children were significant reference points for them personally and in terms of their career. Several (Nina, Isadora, Julia, Lillian) recounted<sup>41</sup> in detailed and explicit fashion how their conceptions of teaching, both as classroom practice and a career path, had been signally influenced by their roles as mothers and homemakers. As the following extract reveals, while this commonly experienced 'motley' professional history prompts a certain solidarity between the two women, Adam is unable or unwilling to empathise.

Lillian: Well my career's also been quite motley because I graduated as a science graduate, and for three years I taught. I've got no physics, chemistry or maths in my degree. I had a science degree, I majored in botany. The expectation in schools then, and probably to some extent now, is if you're going to teach senior biology classes, you're in a lab, and you'll teach junior science. So here I was, teaching third and fourth and fifth form science, with no science ability or interest or anything. I found the first three years just a nightmare. I hadn't been to teachers' college - so I was a 'deferred woman' they called us in those days (all laugh). I love it. Really set back to my career being 'a deferred woman'! For three years I taught science and hated it, I really hated it. I didn't cope well, my first teaching appointment lasted a month. I got to the stage where I knew I was going to have to either get out of teaching science, or get out of teaching. I looked for several jobs and I applied for some, outside of teaching and none of them paid as well as they did in teaching at that stage, this was in the late '60s. And so I thought, OK, what do I do well? I was playing a lot of sport and I was an international hockey player. I thought Phys Ed would be fun. So I applied for every Phys Ed job there was in Auckland, and there were 13 that year, and I got one of them. From then on I taught Phys Ed for 10 years. Two years after I'd been teaching I went to teachers' college and that bears out what you were saying, because I could actually relate to what they were trying to tell us. It just made so much more sense than it would have if I'd had it at the beginning. Although, having said that I was so unprepared when I first went into the classroom. I went to the school and on day one they gave me, I had 58 in my geography class, and well, who cares? Then you got text books, no schemes, just text books I think, and 'go teach'. No wonder I struggled. People obviously survive, so perhaps they had different strategies. But anyway, I taught Phys Ed for 10 years after that and it was just bliss. I was doing something I could relate to personally, I knew it was achieving and so it turned my whole faith in education around, which was important for me. After that I got married and we went and lived in Papua New Guinea and that's when I stopped teaching, had kids and did all of those things, and worked in other occupations, and at the time I thought the other occupations were quite good. I was a marketing officer for the High Commission in Port Moresby, and that was really really interesting, and I thought, something like that when I come back. But you're constrained by where you live, and where your husband works, and all those sort of things, and in the end, when you've got a young family, teaching is quite attractive, and I thought, oh, well, perhaps I'll go back into it. So I retrained and did a post-grad diploma in economics. And that's

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<sup>40</sup> Berliner, 1992. In Galton, op. cit., 1996, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup>The significant point is that these women chose to bring these experiences to the discussion entirely unprompted. None of the men in the study spoke in the same way about fragmented careers or parenting responsibilities although some did speak of the need to limit the length of after-school meetings because of colleagues' family commitments.

why I'm here now which is a circuitous route, but yes, I think as I said, I learned that I didn't know a lot, and that was really good for me. I think, having a family, I don't think it's necessarily a prerequisite, but having a family gives you a completely different perspective on kids. You appreciate that they actually have other things going on in their lives. And whilst you can't be always sympathetic, I think that you are a lot more tolerant, than perhaps you are when you are a really young teacher.

Nina: Yeah. That's an important thing, isn't it? Do you think that, Adam?

Adam: I don't know. You had to develop a certain degree of tolerance at Kauri, or else you wouldn't have survived, so

Lillian: I had a class at Kauri - it was the worst class I've ever had

Nina: And since you have had your children?

Adam: I don't know if it has had - no probably what I'm doing less is blaming parents for bad kids (all laugh).

Nina: Well, that's tolerance.

Adam: I'm far more tolerant of that. You realise that's not the easiest part. But what I learned at Kauri is if you can reward kids – you'll get them onside.

Nina: What? Money?

Adam: No. Just they're totally connable.

Lillian: I taught at Kauri. I had a third form class, it was my worst class I have ever had of twenty something years of teaching. It was just diabolical. There were racial problems, there were sexual problems, there were kids who had come to school having just been raped - there was just everything going on in this class, and it was diabolical. And probably the only successful lesson I had was when I took them all to the domain - I taught them for social studies, and we were doing a unit on food, and different cultures or something. So we went and had a picnic in the domain, and they all had to bring some food of the particular culture we were doing, and everyone in the school thought I was absolutely daft - they thought I'd never get them back, let alone get them there. Well those kids all turned up, they all bought their food, we had a lovely time there. I didn't watch too closely what went on in the bushes, and we all got back to school. It was just amazing, and I survived. One good lesson out of however many I had in the whole year. So I think you're right, that kids do like to be rewarded. I think they're generally competitive - I find hangman works brilliantly, in my junior class, even in senior classes, they really are trying very - and that's something that everyone can participate in and achieve, and contribute to.

Adam: And if you didn't shout at them, either, they were quite pleased, cos' they got shouted at everywhere. So if you made a point of never shouting. Oh, you don't shout here, either, cos' once you shout you've blown it. Can't do much more other than hit them after you've shouted. That's not going to happen, is it?

Nina: Yeah. Pretending to lose it and really losing it - a big difference.

Adam: Yeah, that's right.

Lillian's early experiences at the bottom of the teaching hierarchy as a 'deferred woman' are the stuff that nightmares are made of: fifty eight children in a class and no teacher training to draw on. No wonder then that she failed in her first post and considered, albeit briefly, other occupations (in the 1960s teaching was still one of the few comparatively well paid employment opportunities readily available to women with a degree level tertiary qualification and, moreover, Lillian gave no indication that she had anticipated or sought to use her ('soft science') Botany degree in another field). Significantly for her self-confidence and image, she was able to secure a post in a field where she already had both expertise and credibility: sport. It is not difficult for us to imagine just how enjoyable the next ten years must have proved to be. Nevertheless, like many women, Lillian's freedom to pursue a career path, even in the late 1970s was, by her admission, dependent on her husband's occupation and the associated expectations of homemaking and bringing up children. She picked up "interesting" work abroad and embarked on another career route in marketing but, again, "constraints" make

this a short-lived career and, like Isadora and Julia, she more or less drifted back into teaching, having retrained in her present area of expertise: economics. In 1996 she combined a head of department role with continued involvement in sports coaching at international level. While these multiple levels of career success may be atypical, like most experienced women teachers Lillian could recount the 'horror story' of teaching large, unresponsive, classes in low status curriculum areas. The more important point is that throughout her work-story she drew on her experience as a mother, and argued that her experience of bringing up children had taught her variously to be humble, more tolerant of kids and to "appreciate that they actually have other things going on in their lives".

Having a family deeply influenced Lillian's outlook and practice as a teacher. For Adam, it was subtly different; he joked gently about what parenting had taught him but his humanistic insights about children came from teaching in difficult schools like Kauri where, he reminisced, thirty five staff left in one year, the children "got shouted at everywhere" and (in an earlier extract) "you went into the staff room and complained about what had gone wrong, and seldom talked about much about what went right". In the gendered division of domestic labour, women's role is that of 'homemaker', men's is 'breadwinner'.<sup>42</sup> From the discussion here, there is no reason to suspect that Adam, Lillian or Nina's career paths varied greatly from this stereotype. Thus, while in earlier extracts in this chapter these and the other interviewees were able to share largely common conceptions of what it was to become a teacher, and to think and act as teachers typically appear to do, such mutual understanding and empathy was absent from those stories of personal career trajectories that interweave private and professional worlds. Nina wholeheartedly agreed with Lillian's account, but Adam twice declined her invitation for him to endorse their analysis.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide an illustrative series of sketches or work-stories of the ways in which teachers talk and think about their work (in artificial but non-threatening situations). The selection is precisely that, a selection, which is intended to be neither representative nor exhaustive. Through the study as a whole, a more complete picture of these teachers' work in the four schools will develop. My aim here has been to use teachers' own stories of key aspects of their work to illuminate the reasoning that underpins their day to day work, the constraints and opportunities within which they exercise their agency and how they believe they have developed as teachers over time. By its very nature the discussion has been

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<sup>42</sup> O'Neill, A-M. *Readings in education feminism*. Delta Studies in Education No. 2. Palmerston North: Massey University Faculty of Education, 1996, 13-44.

removed from the specific challenges they face as individual teachers and curriculum leaders or managers.

The aim in these early interviews was simply to gain teachers' trust, to get the participants talking freely about their work in language and among colleagues with whom they felt reasonably comfortable. To this end, the description of their work has drawn, as much as is possible in an analysis of this kind, on their words and organising frameworks. This or a very similar approach in my view is essential if we are able to enter teachers' occupational worlds on their terms, to focus on ordinary, recurrent aspects of their work and to represent this in a discourse that privileges secondary school teachers' own values and priorities. That said, a broad-brush picture is clearly inadequate to provide an accurate analysis of the detail of the specific classroom or workgroup contexts in which these particular teachers worked. In the next two chapters, therefore, we move from the abstract and general discussion of teaching norms, to the context specific responsibilities and curriculum development challenges that were faced by these teachers as curriculum leaders in their daily working situations.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

This chapter attempts to catalogue the considerable range of leadership responsibilities undertaken by the participants in the study. Following a discussion of the difficulties of analysing curriculum leadership within diverse workgroup and institutional contexts, the complexities of curriculum leadership are considered in terms of individual, department and whole school objectives and with regard to both subject, pastoral and entrepreneurial curriculum domains.

#### INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I reported something of the day-to-day characteristics of secondary school teaching, the patterns of work that collectively made up the recurrent organisational, curricular, and social fabric within which teachers find ways to ply their trade. An understanding of this taken for granted fabric, and the opportunities and constraints it produced, afforded us some useful *insights* on teachers' work in these four schools. However, for experienced teachers with additional, formal workgroup or whole school responsibilities such as the protagonists in this study, the routinised elements of their classroom work formed a comparatively static backdrop against which the social drama of curriculum and teacher development takes place for, as Isadora (below) put it with regard to her pastoral deaning role, one needs to be "secure" and "well prepared" as a classroom teacher simply in order to cope with the demands of additional curriculum and workgroup responsibilities.

In this chapter and those that follow, the focus is on the additional management and leadership responsibilities undertaken by the participants in this study. Following the group focus interviews reported in chapter five, an individual interview was conducted between March and June 1996 with each teacher.' They were asked, first, to describe the main elements of their 'job' and, second, to discuss the development priorities they were currently engaged with. This chapter attempts to bring some sense of order to the considerable range and variety of responsibilities described. They varied in scope and complexity, from Julia's shared sixth form dean role at Totara to Frances' responsibility for a diverse group of teachers in a cross-curricular programme at Kauri to Ivan's concern for the pedagogical development of all the teaching staff at Rimu – but such is the reality of contemporary secondary school organisation. The practical development of teaching and learning practices occurs in many ways among diverse workgroups. In this chapter the discussion of leadership responsibilities is organised around individual, department and whole school objectives. However, the secondary school curriculum is more than a collection of discrete subjects, thus pastoral and 'entrepreneurial' curriculum issues are also considered.

In chapter seven, the priorities identified by the participants are discussed according to their principal developmental focus: students, curriculum or staff. For the most part, the interview extracts used in chapters six and seven are of a more conventional length than in chapter five because the purpose here is to record the variety and range of responsibilities rather than to analyse in detail their constituent processes (which takes place in later chapters). In addition to specific data extracts, my work-storied account<sup>2</sup> includes words, phrases and issues, indicated by the use of "speech marks", taken from the relevant interviews.

We begin however, by highlighting the complexities of analyzing curriculum management and leadership in the schools in the study.

## MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In this part of the chapter, we consider the discrepancy between the basic stereotype of curriculum organisation and development in contemporary secondary schools, and the more complex realities of practice revealed in the participants' work-stories. The 'gap' between the two suggests a cautious, non-reductionist approach to the analysis of curriculum leadership.

### *An Overview Of Secondary School Organisation*

Secondary schools are multifaceted, embedded<sup>3</sup> social contexts where individuals and groups pursue a veritable kaleidoscope of goals (curricular, administrative and social) in which the various, differently coloured pieces of responsibility are constantly shifting to create new mosaics of what is urgent and important among many possible configurations of individual, workgroup and institutional priorities. Teachers' workplaces are organised to enable them to deliver and assess a range of compulsory and elective curriculum courses for students of different ages and diverse abilities for forty weeks over four terms of the school year.<sup>4</sup> The size and complexity of this enterprise has spawned an administrative superstructure that typically comprises a 'senior management' cadre of principal plus assistants and deputies who have minimal or significantly reduced classroom teaching responsibilities, together with subject specialists in each of the curriculum areas who hold formal, tenured 'middle management' responsibilities for administration (schemes of work, assessment protocols,

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter also includes data from interviews undertaken separately with the principals at Totara and Kauri.

<sup>2</sup> Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London: Falmer, 2000, pp. 111-112.

<sup>3</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. The contexts in question. The secondary school workplace. In M. McLaughlin, J. Talbert and N. Bascia (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1990, 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> The four term year option was introduced in 1996. Since 1997 the dates of each term have been promulgated by the Ministry of Education.

student records, reporting, budgeting), the professional development and supervision of colleagues, departmental meetings and liaison with state agencies. Typically, there is also a parallel 'pastoral' structure of deans and form teachers. Deans' responsibilities include the monitoring of student progress, absence and discipline, and a mediating role between students and teachers in situations of conflict.

In the curriculum areas,<sup>5</sup> postholders receive additional remuneration for their 'middle management' responsibilities, the amount of which varies with the scope of additional duties, the size of the workgroup (department), the perceived status of the curriculum area and the relative difficulty of attracting appropriately qualified subject specialists to the school or local area. In addition to the Head of Department, larger departments or workgroups may also have their own hierarchy of additional postholders ('assistant HoD' or 'Teacher in Charge of').

Historically, these remunerated 'positions of responsibility' or 'management units' have been attached almost exclusively to curriculum subjects<sup>6</sup> in ways which (i) reinforce the hegemony of the competitive academic curriculum,<sup>7</sup> (ii) privilege management activities over pastoral and classroom teaching responsibilities; and (iii) vest responsibility and remuneration for these management areas in a proportion of career individuals rather than across the profession as a whole. Thus the typical image of secondary school curriculum organisation in New Zealand since the 1940s is hierarchical and bureaucratic in terms of its administration and accountability; and specialised, differentiated and stratified with regard to its delivery and assessment.<sup>8</sup> This picture, however, is monochrome in its representation of the realities of teachers' (and students') lives in schools.

### *The Realities of Curriculum Management and Leadership*

Models of formal responsibilities and official curricula are highly normative in the sense that they attempt to capture the 'should be' of teaching and its administration yet in reality,<sup>9</sup> as Janette, Isadora and Frank's experiences below imply, the management of

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<sup>5</sup> In contrast, as Isadora points out deans frequently have a much lower official status and may not receive PR points or management units for their additional responsibilities. Indeed, at Totara, when additional 'units' became available for 1996, a decision was made to attach these to new curriculum initiatives within departments for a year, rather than give them to the deans.

<sup>6</sup> The Secondary Teachers' Collective Contract, 1995-1998, replaced the individual career ladder PR (position of responsibility) system with a 'block' of 'management units' to be allocated at school board level and which could be used flexibly for a number of management purposes including 'retention and reward'. As I indicated in chapter three, this shift (in both nomenclature and emphasis) is directly attributable to successive governments' determination to more closely link pay and performance in the teaching profession in the 1990s.

<sup>7</sup> See Mac an Ghaill's analysis of secondary school masculinities in a context of changing curriculum and assessment practices. Mac an Ghaill, M. *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Openshaw, R. *Unresolved struggle. Consensus and conflict in state post-primary education*. Palmerston North; Dunmore Press, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> To illustrate this point, in an earlier part of his interview, when asked how much time he spends on his formal responsibility to supervise colleagues in their classrooms, Frank responded: "Not enough. It's high in my moral priority but it becomes taken up fairly low on the other, the actual reality of it".

curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) and the social interactions among workgroup colleagues are much more complex, unpredictable and fluid. Equally they are humanist not technician in their most essential characteristics.

It's the time thing that, when I was HOD - PR2 HOD Commerce - I think I did a more thorough job although even then I had problems I haven't got now that had to be dealt with. I had teachers who simply were not, at that point, delivering the curriculum. One in particular. And that moved my HOD responsibility, it shot up to become priority number one. The reason that I've put the HOD job down in my priority list is because I think I've got an outstanding staff. And that would be backed up by every indicator that you can get in a school from the fact that I haven't got kids coming and moaning at me, saying 'that teacher's a stink teacher', cos' that happens. The external exam results are outstanding and people aren't moaning at me. That's a real indicator. All the indicators would certainly point that way. So that's why that's probably low on my priority. (Frank, Matai, HoD Commerce and SMT member)

I did quite a lot of the thinking trying to work out what would a course in this school look like in practice? That's basically the document there. Then if we're going to do this, what are the barriers that we're going to come across. One of the problems was that we applied for twice the amount of funding that we actually got so this was originally supposed to run throughout the year but because it couldn't we halved it and we've cut it down to two terms. I had two teachers, Susan and Pauline, who's our teacher aide, work on the curriculum and the sorts of resource gathering that would be needed in term one of this year. So my role is actually much more hands on than I envisaged, when I conceptualised it. Without having the experienced teacher, I've had to take a much more hands-on approach, which goes beyond just teaching for one hour a week in the program. I go down every day and work with the students on what has gone wrong and problem-solving our way through that. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

I guess I feel secure enough about my teaching programme that I know what I'm doing. You have to be well prepared because you can't count on ever having time in school to accomplish anything for your classroom. That must be, that usually happens between ten o'clock and midnight, or ten o'clock and one in the morning, or four o'clock and seven or something in the morning. Those are the hours you squeeze that to. ... Because you also do have to maintain your continuity in the classroom. It can't be allowed to slip. (Isadora, Totara, Dean)

The stratification of a teaching staff into 'senior management', 'middle management' and 'assistant teachers' is neat but misleadingly simplistic and the three extracts above provide an important, cautionary introduction to the major theme of this chapter - the forms and substance of the occupational responsibilities and priorities which engaged a substantial proportion of teachers' out of classroom time and energy.

All the protagonists in this study held a clutch of curriculum, pastoral, interpersonal and administrative responsibilities that engaged their attention and energies at various times of the day, week, term and year. These appeared to be taken for granted as the 'lot' of the contemporary secondary school teacher. In the course of 1996, for example, it was possible to glean from a number of sources that Ruth's additional responsibilities at Rimu included helping to select incoming third form students for the 'high ability' class, shared line management responsibility for the school librarian, and involvement in developing the school's computerised student record-keeping system. In addition, in her second year at the school as HoD Social Studies, she was participating, together with her departmental

colleagues in a Ministry funded, school-based curriculum development contract within the school, had begun a major overhaul of the way Social Studies was assessed, including the development of a new portfolio type student record system, was studying as an extramural student towards the completion of a masters degree in education and, as part of this, had recently completed an in-house empirical analysis of student attainment levels. All this was in addition to her basic responsibilities of class and form teacher. This serves to reinforce the notion that secondary school lines of authority and responsibility are, in practice, not simple and linear, but *diffuse* and web-like, demanding considerably more of teachers than they have time available to do well. To survive and cope, teachers have to make choices and compromises, in short to prioritise.

The HoD role was, for Frank, only one of his many accumulated *responsibilities*<sup>10</sup> and, in 1996, one which was a fairly low priority because the range of 'indicators' he relied on suggested that curriculum and relationships were running smoothly enough for him to focus his attentions and limited time on other things (the school's teacher appraisal system, induction of new staff, pre-service teachers' practicum, schoolwide 'quality manager', senior football team coach). Nevertheless, he expressed some concern that this may have meant that he was doing a less than "thorough" job. That he appeared to cope with the considerable raft of other management responsibilities assigned by the principal was no doubt due in large measure to the fact that he had, in the past, been prepared to actively address the issue of non-performing staff, and over time had assembled what he called an "outstanding" group of six departmental colleagues. For Frank, unlike others in the study, there were no pressing curriculum or workgroup issues which merited his detailed attention" and his departmental responsibilities had consequently, for the time being, become an embedded and taken for granted part of his day to day work.

Similarly, Isadora, had to feel "secure enough about her teaching programme" to enable her to create sufficient space for "deaning" demands during the day. Indeed, we should not underestimate the importance of a certain security and predictability in their classroom teaching for those with additional responsibilities because timetable remission for the latter is often minimal. Thus, for Isadora, the consequences of working at the beck and

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<sup>10</sup> Frank had established himself as a successful and well-regarded HoD and had also been assigned a number of additional whole school responsibilities, suggesting that he had reached that point in his career trajectory when the formal move to senior management status would be the next 'logical' step.

<sup>11</sup> Here the composition of the department was arguably a factor in defining the scope of the HoD role that needs to be undertaken. Frank describes the department, which is an administratively convenient grouping of typing, accounting and economics teachers, as "fragmented" and "individualised". In this sense, it was different from mathematics or English or even science in that there was no common glue of subject identity or affiliation (Siskin, 1994) to hold them together. On the other hand, the grouping enjoyed the significant micropolitical advantage (Ball, 1987) of being able to secure material and financial resources that might not be open to them as individual teachers, for according to Frank, it was well known in the commerce department that "if you want something and it isn't outrageous, then we get it, and if we can't get it, we steal it. You know, we'll get it, we'll just get stuff". Siskin, L. *Realms of knowledge. Academic subjects in secondary schools*. London: Falmer, 1994. Ball, S. *The micropolitics of the school. Towards a sociology of school organisation*. London: Routledge, 1987.

call of students, form and subject teachers, parents and senior staff in situations that were often tense and in need of urgent action, were that her classroom preparation and marking responsibilities were relegated to the late evening or very early morning. Free time during the day was taken up with deaning, creating inevitable tensions for her as a teacher in the process.<sup>12</sup> Everything that Isadora said about the role suggested that deans were well regarded within the school and were acknowledged, albeit 'tacitly', as an essential element of the support infrastructure. They did important work but they received little classroom remission and no additional remuneration.

The essential point which bears repeating here is that most or all of the teachers in the study had a range of responsibilities that made continual demands on their time and energies over and above those of attempting to be a good classroom teacher. These responsibilities required them to juggle multiple teaching and non-teaching activities (and, most frequently for the women in the study, also their public and private spheres). Isadora's experience, in this sense, was no different from that of secondary school teachers generally whose workloads increased<sup>13</sup> gradually but inexorably by several hours per week during the 1980s and 1990s. What is most pertinent here is that Isadora's workload invaded her private life to the point where preparation for teaching was "squeezed" and "usually happens between ten o'clock and midnight, or ten o'clock and one in the morning, or four o'clock and seven or something in the morning".<sup>14</sup> Even as an experienced practitioner, she could not reduce her levels of planning and maintain "continuity" in the classroom. Thus ultimately it was her private, familial, domestic world that was further compromised to make sufficient space to accommodate the deaning and other administrative demands made upon her time during the day.

In the context of the study as a whole, Janette's context and comments above were atypical; they related not to routine curricular, departmental or pastoral responsibilities, nor to particular initiatives within established workgroups but to an increasingly common feature of curriculum in secondary schools, what might be termed the 'entrepreneurial' (where schools compete with each other to attract the attention and win the patronage of funding bodies - public, private or charitable - to enable them to implement additional programmes) or 'marginal' (the special initiative at Kauri targeted students at the fringes of mainstream schooling who found it difficult to participate successfully in the core accredited curriculum) curriculum.

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<sup>12</sup> Equally, for example, Nick, a physics HoD at Matai, observed that 'planning' is the "key determinant" of lesson quality for him, conceding that, "if I've had to fudge it a wee bit and done it in the last ten minutes of lunchtime that's when it just doesn't work".

<sup>13</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers*. Final report. Massey University, Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December; Campbell and Neill, 1994.

<sup>14</sup> In chapter twelve, Isadora gives an account of a particularly busy term in which, for a number of weeks, she regularly got up at 4 am to manage her workload. She had to do this because the evenings, until ten o'clock were sacrosanct, family time.

At Kauri, Janette, the principal, applied for and was successful in securing contestable Ministry funding to provide a programme for at risk students within the school. However, the school did not receive all the funding it sought, hence the integrity of the curriculum initiative had to be compromised in important ways. Contestable curriculum funding, then, was something of a curate's egg in this instance for Janette. She devised a context specific programme based on the needs of her students but had to 'trade down' her original course design. For example, she substituted a teacher aide for an experienced teacher; she intended the course to run for a full year and with two groups of students but had to settle for half a year and one student cohort. In short, she attempted to devise a unique programme to cater for the particular needs of the most marginal or alienated students in the school; won the funding but created a number of curriculum and workgroup problems for herself in the process and "had to take a much more hands-on approach, which goes beyond just teaching for one hour a week in the program".

#### The Analysis Of Curriculum Management And Leadership

The three extracts above provide little purchase for us in terms of conceptualising the form and substance of teachers' priorities in categorical terms. There is no irreducible pattern or 'essence' in this sense. They are highly idiosyncratic working contexts in which priorities are brought into full focus for a while and then meld once again into the routine background of teachers' occupational terrain. Priorities - tensions, crises, opportunities, constraints - emerge as a result of particular, often fleeting configurations of people, curricula and resources and the stresses and strains created by their interplay. If we seek to understand such configurations by classifying them into de-contextualised, crude and static categories then we risk discarding their most illuminating characteristics in the process, namely the individualised strategies and reasoning that teachers and curriculum leaders deploy in particular circumstances as they engage with and try to resolve, as best they can, these issues and move on to others. In the three extracts above, we focus on the 'unique' dynamics of each context because the events and actors appear to have little in common with each other - none of the issues discussed equates readily with the normative 'management' conception of a head of department engaged in the gamut of reporting, curriculum, budget, supervision, student discipline or interpersonal workgroup activities and there is, therefore, no temptation to reduce complex realities to neat conceptual typologies.

The important thing, then, in looking at these teachers' curriculum and workgroup priorities is not to document, from the researcher's position, the frequency of what they do and when, but to understand, from the protagonists' positions, how they conceptualise the opportunities and constraints they encounter and why they choose to take up the positions

and strategies they do.<sup>15</sup> In short, this chapter is concerned with individual teachers' voiced thinking about their responsibilities, not simply (or even) about any supposedly general patterns of action, *per se*

That point made, the reality is that much of secondary school curriculum organisation and social behaviour is occupationally bounded and specific. Routines and processes are broadly similar and identifiable within and across school contexts. All those charged with formal curriculum responsibilities are required to undertake a variety of budget, reporting, supervision and discipline issues in addition to ongoing curriculum development and monitoring. Individuals who are held accountable for the work of other teachers are required to adopt certain contractual positions vis-a-vis their work colleagues. Within any workgroup as a whole, irrespective of size, identifiable patterns of personal and professional relationships develop and become sedimented over time. This explains precisely why these people describe their roles using a largely predictable occupational vernacular of scheme development and revision, the support and encouragement of colleagues, securing resources and filtering the diverse and often contradictory demands of community, government and profession. However, these curriculum, professional and social networks are mediated in particular, significant and detailed ways by the age, gender,<sup>16</sup> experience, and histories of the individuals who inhabit them. Networks develop within very real and predictable configurations of 'structure' and 'agency' at system, school, work/subject group and classroom level. Nonetheless it is only the very general patterns of secondary school teaching and organisation that can be predicted with any degree of certainty; individual biographies, experiences and trajectories cannot.<sup>17</sup>

Hence, in the crudest of analytical fashions, and solely for the purposes of coherent narrative analysis, it is possible to weigh, sift, and blend with appropriate caution, the experiences and aspirations of these individuals in order to allow us to document and analyse them as a 'set'. At the same time, recognising that these are irreducibly individual stories of personal work and career trajectory, we need to seek to preserve the integrity and the complexity of each teacher's thinking as we attempt to unpack the unique forms and substance of curriculum leadership in the context of particular teachers workplace priorities.

In the next part of the discussion, we examine the curriculum management and leadership activity that took place at individual, departmental and whole school levels.

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<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the data set from which the extracts are taken was completely unstructured. Potential participants were informed that the research study was focused on the development of teacher 'expertise' and also on the role of the head of department or curriculum leader in that. Moreover, the fourteen individual interviews in each of the four schools, from which these extracts are taken, did follow a common approach, whereby participants were asked to describe the major components of their 'job' in their own words, and invited to identify an area of priority on which the fieldwork might focus.

<sup>16</sup> All the protagonists were assumed to be pakeha

<sup>17</sup> Nash, R. *Inequality difference. A sociology of education*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997.

## CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

On paper, Frank had a set of curriculum and workgroup responsibilities which defined him as HoD Commerce. Frank himself, however, made a significant distinction between what he called a "moral priority" (i.e. the things he felt he should be doing) and "reality". His moral priorities as a head of department included support for colleagues (so that they "maximise their potential for the kids" and "have the resources they need"), supervision of teachers and ensuring that the curriculum is "delivered by the troops". But, Frank also had a number of whole school areas of responsibility and in 1996, by his own admission, he maintained these in sharper focus. Consequently his moral priorities were done "poorly", informally and fairly haphazardly. Those colleagues whose teaching spaces were "geographically closest" got "popped into" most frequently. His safety net, as he said above, were the "indicators" he relied on to let him know that things were running sufficiently smoothly. Frank saw himself, in effect, both as head of department, as something less than this ("I think I do it poorly"), and something more ("When I was HoD, PR2 HoD Commerce" [my emphasis]).

His sense of unease about the way he conducted this aspect of his work underlines for us the loosely-coupled<sup>18</sup> manner in which formal responsibilities may actually be undertaken in practice within contemporary secondary schools. Yet "all the indicators" suggested that Commerce functioned well in the school without his full and undivided attention, that the curriculum in each of the four subject areas in the 'fragmented' department was still delivered and, presumably, his colleagues still reached something of their "potential" in their classroom teaching. If this is so, it seems then that 'organic', contextual factors other than the formal 'management function' undertaken by the HoD must be at work to allow curriculum and teacher development to take place within this and similar subject specific workgroups. The ways in which the other protagonists in the study undertook their work in this area suggested that, in fact, it was the infinitely more complex and ever-present tensions and interplay among individual, department and whole school objectives in both curricular and pastoral domains which produced an environment in which teachers were both encouraged and hampered in their search for more effective modes of teaching and learning.

### Individuals

Nina applied for and won a management unit on a temporary basis for a year in order to develop 'accelerated learning' in her two third form science classes, officially with a view to modelling and disseminating innovative practice among colleagues, but in reality, the impetus, for her, was personal. It derived, in part, from her career long discomfort with the standard textbook led approach to secondary school science teaching:

I've tried doing page one, page two, page three and I can't. There are always side issues which are interesting and need following. Others need text books and the structure they provide but I can't. So, the third form chemistry classes don't have a text. (Nina, Totara, Temporary MU)

The other participants in the study could readily make a conceptual distinction between the totality of their role as curriculum leaders and the particular component they identified as a current priority for the purposes of this research study. For Nina, this connection between her individual and the workgroup's collective practice seemed irrelevant or, more likely, was one she had not yet been required to address by colleagues or circumstances. When asked what would happen at the end of the year and whether the programme would get used by others in the department, Nina's response was equivocal. The programme would go into "the pool" to be used by colleagues only if they wanted to, for "I don't believe you can make teachers teach in a certain way". While the management unit had been attached to the accelerated learning initiative within the department and had been "chosen" by departmental colleagues from a number of proposals.<sup>19</sup> Nina's thinking was, at the beginning of the year, focused sharply and solely on her own classes,<sup>20</sup> on working through and refining her own "independent learning", process led approach to the teaching of science with third formers and, using the opportunity provided by this researcher, to evaluate the extent to which she was being successful in challenging her students' conceptions of science. The pedagogical initiative was important and credible enough for Nina to receive the endorsement and support of colleagues within her subject department but, at the same time, she and they appeared content for it to remain an isolated 'experiment' conducted by one enthusiast without any assumption that workgroup practice or junior school science teaching would change as a consequence.<sup>21</sup>

Julia, in the same school, Totara, professed to having no great ambition beyond that of being a good English teacher<sup>22</sup> and was content to dean in the senior school (she admitted to being very reluctant to "tumble" and become a third form dean) as long as this

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<sup>18</sup> Weick, K. Educational organizations as loosely-coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1976, 21(1), 1-9.

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Nina commented that a colleague had deliberately not put forward his own proposal in order to support hers.

<sup>20</sup> Again, this is entirely consistent with our knowledge of how teachers consider and evaluate changes to their *personal* practice. Galton, M. Teaching, learning and the co-ordinator. In J. O'Neill and N. Kitson (Eds.). *Effective curriculum management. Co-ordinating learning in the primary school*. London: Routledge, 1996, 13-19; Loudon, W. *Understanding teaching*. London: Cassell, 1991. What is intriguing here, however, is that although, nominally, Nina had a management unit for the development of practice across the department, at this stage of the school year (March), she was still working through the implications for her and her students and had not yet applied this thinking to the work to her colleagues.

<sup>21</sup> Arguably, the initiative can remain a low stakes experiment because it has no workgroup or departmental implications for assessment, accreditation or external accountability reporting.

<sup>22</sup> In the first half of 1996 Julia was also helping with the school's drama production, a major undertaking in terms of time and energy.

did not interfere too much with her preparation for classroom teaching. Moreover, deaning was not, for her, a step on a conscious career trajectory:

You see I'm not actually wanting to go anywhere with this job [dean]. I'm very happy where I am. I've got no other agenda of getting experience for something else. Which may make me a little different from some of the other deans, who see it as a stepping place to management. (Julia, Matai, Co-Dean)

In organisational terms, the two women and their work were treated differentially. From the windfall of discretionary salary resources made available to the department, Nina was awarded a temporary, formal, remunerated curriculum leadership role for classroom focused experimentation. Julia's pastoral-administrative role was essential, embedded and formalised within the management structures of the school, but merited no financial acknowledgement from the board.<sup>23</sup> Both women had management or leadership roles within the school but their overriding priorities were the challenges posed by their own day to day classroom teaching. In this regard they operated largely in isolation from colleagues.<sup>24</sup> The expectation was that Nina's ideas would be disseminated among colleagues but both she and they (HoD, mentor, principal) appeared content for this 'osmosis' to occur in organic fashion.

Julia's reference group<sup>25</sup> for gauging her classroom practice was a nebulous mix of long remembered (positive and negative) role models and rites of passage drawn variously from her own youth, beginning teacher days and nervous return to teaching after a gap of eighteen years. She recalled with fondness her various daughters who were and had been at the same school and among whose books and opinions she would forage for teaching ideas. She remembered with gratitude her previous HoDs in English and Social Studies who had provided the necessary material resources to ease her into teaching again some five years earlier when she so lacked confidence and felt "phoney" and "inattentive" for the whole of the first year back. When prompted by the interviewer she added that current colleagues in the department were "very supportive in terms of being glad to swap ideas, give ideas" and that her local moderation work with NZQA was "exciting", but the overall impression given by her reflective analysis was very much one of the individual teacher of English concerned above all with developing productive, "fun" relationships with the students in her classes and engaging them with a range of experiences, media and genre.

Julia did have a formal, shared management responsibility as co-dean. Like Isadora, she made great play of the importance of "the deans' room" for helping her develop in her

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<sup>23</sup> In her feedback on the draft chapter, Julia commented that from the beginning of 1997 the post attracted a management unit and "a generous time allowance".

<sup>24</sup> Such individuality is entirely consistent with, for example, Huberman's empirical analysis of teachers' lives in Swiss secondary schools. Huberman, M. *Teachers' lives*. London: Cassell, 1993.

<sup>25</sup> Nias, J. Reference groups in primary teaching: talking, listening and identity. In R. Glatter, M. Preedy, C. Riches and M. Masterton (Eds.). *Understanding school management*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988, 293-303.

pastoral role and she recounted in animated fashion a number of specific, concrete incidents from the work itself. She also talked at length about the close personal and professional relationship with her co-dean and the occasions on which she sought specific help on mediation techniques from the principal. Yet there was a stark contrast between the two major roles she enacted within the school, and how she developed in each. As a dean, she recounted experiences which placed her firmly within a small but identifiable and close-knit network of professional colleagues and had "picked up a great deal of compassion from the other women. And care". In her subject teaching role her talk revealed her to be a largely self-sufficient individual teacher and, consequently, the only concern she articulated (in interview) was one of time: "deanship vis-a-vis my subject teaching". She was prepared to continue as dean but only as long as it remained enjoyable and did not impinge on her primary classroom and family interests.

Nick's role as HoD Physics at Matai was also, surprisingly perhaps, conceived in comparatively introspective terms. Although a member of the much larger science department, Nick's primary affiliation was clearly to his subject specialism. His department or workgroup thus comprised only himself and the one other physics specialist in the school (who also taught in subject areas other than physics). Like the other participants in this study, in addition to his subject teaching and curriculum leadership responsibilities, Nick simultaneously enjoyed membership of other workgroups in the school; as timetabler he was positioned among the 'senior management' and he was also co-ordinating the implementation of the Technology curriculum across the school, both of which are major administrative and micropolitical undertakings in a rapidly expanding secondary school with approximately eleven hundred students on roll.

### *The Subject HoD*

Several participants in the study described their responsibilities as those of what we might call the typical or conventional HoD, requiring them to build relationships, discipline students, distribute workloads equitably, ensure that prescribed curriculum and assessment changes are implemented, maintain colleagues' morale and liaise with external agencies. Lillian's account, for example, comprised the following components:

#### 1. "The Paper War"

Trying to stay on top of the paper war. I think that over the last several years it has got much, much worse. I've now filed things in the little round receptacle much more often. Because it's the only way to survive. I can't even maintain my filing because there aren't enough hours in the day with the class contact we have. I've got a small department, there are five of us in it, and that makes for much easier management, and being aware of who's doing what, and how people are going.

#### 2. "Information Dissemination"

Related to that paper work I think one of the other difficulties that we have, and this is a small department so [in] the big departments it must be magnified, is disseminating useful

information. A whole lot of stuff crosses my desk. I've got to sort out what's useful for me, what I need to keep, what I need to remember I've got, and then what will be useful for the others. I don't want to involve them in the paper war to the same extent because they'll just file it in the bin. We're finding it increasingly difficult to make time to share information. We could be autocratic and say OK, there's a meeting every week, but four of our staff are women with families, and the reality is that you can't do that to them.

### 3. "Motivation"

I think the most important thing is to keep the staff motivated. Just as I rate very highly keeping the kids motivated, and motivating them to find their particular potential, I think the staff need that kind of support as well. I think that's one of the most important things that I can do, and I do it informally and formally. I'm a bit of an enthusiast anyway so that rubs off. My motivation skills are quite well developed because of my coaching background and so I guess it comes naturally - and I think this is why we've now got a department that's humming. But it takes time.

### 4. "After-school Meetings"

Some weeks there are meetings every day after school, that I'm either involved in or I have to prod someone else in to going to, and I'm very conscious, as I say, that the women with younger kids in our department, that it's not fair to put that kind of pressure on them, and so I tend to try and take the load myself. You get a bit narked occasionally, especially if you go to something that's not worthwhile. You do go to some things and you think "Oh, my God - we were talking about this five years ago - we've come nowhere".

### 5. "Hours"

... there is a certain expectation, and obviously as the Head of Department you have to accept those responsibilities, but I don't think anyone is really looking at the overall picture of the demands on our time. We get very little non-contact time for being a Head of Department, comparatively and so the extra work we do is basically in our own time. The hours we work are incredible ...

### 6. "Teachers' Association"

... we have a very strong Commerce teachers association, and we're all in the same boat there. We all share the concerns, and here we are at yet another meeting - at the moment it's frustrating because our Unit Standards haven't been published yet, and so we're marking time, we're getting prepared but - got no substance to work on. We've had three meetings that have really just been no point to them, because we have nothing to do there.

### 7. "Priorities"

... there are a group of us on this staff, who are also under the same pressure. There are some people who - I don't know, I'm making judgements here - but I think there are some people who head down the administration line, and sacrifice their class contact to some extent. I tend to prefer to put most of my energies into the class, and the department, and then the extras on top of that. In terms of priorities, that would be down the line but I'd still have to do it. But more of my energies would go that way so it's different for different Heads of Department, depending on what they get out of things, I suppose.

### 8. "Shared Loads"

That's my choice. I could get much more autocratic but in a small department my staff are all carrying a reasonable extra load. We share preparing resources, we share the revision of schemes, we share the setting of tests and exams. And that's fairly equally shared, so I feel that they're all doing enough extra, and from their own professional development point of view I think they're getting as many opportunities as they want, and so I think if I loaded anything more onto them they would be saying "Hey, you're paid for this" - quite rightly so. (Lillian, Totara, HoD Economics and Accounting)

Woven through these various components were recurrent threads of opportunity and constraint which taxed Lillian's administrative, curricular and "coaching" or motivational capabilities. First, she worked, as did other HoDs in the school, "incredible hours" which were not monitored or delimited. Because there was minimal timetable remission, many responsibilities were carried out in their "own time". Second, paperwork and meetings generated from outside the department were a constant and debilitating intrusion that, although they may have been low in the list of priorities, nevertheless had to be attended to. Much of this extra load fell on Lillian who was reluctant to "prod" others into attending meetings and knew that extraneous paperwork would be "filed" in the rubbish bin. Third, there appeared to be an unstated accommodation between Lillian and her colleagues in which she attended subject association and administrative meetings for the department as a whole and sifted through the paperwork on their behalf, while they for their part shared, "equally", the preparation of resources, tests and the revision of schemes. Fourth, this arrangement was also a conscious "choice" on Lillian's part and, for her, the approach had been vindicated in terms of developing workgroup relations and collective classroom practice. Unlike "some" colleagues, she had not "headed down the administration line", preferring to focus her attentions and energies on her classes, curriculum area and workgroup. Her preferred professional realm was that of subject and workgroup, not wider school management and administrative processes. Finally, her assessment of the best way to motivate and provide development opportunities for those staff who "want" them had resulted, after seven years, in a department "that's humming"; something that is to be cherished and cannot be taken for granted as a routine feature of secondary school subject based workgroups.<sup>26</sup>

### **Workgroup relations**

Lillian positioned herself quite consciously in relation to the politics of both personal career and workgroup motivation. She had, for the time being at least, decided against the whole school management or administration "line" that for example, was part of the day-to-day work and career progression of individuals such as Frank at Matai, Isadora at Totara and Ruth and Alice at Rimu (and to which Lillian's various non-teaching experiences might suggest she would be well-suited). Equally, in negotiating an equitable division of responsibilities within the workgroup, Lillian recognised the need to constantly juggle her and colleagues' available time, energy, other commitments, differential career aspirations and tolerance while, at the same time attempting to ensure that curriculum development and maintenance activities took place within a harmonious set of workgroup relations.

At his previous school, where he had held a more 'junior' (PR2) curriculum responsibility, William observed that "it was a lot easier to have the relationships because I

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<sup>26</sup> E.g. Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994; Siskin, op. cit.,

had time there. And so I had a lot of relationships with the hierarchy and with the older teachers who had been there for longer". In contrast, at Totara, he had yet to develop those networks of social and professional contacts. As a recently appointed HoD, someone new to the school, and one of the younger members of his department who was appointed (after a year long hiatus) over the widely respected incumbent Acting HoD, William was acutely aware of the need, and the pressures on him, to rapidly establish his credibility and to actively and successfully manage all of the facets of his HoD role (see the extract in chapter four). He faced a broadly similar range of challenges to Lillian and the other HoDs in the study, but had the additional problem of establishing the effective interpersonal and intragroup relationships without which everything else would "fall down".

### **Multiple demands**

Like all his colleagues, William was grappling with the practical implications of complex discursive demands for curriculum and assessment changes. These demands were generated and mediated both by students' differential attitudes to learning mathematics, central government policy direction, the requirements of quasi-autonomous validating bodies, industrial and commercial training groups, the demands of employers, community and parents, the effects of the local secondary school market, teachers' subject association activities, and a long held sector wide frustration<sup>27</sup> with the well-established shortcomings of hegemonic accreditation frameworks such as School Certificate. This is the volatile and contradictory field within which heads of subject departments must learn and practice their leadership role.

In Totara's mathematics department these contextual pressures fused with colleagues' professional curiosity and determination to materially influence the shape of emerging credential alternatives such as unit standards, with the expectations of the school's senior management and with the gravitational pull of parallel developments being undertaken in other departments within the school. Together, they produced a demanding working environment in which William had to hit the ground running. More urgent even than this, though, he identified the need to socialise himself within the workgroup and establish a personal position of credibility among a large group of departmental colleagues and students. Like other HoD colleagues, William periodically needed to demonstrate to senior staff that agreed changes and developments were being successfully incorporated within the department's practices,<sup>28</sup> but his immediate and frequently repeated concern here was the workgroup and the relationships between him and his fellow teachers.

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<sup>27</sup> Openshaw, op. cit., 1995; Hood, D. *Our secondary schools don't work anymore*. Auckland: Profile Books, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> On appointment to her first departmental headship at her new school Matai, Isadora (chapter eleven) recounted a similar range of concerns to William and employs a similar range of strategies for establishing her personal and professional credibility.

In this large mathematics department (comprising eleven of the more than sixty teachers in the school), the relationship building strategies had some noteworthy, idiosyncratic features. For example, in the senior school the department ran a number of courses in multiple classes, the human and logistic complexities which had to be carefully orchestrated. The trial introduction of unit standards in areas of the fifth form programme added to teachers' workloads but also created the potential for conflict or resistance because innovation, albeit a voluntary trial, required them to challenge and change their practice. Moreover, across all classes, and with all his colleagues, William was faced with the ever present disciplinary consequences of teaching and administering in a compulsory subject that "kids tend to either love or hate. Unfortunately there's an awful lot of hating". All these issues were seen by William not just as administrative requirements but as potential opportunities for him to demonstrate to his colleagues that he was up to the task in their eyes; and to begin to bring the individuals together again as an effective "team".

### **Harmony as a prerequisite for change**

In contrast, other Heads of Department such as Adam, Tim, Lillian, Frank, Nick and Frances, were already well established within their workgroups and appeared to take the routine quality of professional and personal relationships in comparatively relaxed fashion as something of a given, allowing them to concentrate on refining shades of practice in particular areas using well tried relationships and processes:

It's really that role of co-ordination and keeping the paper work moving in the direction that it should be moving, and to actually sift through paper work, and work out which needs to shift, and which doesn't, and keeping people up to date with curriculum changes, keeping people up to date with assessment changes, and giving them strategies to actually implement curriculum changes and assessment changes. It's making it clear they know what's required and also giving them a suggested way of getting there. (Adam, Totara, HoD Science)

For Lillian, the period of the research coincided with the first year that she had felt this comfortable with the make up of the staff and the ways in which they "work really well together". However, achieving an environment or culture in which relationships were harmonious was not an end in itself. It provided (and in turn was enhanced by) the "happy" medium in which essential professional collaboration could take place. Good workgroup relations were purposive.

I've got a small department, there are five of us in it, and that makes for much easier management, and being aware of who's doing what, and how people are going. [...] It's accounting and economics. There are four of us who teach economics, and four of them teach accounting. I'm the only one that doesn't teach accounting. It works pretty well. This is my seventh year at the school and it's the first year that I could say that we've got a group of people who work really well together, and are happy to share resources and ideas and prod each other, and things, so it makes my job easier. (Lillian, Totara, HoD Economics and Accounting)

### **Modelling good practice**

Earlier in the chapter, Lillian made the point that she chose to prioritise those activities that related most closely to her classroom and department. In the interview, she also recounted the anxieties she encountered when a dynamic classroom practitioner joined her department the year before. Having seen her teaching, Lillian, felt "challenged" and "pressured" by this and a need to "keep up" with her in terms of classroom practice but could only admit this to her colleague after several months. Being a model or example of good teaching practice within the department or wider school was, then, clearly very important to these curriculum leaders' own sense of credibility among colleagues. For example, in addition to the two HoD role requirements of "managing people and resources", Tim added a third:

... which is the idea of modelling, and again these are aspirations, I'm not saying I'm necessarily all that good at it, but I think it's important that as an HoD I can be someone who can demonstrate some useful teaching and classroom management principles and techniques. Not necessarily directly to them, because although it does happen from time to time. The teachers do come to my classroom to look at what I'm doing - not necessarily teachers of English, recently a teacher of Japanese - that I hopefully can provide that sort of thing. And I think it ties in not just with the fact that I'm a middle manager and a more senior member of staff, but as an HoD is saying something about the person's ability to deliver the formal curriculum. (Tim, Rimu, HoD English)

Throughout the period of the research, the interviews at Rimu were all preoccupied with a barely concealed **subtext**: the struggle for ascendancy between those 'traditionalists' who espoused and practised more static pedagogies and management roles and those advocates of change, like Ivan, who argued that the particular needs of the students required teachers at Rimu to (i) adopt a considered, reflective, resource driven and student-centred pedagogical approach; (ii) to link classroom practice more closely to the demands of prescribed curriculum schemes; and (iii) to provide support through documented and detailed schemes for both non-specialist teachers and those new to the school.<sup>29</sup> Tim was positioned somewhat ambiguously in all this, his practice a complex amalgam of pedagogical continuity (after sixteen years at the school) and innovation in content and assessment (through, for example, the department's participation in successive rounds of Ministry funded English curriculum development programmes). He was, to use his words, a middle manager, a more senior member of staff and an HoD. New teachers in the school sometimes visited his classroom to observe him in action, thus we might reasonably assume that his classroom practice, in terms of its disciplinary and pedagogical strategies, was held up as an example of 'good practice' for newcomers, and, by implication, for other HoDs in the school, of how to deliver "the formal curriculum" in what Tim called a "challenging" teaching context. Thus, although Tim was talking here in terms of his HoD English role, like Frank at Matai,

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<sup>29</sup> In their feedback on the draft of this chapter, both Ivan and Alice made the point that this analysis was a fair assessment of practice at the time but that the school had changed considerably since then.

his departmental priorities competed for his time and attention with whole school management and administration issues in a school where his length of service, institutional memory, relationships with colleagues and position within the hierarchy together constituted him as something of a quasi-formal 'culture bearer'.<sup>30</sup>

### **Variations on the HoD theme**

Finally, in this section, we should be prepared to acknowledge that although the term 'head of department' is ubiquitous this should not be taken to imply that subject departments are homogeneous across all secondary schools in terms of size, organisation, institutional power, student motivations, pedagogies and relationships. Numerous and often subtle differences of organisation, culture and dynamics exist within them.

For example, one of Ruth's dilemmas in a small humanities department in a small secondary school was that "social studies is one of those last subjects where you just bung in whoever's left on the timetable which is a real problem". She was, nonetheless an HoD in name and practice, and accountable for curriculum and accreditation changes. She also had to communicate with fellow teachers, apply for and co-ordinate Ministry funded contracts and promote broadly consistent curriculum practice across the group. Yet the specifics of her occupational and institutional contexts, her position in the school and subject hierarchy, the nature of the subject itself and the diffuse character of the workgroup, all combined to directly influence the particular ways in which Ruth could, in practice, exercise the various responsibilities of her role. Like William, Lillian and Tim, above, Ruth's freedom of manoeuvre and the related micropolitical strategies she engaged in were shaped in minute and unique detail not only by the personal conceptions and experiences she brought to the work, but also by the history of the subject department in question, the make up and dynamics of the workgroup, and the characteristics of the institutional and community context in which these were contained. These factors combined to create the specific 'mindscapes'<sup>31</sup> through which individuals construed their work. For Ruth, the problematic reality was that her eclectic, fragmented group of social studies teachers had other, more pressing teaching and administration priorities, thus:

I see myself more as a facilitator, I get things set up and try and pass on the information to them, and they sometimes pass it back to me. I'm just trying to get things organised for next year. It's a bit hard to be totally consultative though, it's so hard to get meetings in ... I've changed my approach to dealing with the staff. Instead of trying to get everyone to meetings which is very difficult, besides the intention to be there, there's also the problem that they're so busy, and Susan's with equine so she's out with the horses all the time. So, if I've got something important like changing the report formats, I'll go round on a one-to-one, and corner them in the staffroom and (laughs) don't let them get away until they've given me an answer. [...] I think it's that they're all HoDs in their own right and so they're all

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<sup>30</sup> Sergiovanni, T. Leadership and excellence in schooling. *Educational Leadership*, 1984, 41(5), 4-14.

<sup>31</sup> Sergiovanni, T. Landscapes, mindscapes and reflective practice in supervision. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 1985, 1(1), 5-17.

busy people, and they've got focuses other than social studies. (Ruth, Rimu, HoD Social Studies)

Like Ruth, Frances at Kauri listed the skeletal components of her 'co-ordinator' role in similar fashion to other HoDs even though her responsibility was for a whole school modularised, individualised learning programme that straddled all four core curriculum areas of English, science, mathematics and social studies, each of which had their own HoD. The specific nature of Frances' programme demanded a highly idiosyncratic and stylised emphasis (see chapter eleven) on curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment in order to perpetuate the distinctive philosophy of the programme among teachers who volunteered to teach in the programme but who simultaneously taught in the more traditional 'mainstream' classrooms in their respective subject areas. Despite her claims to lack of clarity of what the role as co-ordinator of Individualised Learning was, the form and substance of many of the activities she engaged in had much in common with those of more typical HoD postholders in the study:

I have a meeting weekly with the staff, which by their request it's probably two weeks out of three now, because we have so many meetings after school, so I try to cut it down, although I know that I'm probably meeting their needs rather than [the programme] needs, a lot of the time, but then you've got to keep that in balance too. So if I've only got a few admin things I might put out a newsletter and a printed thing and no meeting, whereas tonight we have a meeting after school to write an across the curriculum unit There will be no admin done in that time, except for that writing unit, we're all going to meet to write this unit. I can't actually define what my role is, I see myself blending in to run the program, I feel I've got to keep the students happy, keep the parents happy, keep the teachers happy. I'm sort of a go-between, between a lot of parents-students, students-students, student-teachers - that sort of thing to keep the program running. (Frances, Kauri, Individualised Learning co-ordinator)

Frances had helped establish seven years earlier a student centred, modularised learning programme that was highly idiosyncratic in its pedagogy and assessment. Since its second year, she had also been its co-ordinator and, in effect, cultural guardian. She and the other teachers involved with the programme, both long serving and newcomers, often referred to the programme in terms of its 'philosophy'. Indeed, highly structured routines were built in to the programme timetable to reinforce this philosophy with staff and students, and parents too at daily, weekly, fortnightly, termly and annual intervals. But, as noted above, the programme ran across several subject areas and was staffed by teachers who worked both in this and "conventional or mainstream" classes. Thus, Frances talked on several occasions of potential and actual conflicts over style, philosophy and role with other heads of department since the inception of the programme and also of the need to ensure that teachers left their traditional mathematics or science or English or social studies content, pedagogies and assessment outside the door of individualised learning classrooms (see chapter eleven).

The need for this monitoring or boundary maintenance role gives us an inkling, first, of the compartmentalised, bounded, and relatively impermeable nature of hegemonic pedagogies within secondary schools that, for the most part, are organised along traditional subject divisions; and second, of the tensions and resistance that can be generated by attempts to shape teachers' practice in cross-curricular patterns of delivery at whole school level.

Nevertheless, from the stories of the participants in the study, it is clear that efforts to influence, support and develop curriculum and teachers' practice within a school take place, often independently and haphazardly, in a number of ways outside the confines of the subject department workgroup. While teachers' and HoDs' primary affiliations<sup>32</sup> may, indeed, be to subject and workgroup, other forces are at play within secondary schools which influence the ways in which individuals and groups practise and manage teaching and learning. Arguably, the most significant of these are the management strategies, both overt and covert, pursued by principal and senior staff at whole school level.

#### *Whole School Curriculum Objectives*

Whole school, whole curriculum or whole staff initiatives existed in each of the schools in the study. They exerted pressures, both formal and informal, for greater homogeneity in curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment as principals and senior management worked to establish commonalities of approach across the teaching staff as a whole and to attempt to encourage and disseminate perceived good practice more widely.

At Rimu, Alice had recently been appointed as assistant principal from a head of department position at a secondary school that served a predominantly professional commuter community. One of the responsibilities she inherited from the previous AP at Rimu was the induction and support of new staff and pre-service students. Previously, according to Alice, "there didn't appear to be anything" and support systems "don't exist".<sup>33</sup> Alice admitted to being "described as a very systems person, I'd never thought of myself like that, but apparently I am". From her account (and others') of existing staff support processes in the school, she was clearly presented with major challenges as she attempted to move beyond the *laissez faire* approach that characterised the school's practice in this area before her arrival. As a recent, former head of department herself, she argued that much of this responsibility needed to be undertaken at departmental level (indeed, she was clearly exasperated by the way in which she considered that 'her' HoD in her own subject area was not doing as much as could be done for a new member of staff). However, she was encountering apathy and passive resistance among some long serving

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<sup>32</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Ivan made the point in his feedback on the draft chapter that prior to 1996 "there hadn't been any new staff for ages it seemed till I then Ruth arrived".

staff in positions of responsibility and was attempting to circumvent this by implementing a documented school wide policy:

I think the Heads of Department and the teachers who are in charge of the students need training. Most of them are very experienced teachers so they've been doing this in an ad hoc way over the years, so they probably know that this has to happen and that has to happen - but I think it needs to be more formalised. They really need a check-list of: this term have you done these things here? Have you got a regular meeting time? Is time negotiable? Little things that we can lose along the way because you just get too busy. The first year teachers and the teachers involved with new staff need some training course and reminding about what the needs of those people are and what their relationship is. The year one teachers and the new teachers need people like Eric (deputy principal) and I, in a different corner, talking about the systems and how the school operates in a general way. There needs to be a link between those people - staff members in their own departments, and the Head of Departments. There's quite a lot of training that needs to go on at all those different levels. (Alice, Rimu, Assistant Principal)

It is, at one level, unremarkable that Alice should have sought to introduce systems - check lists, training courses, reminders - to tighten up procedures for the induction and support of new staff, in order to counter unreliable, ad hoc processes that depend on the diligence and goodwill of individuals. Moreover, such approaches may be attractive precisely because they give the veneer of having achieved commonality of purpose and practice in difficult circumstances; a checklist ticked and a course attended are, if nothing else, tangible signs of apparent progress. However, she elected to concentrate on the less confrontational approach of procedural documentation and passive “training” in these circumstances. This gives an indication of her status as a newcomer to both the school and the demands of whole school 'senior management'. The transition from head of department in an ordered school environment to assistant principal in a new school where some classroom and departmental management practices remained "traditional", cannot have been an easy one.<sup>34</sup> For Alice, it was certainly the cause of much frustration because she felt, unlike the principal, that the inappropriate practice she saw in the school needed to be directly confronted:

Ivan and I have talked about this. He and I have quite different approaches. He would see me as very hard line about people delivering good teaching. If you're not delivering good teaching you've got to confront people about it. I'm quite interested in how Ivan and I are going to evolve over the year, because his is all about motivation, and making people feel good and all that sort of thing, whereas I'm more about saying - well, you're not doing this, this, this and this and you do this. (Alice, Rimu, Assistant Principal)

Yet Alice, partly because of the approach preferred by the principal, did not herself feel able to confront people who are "not delivering". Instead, in a situation where her position and influence had yet to be fully established, she chose checklists and training as the vehicles through which the previous 'adhocracy' was more indirectly questioned and

whole school commonalities of approach to staff socialisation and support were to be encouraged through the development of whole school policies and systems, not demanded from individuals.

### **Attempting whole school change**

Alice described the approach of the principal, Ivan, to whole school change as one based on "motivation and making people feel good". Arguably, however, experience and his knowledge of the change and implementation process<sup>35</sup> had resigned him to accommodating and working around (as opposed to directly challenging) the embedded resistance to innovation among those staff who clinged to what he considered to be the "very very traditional teaching" that in his view<sup>36</sup> was typical of secondary teachers generally:

... one of the things that is very hard to get your hands on - and I feel that a lot of changes have occurred here, in the last two years, but when I go round the classes, in some classrooms there are still some very very traditional teaching going on. In some cases it suits the students, in others it doesn't, and in some cases there is still a place for it. Some staff are going to need some assistance to move on a bit further than they are at present. I see this [the introduction of a 'supportive appraisal scheme'] as being a way I can actually help that happen. Some of the changes are going to happen because of the new curriculum, they've got to happen though some staff will try to - teachers are very good at fitting new things into their existing patterns. (Ivan, Rimu, Principal)

If in 1996, Alice's lack of leverage on whole staff attitudes and school-wide practice at Rimu was not surprising, Ivan's, from his position of greater authority and experience was and gives us a tart flavour of the kinds of resistance to whole school and individual change initiatives that may be encountered in secondary schools even by the most powerful (in a positional sense) professional on the staff. At Rimu, Ivan acknowledged that changes "have to happen" because of the new curriculum but, although many "changes" had taken place, classroom teaching, in his opinion, had not. Ivan was well aware that teachers are adept at subverting or accommodating unwanted prescriptions both from external agencies of the state and senior colleagues within the school who are not themselves regularly in classrooms working at the sharp end<sup>37</sup>. In recognition of this, Ivan adopted the language of very tentative and modest objectives: to move some teachers "a bit further on"; and echoing, almost, Alice's strategies, this need for change was not to be broached directly with

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<sup>34</sup> In addition, it is significant in terms of her positional and actual status that Alice is assistant, not deputy principal and that the previous incumbent was also the only woman among the senior management triumvirate.

<sup>35</sup> His analysis of the process closely resembles, for example, Fullan's seminal work in this area with which Ivan would likely be familiar having been previously a school inspector, and tertiary lecturer with a higher degree in educational administration. Fullan, M. *The meaning of educational change*. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>36</sup> A point made in the written feedback on this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> "I haven't taught for some time actually but the staff think it would be good if I did."

staff who were unwilling to take on a facilitator role<sup>31</sup> but through the introduction of what Ivan referred to as a "supportive" appraisal scheme<sup>39</sup>.

At Rimu, then, whole school, whole staff change initiatives had to take into account the passive resistance of some teachers in some curriculum areas. In these circumstances, the efforts and wits of senior staff (and supportive heads of department such as Tim and the recently appointed Ruth) were in tension with those of some teachers who were unwilling to accommodate necessary changes in their teaching content, pedagogy and assessment or habitual workgroup relations (these issues are explored further in chapter ten).

### **School 'culture' and change**

The difficulties posed (in, it must be emphasised, "some" curriculum areas and "some" classrooms with "some" teachers) at Rimu by a combination of poor motivation among a sizeable proportion of students and 'restricted professionalism'<sup>40</sup> among some staff may usefully be contrasted with what it was possible to discover about the whole school cultures and routine levels of professionalism that were reported to exist in the other schools.<sup>41</sup>

At Kauri, also a school with a 'challenging' teaching environment, Janette, recounted several concrete examples of curriculum and staff development initiatives which suggested that the problems associated with traditional secondary school approaches to curriculum content pedagogy and assessment had been actively addressed over a number of years in, perhaps, a more radical and direct fashion than was the case at Rimu, by articulating the difficulties and **identifying** the specific forms of support that were needed to lubricate the change process:

One of the results of that is with the Qualifications Framework I think we haven't had the problems that many schools have had, or the resistance, because we are used to working in teams as a staff to prepare, to discuss, to develop. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

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<sup>38</sup> Gareth Morgan's cautionary note on institutional culture - those who work against the prevailing organisational culture are likely to hit a solid brick wall - seems very apt in these circumstances and helps explain, perhaps, why Ivan and Alice have each adopted less **confrontational** strategies. Morgan, G. *Images of organization*. London: Sage, 1986.

<sup>39</sup> At the time of the interview (June 1996) schools had received some months earlier the Ministry of Education's consultation document *Draft National Guidelines for Performance Management in Schools*. Moreover, the Secondary Schools Collective Employment Contract 1995-1998, appendix G documented, for the first time, performance criteria against which secondary school teachers were to be assessed annually in order to receive annual salary increments.

<sup>40</sup> Hoyle, E. and McCormack, R. *Innovation and the teacher*. E203 Units 29 and 30. Milton: Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1976.

<sup>41</sup> Angus, the principal at Matai was not interviewed during the research study itself. However, when access to the staff was first sought, the appeal or 'carrot', as he put it, for both him and his overworked staff was that the research would contribute to a **confirmation** of the departmental level staff development processes that needed to be in place for accreditation with NZQA as a provider of Unit Standards in a school that had a nominated 'quality manager'. The impression thus given was of a school that was, on the principal's view, running sufficiently smoothly in terms of teaching and learning practice for the research study to focus on an analysis of the bureaucratic aspects of curriculum administration.

These kinds of 'whole school' observations are commonly made by both academics and practitioners when attempting to sketch, in broad-brush terms, a school's culture or climate. Inevitably almost, they gloss over what may, in reality, be very varied and different modes of workgroup practice and the received experience of individuals in the one institution. However, in this instance, Janette said she was aware of and comfortable with the notion that staff in all departments were changing and developing curriculum in idiosyncratic ways and at different rates.

Some departments are not as challenged as others, they don't challenge themselves as much as others but virtually all departments I think as setting very ambitious goals. They are introducing new programs. We have got accreditation in a wide area of vocational areas as well as the conventional areas. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

To my mind, these caveats more accurately capture the fragmentary nature of whole school change in the secondary sector. Practice is gradually and haphazardly modified as relatively autonomous workgroups and individuals experiment with and adapt proposed changes to suit their own requirements. Such innovations are mediated by the particular social dynamics within the various workgroups (dynamics which change with each issue faced by the group and as personnel leave and enter) and the relationships between them and senior staff, external agencies, community groups, subject and professional associations. Nevertheless, it was apparent from the comments of both Janette at Kauri and Marian at Totara that both whole school and particular sub group practices and cultures did change noticeably over time both by design and default.

In her early years at Kauri, Janette had spent some considerable time and energy engaging the whole staff in structured approaches to curriculum change such as the introduction of the Individualised Learning initiative. She organised and led considerable in-service work on, for example, learning styles and alternative pedagogies drawing on her previous experience as a secondary, pre-service teacher educator. After seven years in post as principal she suggested, rather self-effacingly, that the 'culture' of the school was sufficiently robust and well established to allow this to happen independently of her personal interventions and, at departmental level, was now driven by the staff themselves:

I think there are very few teachers now in this school who actually write their lesson plan the night before. Now there's banks of material that have been jointly written and that's been very, very good given all the curriculum and qualifications change. They are there so once they have done it once, OK, they do have to tinker around with it perhaps but the majority of work is actually shared and that has been an enormous change over the seven years that I have been here. There wasn't any of that going on when I arrived here and I haven't told people they should be doing it. They have discovered that for themselves. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

The whole school issues facing Marian at Totara were both grossly and subtly different. Marian felt "privileged" to have inherited a well-run school with a critical mass of

outstanding, very highly qualified staff and high achieving students (a lot of the learning was at "university level" and a hundred out of two hundred and fifty students in each year cohort were "decile eight or nine"). Both she and other participants in the study referred to teaching and learning at Totara in terms which implied that departments were in competition with each other in their desire to be involved at the cutting edge of curriculum reform. For example, several departments had volunteered to take part in Unit Standards trials and others were involved in a range of Ministry funded curriculum and professional development contracts while both Lillian and William commented in some detail on the outstanding pedagogies and expertise of colleagues in their subject departments.

In the course of the study, there was the occasional, usually oblique, reference to individuals who were struggling or not performing as teachers or heads of department. Equally, Marian's analysis of the school in her first twelve months in post had identified a limited number of curriculum areas that needed attention. However, the general impression given by both the principal and the various heads of department with regard to curriculum was of the need to fine tune practices in particular ways, not change or abandon them wholesale, and to find ways to disseminate good practice more widely rather than having to overcome the lack of energy and enthusiasm of members of staff who had, to use Alice's words, "lost it - for whatever reason".

In all this, Marian's principal objective was to put in place more effective review processes, whole school meeting forums and appraisal and professional development programmes. Like Ivan at Rimu, she was content, for the time being, to take a softly softly approach to change, waiting for staff to feel "uncomfortable" with the status quo and for "chinks to appear" before offering alternatives but, significantly, this hands off approach was possible because the school as a whole was functioning well, leading her to predict with some confidence that the subtly changing management culture would eventually encourage staff to want change. She did not anticipate strong resistance. Indeed, the major staff challenge for her was one of helping people to move from the "hierarchical", "controlled", conservative management "culture" of the previous principal to one where staff acted, and were convinced that they had the support to act, with more autonomy, on their own initiative:

By all means protect and look after them, care for them, but actually also strengthen them to do their job well. There's some curriculum areas in this school that need attention. [name of subject] we've started on which is not bad, but it's not across the curriculum, we're going to make it but the other one's [name of subject] which is very weak, needs work, the Head of [name of subject] has not yet given us permission to fly. She knows I'm with her, but she hasn't given herself permission to fly. (Marian, Totara, Principal)

Even from an analysis of these few individual, subject department and whole school activities it seemed clear that, although the subject department (curriculum and workgroup) did exert a considerable array of social, epistemological and pedagogical influences which

defined and supported the work of these secondary school curriculum leaders, other, related forces within the institution, i.e. those exerted by classroom teachers and senior staff also helped to shape the kinds of work that it was possible to conceive, attempt and do. Before we examine in greater detail in chapter seven the particular priorities identified by the participants for the purposes of this fieldwork, we should aim to complete the descriptive account of curriculum and workgroup activity reported in these schools by looking briefly at both the pastoral domain and the entrepreneurial (or marginal) curriculum.

### *The Pastoral Domain*

Pastoral structures are an established feature of secondary schooling and administration. Nevertheless, they appear only rarely in either empirical research<sup>42</sup> or theoretical analyses of management structures and processes in secondary schools. Despite the centrality of pastoral structures and processes to teachers' and students' ways of being in schools (plus growing public and media alarm over levels of student alienation, truancy and deviance and professional association concerns with teacher workload and stress) they receive little mention in discussions of teacher and curriculum development. In practice, pastoral work has traditionally been accorded a lower status:

... they do a lot of jobs, at a really high management level, but are not considered management. The other thing is, at this school, the deans are not respected for the work that they do. And that is quite historical. It's nothing to do with people in the job, they're all relatively new. They should be given it, and it needs to be profiled. Because they do, you know, they're dogsbodies for (inaudible) ... (Marian, Totara, Principal)

The comments of Isadora, Julia and Marian at Totara suggested that students' and teachers' work in schools was considerably influenced and supported by the activities of deans and form teachers and, moreover, that the experience of deaning could be an important stepping stone in teachers' career trajectories (see Isadora's reflection soon after her appointment to an HoD post in chapter eleven). In this sense, any analysis of teacher and curriculum development needs to attend to the concerns and experiences of deans themselves and also to the nature of the relationship between pastoral, academic and management structures within the school.<sup>43</sup> We can usefully do this in two ways: first, to identify the place of pastoral activity within the structures of the school as a whole; and, second, to identify the major components of the dean's work within this.

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<sup>42</sup> One of the few is Best, R., Ribbins, P. and Jarvis, C. with Oddy, S. *Teacher perspectives on pastoral care*. In T. Bush (Ed.). *Managing education. Theory and practice*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989.

<sup>43</sup> Of the participants in the study, only Isadora and Julia at Totara were deans. Although it is not possible to generalise even within Totara or across the four schools from such a limited set of experiences, the accounts of these two individuals, together with the comments of Marian, the principal, did highlight the role in ways which allow us to understand something of the importance of pastoral work in secondary schools.

In secondary schools, historical and largely impermeable subject boundaries combine with symmetrically partitioned days (into which students are, to borrow Julia's term, "packed"), to mould the relationships that develop between teachers and their charges in peculiarly measured dosages. It is, then, not too surprising that there exists something of an artificial gulf between pastoral and curriculum domains:

The Deans have enormous knowledge of students. The HoDs have an enormous knowledge of curricula, and the balance is needed to run the school. I think that's why I want the two communicating more than they do. (Marian, Totara, Principal)

This bipolar division neatly captures the administrative schism that has developed between pastoral (deans and form teachers) and academic (heads of department and subject teachers) structures in secondary schools. However, teachers inhabit both of these in various roles. Form teachers are also subject teachers, as are deans, and heads of department, as William indicated above, are expected to grapple with teacher-student conflict issues that occur in their colleagues' classes. Moreover, increasing recognition of the diversity of student populations, greater attention given to individual learning difficulties and challenging behaviour, an increase in non-British, non-anglophone immigration into New Zealand, structural changes in the youth labour market and a growing emphasis on the educational needs and entitlements of the tangata whenua (Maori) and other Pacific Island peoples, together with statutory obligations for schools in these areas, all make the organisation and administration of secondary schooling increasingly more complex than a simple academic-pastoral 'split' would suggest; thus, as Marian points out:

... the guidance team is a PR in transition, a careers advisor, the guidance counsellor, and the deans; the Maori teacher, the learning support teacher, and the ESOL teacher. It's not just deans, and that team makes huge decisions. I quite like it. The school is not over 'committed'. It's good. the groups function well, and they do the work well. I suspect that there's not good communication back to the body from each group and that's why a management forum would work so that when the groups work they report back to the management forum.

Nevertheless, in an occupational environment where subject teachers move from class to class throughout the day, and where senior staff time is increasingly taken up with issues that are only indirectly related to teaching and learning,<sup>44</sup> much of the day to day infrastructure of student support revolves around the deans and their workgroups of form teachers:

... we would regard ourselves as Heads of Departments. But it's really like being a Minister without a portfolio because we do not have a PR status, therefore we don't have the status and the ranking that HoDs get. But in fact our organisational structure is as wide as an HoDs in the school. We've got teams. Jo in the third form she has ten form teachers

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<sup>44</sup> E.g. Campbell, J. and Neill, S. *Secondary teachers at work*. London: Routledge, 1994; Bloor and Harker, op. cit., 1995.

working under her and is responsible for all administration and pastoral care at that level. The buck stops right there, and only the things that she can't solve proceed further up the line. (Isadora, Totara, Dean)

Given that, on the principal's admission, deans carried out a lot of "high level management" work, it seems reasonable to ask why their status should have been lower, in both remuneration and perception, than that of curriculum subject postholders. It is probable that part of the answer lies in the nature and effects of what Connell calls the hegemonic, competitive academic curriculum and its assessment regime which, in crude terms, privileges cognitive over affective domains. Students are schooled in order to be progressively selected and credentialled and thus the development of the whole child, and the support structures such an approach would demand, may be given scant attention.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, from the description of 'pastoral care' offered by both Julia, Isadora and Marian, there appears to be a conflation of administrative and student support activities. In the guidance team, according to Marian, "huge decisions" were made. In practice, these related largely to the administration of learning: collation and writing of reports, monitoring attendance, correspondence with families and scheduling of tests and exams. At form level the 'administrivia' persisted and, according to Isadora, form periods could be taken up with "fund-raising being done or scratch'n'wins, or filling in a survey form, or whatever, 'wiperoo'". This was, perhaps, urgent work particularly in an age of increased political surveillance and institutional dependence on locally raised financial support, but it is debatable whether or not it was 'professional' in the sense that teachers would wish to see themselves and their work understood. It may be, then, that with this collapsing together of bureaucratic and humanistic aspects of the pastoral role, and the historical subordination of affective development to cognition in the secondary school curriculum, the lower status accorded those with pastoral responsibilities was predictable.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge, with regard to social relationships within the school, particularly those between staff and students and staff and families, that the dean/form teacher structure provides important human continuities in a largely timetabled society of atomised fifty minute encounters. For example, in explaining the school's decision to change the deaning arrangements to allow deans to go through school with the same class, Isadora commented that:

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<sup>45</sup> It is no coincidence, for example that in those few documented instances of schools that have attempted to counter the effects of timetable and subject compartmentalisation in secondary schools (e.g. Watts, 1976; Goodson, 1989) the students' day seems to be reorganised to ensure that they spend most of their time with fewer teachers, studying a small core of subjects, perhaps thematically, in one physical location. As we saw with the whanau house design proposals in chapter three, this provides the administrative 'base' in which pastoral and academic issues are managed holistically. Watts, J. (Ed.). *The Countesthorpe experience. The first five years*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1977; Goodson, I. Critical introduction: understanding/undermining hierarchy and hegemony. In A. Hargreaves. *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989, 1-14; Department of Education. *Secondary schools for tomorrow. A new approach to design and construction*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1975.

... you can pass over all your notes but it's everything you don't write down, the fact that you know that this one's shackled up, his mother's shackled up with that one's father. I mean it's just the little, or that you know you're going to get Nana when you ring because Nana does most of the childcare. It's those things which actually get lost in the translation and you have to rebuild those relationships. [...] Now, our rationale behind it was two-pronged. That for the sake of the students and the relationship the Dean has with the students and families there is more flow. The kids are going to meet a new form teacher this year, and retaining one contact, that's great because there's just that little thread that's kept going. And the second thing is actually from the teacher's point of view, from the person who is the Dean, we're wanting to get the professional expertise at all levels. (Isadora, Totara, Dean)

In her observation that continuity was important “for the sake of the students and the relationship the dean has with the students and families”, there was the recognition, first, that continuity of interpersonal relationship between adults and students in the school was important; second, that students' families were a significant influence; and, third, that most subject teachers (who each taught five classes per week in syllabus dominated lessons where limited attention is given to each student as an individual) may have had neither the opportunities nor resources nor the encouragement to develop and maintain relationships with students and their families. The boundaries thus created, produced the space in which deans maintained the necessary links between students, teachers and families, in particular, on those occasions when the school's various stages of contingency have failed:

Today I have arranged a meeting on behalf of the form teacher plus the class teacher, those two next Wednesday for a student who is presenting difficulties. Her teacher has tried a variety of methods of resolving it and it's not being productive at the moment so it's now 'call family' time. We're working together on that and the form teacher and I between us have set that up. Today also I've met with, I had morning coffee with one and lunch with one, with two HoDs, to discuss problems that students have reported that are occurring in various classes. Now the HoD will go and discuss it with the staff member. And I'll discuss it, I'll deal with the student side of it. That's a good way to do it. Often if there are difficulties with, say a kid comes in and says they're not getting along. I've got one at the moment who says that her teacher said that there was a problem in the class with the child. When I saw the child today I found out that the problem was that she physically can't write very quickly. She likes to do very neat work. She showed me her books and she showed me what it looks like when it's very neat, and what it looks like when it's hurried. She and I have agreed that in certain circumstances she has to make the compromise and do the hurried stuff because that's the priority. But when there's a good piece of work to be handed in she'll take the time and do the good stuff. Now the next step will be that tomorrow I'll get that girl and that teacher together and we'll seal it. And that will be the end of the matter then. (Isadora, Totara, Dean)

Significantly, Isadora's account of her role included regular advocacy<sup>46</sup> on behalf of students who reported “problems” with teachers and classes to her. If nothing else, this provided an important outlet for students who historically have enjoyed little formal authority in the secondary school generally and, more specifically, may have little voice or

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<sup>46</sup>This is the term used by Julia, the sixth form dean to describe what she saw as a major component of the role.

influence in the routine patterns of classroom interaction. For a number of reasons (not least the enduring requirement for teachers and students to complete and formally assess the prescribed subject curriculum in their allotted timetable share) these patterns positioned teachers and students in particular ways according to taken for granted power configurations. This was underlined by the utterly banal (for us) content of the anecdote recounted by Isadora where a student's handwriting speed had become a "problem" requiring the intervention of a dean. In addition, we could see from her account, and the strategies she deployed, that Isadora was able to orchestrate with some élan the negotiation and "resolution" of issues across a complex territorial web of professional, managerial and familial realms, circumventing the dominant organisational boundaries of subject curricula and workgroup relations (for example, the choice to have morning coffee and lunch as informal venues for discussion of students' reports of problems in classes in the HoDs respective subject areas was a subtle strategy that said much about her own awareness of the boundaries and her experience in dealing with these matters).

### ***The Marginal Or Entrepreneurial Curriculum***

The management of curriculum and workgroups in secondary schools across the system as a whole is anticipated and budgeted for in the formulae developed for the allocation of government operations, staffing and various targeted grants to each school on the basis of entitlement; and in timetable, resource and student distribution mechanisms within the schools themselves. Historical organisational structures - management, curriculum, pastoral - are shaped by and help to shape these fiscal conventions. Since the Tomorrow's Schools reforms, however, central government has distributed increasing amounts of discretionary funding for capital works, curriculum and professional development on the basis of contestability. In 1995, the government established several pools of money for specific initiatives. One of these was for 'at risk' students.<sup>47</sup> In these schemes funding is distributed either proportionally to all institutions that meet the conditions for approval or selectively to those which most closely meet the criteria in a process that has been referred to as 'honeypot management'.<sup>48</sup> For winners, the process provides windfall funding to enable them to offer or participate in programmes that would otherwise not be available. In Janette's case, however, although the application was successful, it did not provide all the money requested for the curriculum initiative and considerable curriculum compromises had to be made in order to run the programme.

Now the curriculum part, I oversee that, but she is with the students for most of the time. That isn't how we planned it, but that is how the funding came through, and it's been

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<sup>47</sup> Simkin, G. Overcoming the bulk funding blockage. The Ministerial Reference Group on School Staffing. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 1995, 5, 57-74.

<sup>48</sup> Knight, B. Managing the honeypots. In H. Thomas, and T. Simkins (Eds.). *Economics and the management of education*. London: Falmer, 1987, 203-212.

interesting that I've adapted; this document here was our application for funding and we said we wanted an experienced teacher, plus two teacher aides. Well we didn't get the funding for it, but we still went ahead. So already this plan in action is slightly different from what is there and that's expedient things. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

While it is true that secondary schools vary considerably in their ability to attract sufficient funding, student enrolments and specialist staff to effectively meet prescribed curriculum requirements, these requirements are nonetheless known and provide a fairly predictable framework within which staff and students endeavour. In the marginal or entrepreneurial curriculum, this is not the case: funding levels are uncertain, individual staff expertise in new or unconventional curriculum areas may develop only as the new programme evolves rather than exist, a priori, and there may be no established workgroup with previous experience of accommodating similar experiments of curriculum content, pedagogy or assessment. Indeed, in Janette's case, the curriculum initiative was arguably proceeding without any of the conventional structures or processes that support teachers' day to day work with students. Such initiatives are intriguing precisely because of this. They allow us to question not only the extent to which traditional curriculum affiliations and loyalties and work-a-day group processes are, in practice, pre-requisites for successful teaching and learning in contemporary secondary schools, but also whether or not the increasingly common political strategy of 'honeypot' management is an effective mechanism for promoting the use of novel or alternative curricula across schools and the teaching profession.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we have examined the form and substance of a number of teachers' responsibilities in these four secondary schools. Responsibilities were mostly undertaken in addition to classroom teaching loads and, in the main, derived from the differentially valued, historically embedded subject and pastoral structures that dominate the administration of teaching and learning.

While the subject department exerted a considerable influence on the organisation and use of teachers' time and, for many, was the primary recipient of their professional affiliation and loyalties, a tensile web of other structures, networks and spheres of activity existed, each strand of which competed for teachers' attention at various times of the day, week, term and year. In Julia and Nina we saw teachers whose minds were focused creatively, questioningly and almost exclusively on their own classrooms; Ivan, Alice and Frank were preoccupied with the generic development of curricula and staff at the whole school level; William and Lillian dwelt on the specific priorities generated by the particular workgroup and curriculum contexts in which they worked; and Isadora's "important management

work” was conducted completely outside the formal, prescribed curriculum structures of Totara.

The discussion has reinforced the notion that teachers were continuously engaged in an unseemly and personally debilitating juggling act between various personal and collective and domestic and professional tensions. The evidence presented so far implies that formal responsibilities were enacted in fragmented and haphazard fashion as time allowed and urgency demanded. In the next chapter, we examine in more detail the particular features of the development priorities the participants were working on during the 1996 school year.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

In this chapter, the analysis moves from general curriculum leadership responsibilities held by the participants to the priorities they identified for development within their respective spheres of influence. For the purposes of analysis these priorities were considered to focus principally on students, curriculum or staff. Priorities that relate to each of these foci are discussed in turn.

#### INTRODUCTION

Having elaborated a range of curriculum and attendant workgroup roles and responsibilities described by the participants in the study in chapter six, we turn now to a brief analysis of the various, specific priorities with which these individuals and workgroups were engaged during the course of 1996, the first year of the fieldwork. As I have argued before, the synthesis of diverse aspirations, concerns and objectives into free standing categories for the purposes of more straightforward analysis is singularly unhelpful in terms of accurately representing the context-specific complexities of teachers' and administrators' work. In practice, issues of people and curriculum are closely linked. Nevertheless, a modicum of organisation is necessary to prepare large amounts of loosely structured qualitative data for discussion. Thus the priorities discussed by the protagonists in the study are presented below according to what appeared to this researcher to be their principal (but not their sole) focus: students, curriculum or *staff*. In the three chapters that follow, more detailed attention is given to one initiative in each of these areas.

#### STUDENTS

In this part of the chapter, we consider Nina's attempt to change her students' understanding of science, Julia's attempt to balance her pastoral role with classroom teaching, and Janette's efforts to introduce appropriate pedagogies to a novel programme for at risk students.

##### Changing Student Conceptions

Nina had a clear and passionately articulated position on what she wanted her third form students to gain from the process of learning science. Here, her energies were totally focused on the needs of her students, in this case, on the ways in which she could enable them to change their narrow conceptions of what science was:

They come in asking, "When are we going to blow up the lab? My dad said when he was at school he blew up the lab in chemistry". I want to change that. I want them to have fun but fun learning. Fun is easy, colouring in can be fun, but I want them to be learning as well. I want

them to be actively involved learners, not passive, finding things out for themselves. (Nina, Totara, Temporary MU)

Nina was an experienced teacher who was frustrated and alienated by conventional “textbook” led approaches to science teaching and the narrowing effects these had on students' conceptions of science (including her specialist subject, chemistry). The award of a formal, albeit temporary, management unit and the associated endorsement of her workgroup colleagues, provided the opportunity to try out the sorts of approaches to science teaching with which she began her career and felt most comfortable. Attendance at a non-education sector “accelerated learning” course during her vacation the previous year convinced her of the need to adapt the third form introductory science course at Totara to emphasise what, for her, were the important components of the “active”, process-led, independent learning approach she envisaged for her junior classes. She talked not in terms of knowledge or skills acquisition, but of how she wanted to fundamentally change the way her students conceptualised and practised science. Nevertheless, she was acting at this early stage of the school year on the basis of personal and professional intuition and was still unsure of whether, or the extent to which, she would be successful. It is for this reason that she was focused exclusively on the implications for her own classroom practice and students, rather than the workgroup<sup>1</sup> as a whole. She needed to prove to herself that the approach could and did work before recommending it to colleagues.

#### *Balancing Teaching and Administration*

Julia’s occupational concerns were also focused largely on her own classroom and her students but, in her case, this would only be achieved if she could find ways to balance teaching with deaning and with the private world responsibilities of her family; to manage the “squeeze” that these conflicting priorities generated (for a Minister's wife with a comparatively large family to support - and with more than one child currently participating in tertiary education - the money she made from teaching was clearly a very important consideration). Family and administrative responsibilities impinged quite significantly on the time and energy she had to devote to preparing for teaching, her overriding priority, and within this the desire for the lessons to be “fun”.

Teaching - I just love the classroom. I really like the classroom and so I really do want to teach well, want to make my lessons fun. I love English. I want to make sure that students don't hate English 'cos of my bad lessons. So managing that time, and still being a mum, and a wife, and a Minister's wife, that puts the squeeze on sometimes. I certainly don't want my family to go down the tube because I'm making money at school. Caring about them that's just a personal thing. I don't quite know how it works.

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<sup>1</sup> Her reported reference group for this innovation against which she judged its success were not departmental teaching colleagues but her mentor (the deputy principal and former HoD Science), her lab assistant and the college student who was on section in the department.

Interviewer: Is it something that you find particularly difficult and challenging at the moment?

Julia: At the moment.

Interviewer: You mentioned the beginning of the term didn't you, or the beginning of the year where ...

Julia: I found that hard because more of my kids were home at that point and life was very busy. Home was very busy. Lots of people coming and going. And the last thing I want to say to my girls was - hey, I need more space in the evenings, I need more quiet, or - I don't want to come home from school and find that I've got eight to cook for and not five. I want to know what's happening and blah blah cos' home's always - especially when they're away for most of the year - you want it be a really neat place to come, to be around. For their friends. (Julia, Totara, Co-dean)

The tensions between subject teaching and pastoral administration, and between professional and domestic domains, ebbed and flowed during the year. Earlier in the interview Julia referred to the beginning of the school year as a particularly busy period for a sixth form dean in terms of sorting out option choices. In 1996, there was the additional complication that she had taken a "proper" holiday, and thus had not had the time available to prepare her teaching programme for the beginning of the year in the way that she normally would. She was also involved in a role with the school drama production in term one of 1996. In the extract above, she described the "personal" difficulty of juggling not only professional workloads but of wanting to prevent these from having too great an impact on the "neat", inviting home environment she tried to provide for her children (especially those who "are away for most of the year") and their friends. Julia loved teaching, loved the classroom and was conscious that the quality of her lesson preparation and delivery significantly influenced the attitude that the students had toward English as a subject. The continual struggle for her was to be able to organise her life to ensure that she had the necessary time to prepare the English lessons that would enthuse the students without compromising her other responsibilities as homemaker, breadwinner, mother and dean.

### *Pedagogies for Disaffected Students*

Just as Nina and Julia were both concerned to manage their students' attitudes (towards their respective subjects), so too was Janette. In her case, with disaffected students, it was their self-image and attitude toward schooling generally, and the attendant pedagogies that these demanded, which engaged her attention within the externally funded programme for at risk students. Students and their motivation were a common concern across all three of these specific occupational contexts, but in Janette's case, and possibly because she wanted to shape the work and thinking of teachers other than herself "across the board", the relationship between student motivation and pedagogy was explicitly articulated:

... if students are at risk, they are generally oriented to self, because they've had to claw their way through things. We want to try to make them start thinking about other people, so that was part of what we had. I've talked about a skills auction. What have I got to give to this activity?

And what do I need from you? It's that sort of approach. Now I don't know that that's being used right across the board, so there are certain things that we need to come back to - philosophy is so important and I think that's what Frances was getting at with Individualised Learning, that if you don't take on board the philosophy, and if you don't believe that it can work, then you're going to revert to your old teaching style, or your most comfortable one. [...]

I think it's important that we get people to reflect on all aspects, because this is a pilot - and I know having the course in operation is never the same as the course on paper. That has been very obvious right from day one of this program. One of the things that I'm doing too is videoing them at intervals, so they can see themselves, because very often students are quite unaware what they're doing for other people. The ticks and crosses, although it is only in its second day, I was able to go through this morning and say well look, this is your profile here, you have nearly all ticks, only one or two crosses, but look at yours, you've got nearly all crosses and so you're going to have to work really hard to make your profile different. It's a physical thing that they can see and these things are evolving day by day by day, so maybe there's something else that we're not doing that we could be doing. (Janette, Kauri, Principal)

The funding shortfall which prevented her from appointing experienced teachers to the programme clearly created significant difficulties for Janette. The "course" was not running as she had envisaged. This was not necessarily because of any inappropriate or naive assessment of the challenges that would be presented by these disaffected, adolescent students. In fact Janette was acutely sensitive to the sorts of entrenched, self-centred behaviours and lack of self-esteem they would bring to the programme. Janette's previous experience with the Individualised Learning initiative at Kauri had taught her two valuable lessons which informed her thinking here. First, that teachers and students needed to be constantly reminded of the philosophy behind the programme and the consequences of this for teaching and learning - i.e. the need to prevent teachers "reverting" to the comfort of their "old teaching style". Second, that progress would be fitful and heuristic. Teachers and students would learn best how to cope with each other by participating in the programme and engaging with the idiosyncratic demands that their interactions produced. Thus, although Janette's priority in this "pilot" was to change students' thinking by making them aware of the behaviours they exhibited and providing specific strategies for dealing with these (e.g. ticks and crosses, video), she knew very well that this could only be achieved by providing the adults in the programme with an equally structured repertoire of pedagogical strategies (e.g. a skills auction) which would be applied consistently within the classroom. Above all, like Nina and Julia, she recognised that if the students were to succeed, the onus was on the adults in the programme constantly to evaluate their curriculum practice, for "maybe there's something else that we're not doing that we could be doing".

## CURRICULUM

In practice, the categorical distinction between student- and curriculum-focused priorities is a false dichotomy; they are intimately connected. Nevertheless, differences exist, if only of emphasis. This part of the chapter examines Ivan's attempts to promote less traditional classroom "methods" in the face of teacher resistance, Lillian's desire for more collaborative

curriculum resource use and Ruth's effort to secure curriculum change within a fragmented subject department.

### *Promoting Whole-School Pedagogical Change*

Ivan was working within an institutional environment where he acknowledged the diversity of student attainment levels and motivations. They formed part of the background against which he brought the quality of teachers' curriculum planning and use of resources into purposive focus. His analysis suggested that if teachers were to plan and resource their teaching differently, and thereby increase the relevance of the curriculum for their charges, then students would benefit and teachers would also "enjoy their teaching" more:

I think the key thing is for people to look at whether they're meeting the needs of all the kids in the class. If they're really honest about it they'll realise that in fact they're not. Even though we had an extension class made out of form three and four levels, makes the other couple of classes fairly uniform, there's still a wide range of abilities within each class...

So we would have say as a focus for our year's appraisal, as I have already tried to get them to do, to actually think of the class not just as thirty students, but say two groups in the class and work towards different levels there. And then add their own personal component in there as well, so that in a sense it's being driven across the board and there's some uniformity of things that people are looking at. That would give us a chance to have some feedback. But I've just identified what I think is the key to the role of the new curriculum, and to teachers enjoying their teaching despite the fact we have to put a lot of work into resources. Methods. And the kids will get more out of it. (Ivan, Rimu, Principal)

There is a further, key difference between the "across the board" approaches that were being advocated by Janette and Ivan. Although they used the identical phrase, Janette was concerned to identify and articulate a distinctive philosophy for the short-term programme which would inform the thinking of a small group of adults and students, while Ivan was attempting to encourage similar processes of reflection on curriculum practice (content and pedagogy) among his teaching staff as a whole through the back door strategy of a new school-wide appraisal scheme. In the face of some colleagues' reluctance or inability to change, Ivan was reliant on this structured appraisal approach to encourage more sophisticated planning and resourcing of learning – "to think of the class not as thirty students but say two groups in the class and work towards different levels there". He resorted, in effect, to strategies that were very similar in style to those of Alice and her induction "systems" above. In the absence of a shared philosophy to drive practice across the board (and this at whole school level where commonalities of epistemology and pedagogy are considerably more difficult to secure), Ivan adopted a less direct approach to pursue the pedagogy or "methods" agenda that lay at the heart of what he was trying to achieve, hitherto with limited success, in the areas of curriculum and teacher development at Rimu. Moreover, unlike those research participants who were involved with concrete subject and workgroup priorities within their immediate set of departmental

colleagues, Ivan was addressing the more problematic and abstract generic issues of curriculum quality in a number of classrooms and subject areas across the school.

The pragmatic nature<sup>2</sup> of their actual curriculum priorities, and teachers' responses to these was very evident in the ways in which the participants talk about their work. A number of the priorities were dictated by prescribed curriculum changes (e.g. Tim at Rimu, Nick at Matai) or a decision to participate in voluntary NZQA trials for the introduction of Unit Standards (e.g. Adam and William at Totara), and the timetables for their implementation. In other cases, delays in the production of statutory curriculum documents (e.g. Ruth at Rimu, Lillian at Totara) had led to a moratorium on some aspects of official subject curriculum development. These forced areas of activity notwithstanding, other perennial curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment priorities, which lay outside the domains of the national Curriculum and Qualifications frameworks were being attended to by several participants and their immediate colleagues. These were derived from the local curriculum and workgroup needs of particular groups of staff in specific, idiosyncratic institutional contexts.

#### *Autonomy Versus Curriculum Collaboration*

One of the ever-present tensions among groups of teachers is that between autonomy and collegiality.<sup>3</sup> In secondary schools, this presents particular difficulties for curriculum leaders who are expected to ensure that prescribed curriculum content is delivered consistently across a number of parallel classes taught by different colleagues and where, for example, differences in examination results between classes of apparently similar abilities may lead to a questioning by senior management of departmental or individual teacher performance. The manner in which Lillian, below, enumerated and commented on her priorities for 1996 revealed something of the pressures (both implicit and explicit) that exist in secondary schools to achieve curriculum consistency across classes and teachers. Why else should Lillian, like many other workgroup leaders, seek to work counter-culturally<sup>4</sup> in this regard given that securing commonality of curriculum approaches throughout a group of teachers can prove extraordinarily difficult? For example, at Rimu, Ivan was attempting to use the vehicle of a generic, whole school component within the soon to be introduced compulsory performance management system to promote the use of more sophisticated "methods", planning and resources amongst some staff who were quite happy with their present teaching methods. At Totara, within her two-subject department, Lillian had three concurrent and apparently unrelated priorities. One of these was to encourage

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<sup>2</sup> Apple, M. *Teachers and texts. A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. London: Routledge, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Hargreaves, A. Changing teachers, changing times. London: Cassell, 1994. Little, J. The persistence of privacy: autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers' College Record*, 1990, 91(4), 491-518.

<sup>4</sup> Morgan, G. *Images of organization*. London: Sage, 1986.

the more widespread use of what she called the departmental "filing box". Essentially, though, her problems had much to do with encouraging the collation, dissemination and use of common resources across the workgroup as a whole. The fact that it did not work well in a smallish department that (albeit only recently) had begun to really "gel" is reflective of this constant tension for teachers between (i) the sedimented occupational desire to do one's own thing in one's own classroom with one's own resources; (ii) the normative belief, exemplified here by Lillian, that sharing resources is a more efficient use of teachers' limited time and, by implication, will lead to more effective curriculum delivery; and (iii) the need to ensure greater homogeneity of curriculum content.

The latter is driven by increasingly pervasive public, professional and political discourses of teacher accountability which are manifested in a number of ways in schools and create tangible pressures for teachers to be seen to collaborate more closely<sup>5</sup> and monitor each others' work.

... the sort of things that we are up to our eyeballs in at the moment is the computer assisted learning [CAL] project. Although that's in its second year and so it's almost ticking over, and needing new input. We have a problem with one of the staff in particular, not meeting deadlines. I don't know whether that's something we could target. And the other thing that drives me up the wall is developing a useful way of storing information that will be easily retrievable. We all start off the year with everything beautifully organised and within two weeks it's just bits everywhere. I'm sure that there are more resources that we hold in our department that we could all be using if we remembered that they were there. And I haven't developed a system to - I know one that worked in another school I worked at, but - well, it worked up to a point, I made use of it. They had a central filing cabinet and it went subject by subject, and there was just everything in there, and you could have a little rummage. We have a filing box system, and I think I'm one of the regular users of it, and the rest will either forget it's there, or have to be reminded, and so that's all part of the time and getting caught up, and just surviving. (Lillian, Totara, HoD Accounting and Economics)

Having taken seven years to reach the stage where professional workgroup relations were running smoothly and departmental schemes of work were revised collectively, Lillian was understandably reluctant to tinker too much with a fragile occupational environment where the one overriding priority for everyone was "just surviving". When introduced some twelve months earlier, the attraction of the CAL initiative was that it would provide computer hardware and software for the department. More importantly for Lillian, since then it had proved to be an unexpectedly and spectacularly successful catalyst in opening up classrooms and teaching practice across the group, thus she was content for the project to be "almost ticking over". Equally, there was an isolated problem with one staff member, but it was only the comparatively trivial issue of "meeting deadlines" not professional competence. Consequently, it too was raised as an issue that would require attention but she did not elaborate. The third

priority, however, was considerably more complex an issue than it may have appeared on the surface. Given that she described the "filing box" problem in some detail we may reasonably assume that it was somewhere to the forefront of her consciousness. Handled clumsily, the issue had the potential to damage Lillian's hard won collegial relationships. Although she considered that the creation of a common resource bank, used by everyone, was necessary to the development and further integration of the department, in practice, in the important area (for consistent delivery of prescribed curriculum content) of shared resources, the workgroup was atomised. Hence, the centralised and deliberately assembled filing box system lasted only for the first couple of weeks of the year and Lillian was one of the few regular users.

#### *Curriculum Change Within A Fragmented Subject Area*

In terms of curriculum priorities, then, we have seen that attempts to promote consistency of planning, methods and use of resources by Ivan and Lillian were regarded as important normative aspirations for teachers but could prove highly problematic to implement in practice. Ruth faced similar problems in attempting to develop consistency in the related aspects of curriculum pedagogy and assessment in her social studies programme at Rimu but in her case, these were exacerbated by a number of context-specific, historical factors:

... in the contract one of the things I'm looking at is the students and their learning habits, and how I can get a more student focused learning programme. A lot of the teachers here tend to have a desk facing the front, individual work, didactic style teaching. We know that they're keen to get into more sort of co-operative group type stuff, and I'd like to take it a step further and give the students a lot more choice. I've started looking at that and what I'm doing probably does not suit a lot of the students so maybe that could be a sort of feedback thing from the students. I'm also getting into the evaluation a lot more this year, workbooks that they have to evaluate. Everything when they do it, they have to say how it's going, what they've enjoyed, and how it could be improved.

Interviewer: And how different is that from what went on in social studies?

Ruth: Well, all the evaluation, the student's evaluation, wasn't really ... well, you'd say what was that like? It wasn't formal, there was no formal department-wide evaluation of the students.<sup>6</sup>  
(Ruth, Rimu, HoD Social Studies)

Ruth's priority, if not unique among the group of participants, was certainly unusual and ambitious inasmuch as it required her to simultaneously change the conceptions and practices of both teachers ("teaching style") and students ("learning habits") in what was regarded by her, Ivan, Tim and Alice as a fairly traditional teaching and learning community. In the past, conservative pedagogies had been readily accommodated and sustained while assessment by

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<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, the introduction of performance management systems, incorporating highly individuated, contractualised appraisal and remuneration procedures, may be argued to militate strongly against collaboration.

<sup>6</sup> In her written feedback on the chapter draft, Ruth clarified this: "I was trying to teach students to be reflective, to intrinsically motivate them. The assessment happening before lacked structure and teachers did their own thing ('informal')".

either staff or students in social studies, had been "informal". Ruth faced the daunting challenge of attempting to develop novel pedagogy and assessment approaches in social studies amid quite inauspicious circumstances generated both by colleagues ("a lot of teachers here tend to have a desk facing the front, individual, didactic style teaching") and the students themselves ("what I'm doing probably does not suit a lot of the students"). Nevertheless, she did not face an insurmountable brick wall<sup>7</sup> in this regard, having made the assessment that some teachers would like to "get into" co-operative group work.<sup>8</sup> However, acutely aware that pedagogy and assessment are intimately linked, and that group work per se is only a means to a "metacognitive" end, she wanted to push this paradigm shift as far as she could to include greater student choice in learning.

Although, for the purposes of this written analysis, I identified Ruth's priority as a curriculum issue, this was, in her case, a pedantic distinction. In practice at Rimu, and indeed the other schools in the study, classroom and teacher development priorities interwove student, curriculum and staffing issues closely. It is to the staff focused priorities that we now turn to complete the analysis of responsibilities and priorities undertaken in this chapter.

## STAFF

While many of the activities and interactions which take place in schools do so among statutory systems and timetabled relationships that are highly routine and predictable, it is important to remember that schools are irreducibly social communities where change and development take place only as people modify the various practices that position them as participants in a complex web of competing, often contradictory discourses both inside and outside the physical buildings of the institution. Change, then, among a social community, is not something that can be undertaken (or mandated) in isolation and in linear, rational fashion by single professionals but, rather, constitutes often quite subtle, tentative and piecemeal shifts in the interpersonal and intragroup relations in classrooms, subject departments, pastoral, senior management and board settings. This final part of the chapter considers how Isadora approached the issue of support for form teachers as their role became more complex and demanding, how William attempted to come to grips with an unfamiliar department within a different school, the issues encountered by Frank and Alice who were responsible for the induction and care of new staff, and Frances' desire to maintain the distinctive pedagogic culture of the Individualised Learning programme at Kauri.

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<sup>7</sup>Morgan, op. cit., 1986.

<sup>8</sup>Fullan's (1991) observation that: "it isn't that people resist change as they don't know how to cope with it" is germane to Ruth's analysis. Fullan, M. *The new meaning of educational change*. Second edn. London: Cassell, 1991, p. xiv.

### *Expanding The Form Teacher Role*

In focusing their attentions primarily on teaching staff, as opposed to students or curriculum, those with formal leadership responsibilities implicitly accepted the central importance of teachers' actions and thinking to successful change and development.

The trend here at the moment is to try to make the role of the form teacher a far more powerful pastoral care role, where those people really do have some responsibility and clout, and ability to do the job. The long history of that is that prior to about a year or so ago form teachers were not encouraged to make contact with student homes. They were really toothless tigers. They were supposed to do a job but they didn't feel, I felt this when I was a teacher, trusted enough to do some of the tasks. Now there's been a reversal in that thinking. Now we're trying to give them things that for a long time they'd been saying they'd like and that would certainly be much more effective for the students. Some teachers don't feel as confident as others, and also there's a time problem because in our school now we've moved from a two form-time a day situation which we had three years ago, to a one form-time a day. And once a week that's assembly so it's not full-time. And if there's fund-raising being done or scratch'n'wins, or filling in a survey form, or whatever, 'wiperoo'. So sometimes there is quite a time problem for the form teacher to accomplish things. That really is a hassle for them. So if you wanted to find out more about how form teachers felt about being made more of the pastoral caregivers, and how they like to do it it would be wonderful. Because then I could know how to really start in and what sort of questions to be negotiating on their behalf. These are the things that I'm trying to ascertain at our weekly meetings. (Isadora, Totara, Dean)

Here, Isadora was grappling with the conundrum of how to enable her group of ten form teachers to implement a recently and normatively modified institutional role in markedly different practical circumstances from those which had obtained a few years earlier (i.e. from a bureaucratic role administered solely in the two form periods per day to an open ended pastoral care role with students and their caregivers, exercised whenever needed). Historically, the form teacher role was circumscribed in terms of discretion and authority to act; form teachers were, to use Isadora's evocative term "toothless tigers" and, one assumes, the role was limited largely if not exclusively to administrative and bureaucratic activities such as taking the register, collecting monies, monitoring uniform compliance and issuing notices. A decision has been made to "try to" elaborate the role, to make form teachers more "powerful", to give them real "clout" and, amidst the minutiae of form filling and fund raising which continued unabated, to provide them with sufficient support to successfully manage a major intensification of their responsibilities whereby more of the day to day pastoral intervention and family contacts were to be carried out by form teachers on top of their classroom teaching load. In all this, Isadora recognised that she had a significant advocacy role to play, acting as a conduit and mediator between senior staff and her "team" of form teachers. Thus, in her brief weekly meetings with the "team", her immediate priority was to identify ("we brainstorm and chat") and support their emerging collective and individual needs in a novel situation where time was very limited and "some teachers don't feel as confident as others", even though, on Isadora's analysis, form teachers had themselves been lobbying for an enhanced role "for a long time".

### *Leading From a Position of Uncertainty*

Isadora's analysis of staff needs was undertaken from the position of an experienced dean (she was the longest serving incumbent) who had been closely involved with the administrative and organisational shift undertaken in the previous three years. She was confident about the nature of the management role and activities she herself needed to play in this change process. William's position was quite the reverse. As a recently appointed HoD he was unsure of his new role and how this should be negotiated. He was one of the younger members of an established workgroup that had operated within a particular complex of group processes of which he had no knowledge but which he was expected actively to lead. Thus, having been at the school for only three terms:

What I'd like to know is, as I outlined the situation under which I came in the department, - I've had quite a lot, well not quite a lot of resistance but a bit of resistance on certain issues. We still use the same tests from year to year sometimes and I'm very unhappy with that because of the security of the system, that if a copy gets out. That sort of thing. The rationale for that is well, we want to reduce our photocopying. I thought OK, if the photocopying budget's not high enough to do that we ask for more money, but the system should come first rather than the money driving the system. Now the majority of the people in the department don't want that so I've got to try and, rather than saying, 'This is the way it's going to be,' I've got to put up with the existing system and turn in to the way I want it. I think that will happen eventually but it's not a quick thing. I'm interested to know how people think I'm doing my job because it's a balance between making all the decisions and seen to be too authoritarian, and them not having a part in it; or involving them in the decisions to the extent they feel that no decisions are ever made. I'd like to tread that fine tightrope that goes down the middle but I want, I wonder and I fear whether people are concerned we're not making enough decisions. Or I can't make a decision or that I'm making the decisions without due consultation. I think it's probably that they feel I don't make enough decisions, I don't know. (William, Totara, HoD Mathematics)

When William conceded that he had to "put up with the existing system" and wait for change to happen, he was manifesting an intuitive but highly perceptive understanding of the powerful influence exerted by established departmental sub-cultures on workgroup practices and decisions. William was being pressed, in part by external NZQA compliance and accountability demands, to develop "secure" testing procedures but, evidently, this encountered resistance (justified it should be noted, in the less directly confrontational terms of financial cost, not personal or professional reluctance) from staff who clung to the rather more informal procedures they had developed over time.

This was one, trivial enough, example but it illustrated well the kinds of unstated yet crucially important interpersonal and intragroup power struggles that can surface through utterly mundane issues; in this instance with the restructuring of workgroup relations and practices that followed the appointment of a new HoD from outside the school? It was not surprising, then,

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<sup>9</sup> It was possible also that William, with his loyalties to the subject group yet to be affirmed in their eyes, was still associated with the new management practices and processes gradually being introduced by the recently appointed principal whose arrival at the school coincided with William's.

that William should be appropriately tentative in his efforts to modify existing routines despite his formal 'authority' to do so. In this section of the interview, he mused in uncharacteristically hesitant tones on the difficulties of gauging the appropriateness of his management "style" for even after three terms in the post he simply did not "know" whether his "tightrope" walk was appropriate and appreciated by them. The dilemma he faced was the standard one that appears in any textbook discussion of rational decision-making processes<sup>10</sup> and was one he had no doubt encountered in abstract terms as part of the HoD course he attended at the time of the interview run by a local facilitator. Here, however, it was given an added, real world poignancy by the softness and ambiguity of the language used by someone who "wonders and fears" about the efficacy of his actions and was not yet sufficiently well socialised or confident within the group to be able to interpret the many verbal and non verbal clues that must have been available to him and obvious to his immediate colleagues.

### *Supporting New Staff*

The problems of socialisation and rites of passage associated with gaining membership of institutional and sub-group cultures is, of course, one that faces all new staff not just those with positions of additional responsibility. Alice at Rimu and Frank at Matai had whole school responsibilities for the induction and support of new staff, including pre-service students on placement or section from local tertiary providers.<sup>11</sup> That this was a pressing priority for senior staff in schools underlined the reality that these social communities of adults comprised not just tenured and long-serving staff but also a significant number of short-term and part-time contract staff, relievers, provisionally registered teachers and pre-service students. Such a mix of people contributes to the fluid and elusive nature of institutional and workgroup cultures and explains, in part, the desire of both Alice and Frank to develop more structured and inclusive approaches to the support of people who were new to their schools.<sup>12</sup>

Frank wondered whether the casual nature of support that was provided over and above the rituals of staffroom welcome and farewell was typical only of Matai, but Alice's very similar experiences at Rimu suggested that any looseness of approach may well have been more occupational than institutional in character. Secondary schools are busy places organised according to impersonal timetables and prescribed curricula in 'egg crate'<sup>13</sup> physical spaces that

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. Hoy, W. and Miskel, C. *Educational administration. Theory, research and practice*. Third edn. New York: Random House, 1987.

<sup>11</sup> At workgroup 'level', Frances talked of a similar responsibility for the induction and socialisation of teachers and students new to the Individualised Learning programme. More generally, Ivan made the point in his written feedback on this chapter draft that in his experience, formerly centralized support systems for beginning teachers suffered in the transition to self-managing schools after 1989.

<sup>12</sup> There are other reasons too, of course. For example, Rimu's rural location and decile two status made it difficult for the school to attract applicants to posts while Matai had a well regarded (by the pre-service students in this study) and substantial link arrangement with the local teacher education provider.

<sup>13</sup> Lortie, D. *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

offer few opportunities for socialisation divorced from the demands of urgent professional work. It is easy, in these circumstances, for disconnected or transient individuals to inadvertently fall through any cracks that exist in support networks and established workgroup processes (see for example Fay's experiences as a new member of the science department at Totara in chapter nine). As Frank explained, below:

Two broad things. One would be teachers new to the school, and specifically my department, and the Div C, the student teachers that are coming in to the school. I like to have them welcomed, have a time table for them, and that's down to the individual HoD so, each Div C student that comes in, if you're Head of science, then I'd be asking you - in the week prior to them coming, to do me a timetable for them against what they've asked for. We're given some information - you know, I'd like to teach the junior science, senior bio, and stuff like that. So I'd ask you as an HoD to jack that up. They mainly come from College of Ed. locally, although we've got one just now from Wellington. And we get some from Christchurch. And I just try to get them in to school with a timetable, with somebody looking after them, and again it's normally the HoD, and I want the boss to welcome them at the staff meeting in the morning. And from there on in, I'll try and touch base with them as often as I can. Say 'we'll how are you doing? Are you teaching enough, are you teaching too much?' And then there are some things they've got to focus on while they're here and I'll try and help them with that focus. It might be assessment, it might be curriculum development. But I suspect that's where I'm not doing as good a job as I could be.

Interviewer: So it would be useful for you to have feedback from them?

Frank: Yes. Just, what could we be doing better as a school, for you guys here? And I'm sure the school if we were honest about it - you see I think they get robbed - I think they do that period, that initial - given the fact that there's a start a middle and an end, I think we do the start right - but I guess there's - be more structured in the middle there. [...]

There would be five or six all up. There was four, five start [at the beginning of the year]. We've had teachers come in since. That's where, if we do fall down, which we do, that's where we fall down the most. Especially ones that are coming in through the year. I think we do bugger all for them. You do some good things I think for the new staff, at the start of the year, but I'd be fairly certain we do nothing. [...] And I just suspect especially the ones that have come in just fairly recently. You okay here? Right and you're off, come back and see you in November sometime if you've survived. I don't know if it's just a Matai thing. I know for a fact that we do that badly. So to have that identified would be great. (Frank, Matai, HoD Commerce)

Although Frank, like Alice, was anxious that newcomers' fragmented experiences appeared to reflect badly on their own professional actions and institutional cultures, and while each could attempt to put in place, for example, more supportive induction or buddying structures for newcomers, and make customised timetable arrangements for students, and involve HoDs more closely in their supervision, the fact is that most secondary school labour processes revolve around the day to day demands of classroom teaching and learning and the maintenance of control. There is little time outside of these ordered occupational patterns for the structured socialisation of newcomers. Indeed, there was sufficient evidence in this study to suggest that, at the end of the day, both staff new to the school, those appointed to more senior positions and student teachers all learned their classroom and supervisory trades experientially, through an informal apprenticeship in 'the school of hard knocks' while they were socialised into the norms of workgroup membership in an ad hoc fashion over often lengthy periods of

time. As Nick replied, when asked about the support he received on appointment to his HoD role:

Yes, a pretty good hand. You ask, you get an answer. When I first got the job I felt that there was minimal training, but I think that's cos' everyone's so busy. They can't put you up for a week and say 'these are the things you have to do' but they will tell you if you do something wrong or sit down with you if you're asked and say 'Can you show me how to do this?' or 'How did you do this?' but that's just the nature of school I think. (Nick, Matai, HoD Physics)

We must, nevertheless, not imply through our analysis that all staff development necessarily takes place in purely organic fashion by virtue of teachers' close physical proximity with each other. Quite apart from the increased 'development' opportunities that exist for teachers in the specific, centrally funded professional development programmes that have accompanied the restructured and rewritten, subject dominated national curriculum framework in schools since 1990, those who have responsibilities for curriculum areas are often concerned, despite the many attendant difficulties and potential conflicts, to exert a direct influence over the ways in which curriculum is conceptualised and practised by colleagues in their subject realm.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Maintaining a Unique Pedagogy*

In this study, Frances' aspirations at Kauri, were a case in point:

One of my roles I see [for] my self as the co-ordinator of Individualised Learning is teacher development. I see that as quite an important part of my role and the part that I want to improve and for you to look at too. Teacher development in the way of leadership, how I actually lead the (Individualised Learning) unit, and also in information sharing and the learning - how to improve the learning type sharing information like that. (Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator, Individualised Learning)

Frances co-ordinated a programme the philosophy of which demanded that teachers and students both challenge and change their conceptions of how teaching and learning took place within the secondary school setting and, therefore, it was not surprising that Frances saw teacher development as a key aspect of her leadership role. What was remarkable, perhaps, is that she had to a great extent fashioned the co-ordinator role herself and had held this post for six years yet remained unconfident or unsure about the extent to which she did this well. We need to ask, then, why length of service, and successful, highly regarded service at that, was insufficient to affirm her practice. One possibility, and it is explored in various workgroup settings in subsequent chapters in this study, is that the human aspects of

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<sup>14</sup> E.g. Earley, P. and Fletcher-Campbell, F. *The time to manage? Department and faculty heads at work*. Windsor, UK: NEER-Nelson, 1989; Torrington, D. and Weightman, J. *The reality of school management*.

leadership and the development of teaching practice are, irredeemably, the most opaque and problematic for those who work with teachers in school settings. Time and again in the literature, the balance between individual and collegial modes of work is identified as a major source of tension. Even for a well-liked, experienced practitioner and curriculum leader like Frances, it was an area where it was extraordinarily difficult to get honest, precise feedback from colleagues and, on the basis of this, work out where improvements to the sensitive field of classroom practice could and should be attempted.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have examined the nature of the particular development priorities faced by the participants in the study during the 1996 school year. For the purposes of discussion, these were categorised according to what seemed to be their principal focus: students, curriculum or staff. In practice, however, the foci overlapped and there were elements of all three present in each of the work stories told by the protagonists about what they were attempting to achieve.

Common to all the discussions were a number of tensions: between the time available and what needed to be done, between wanting to promote common practice across the workgroup or school as a whole and accepting what individual teachers were prepared to tolerate by way of imposition on their preferred, habitual ways of doing things; and between external accountability demands and internal institutional, workgroup and individual capacities.

The requirement to accommodate the complex demands of new, prescribed, curriculum and assessment frameworks and, more recently, to participate in competitive, entrepreneurial programmes via contestable funding mechanisms exerted a significant influence on the sorts of labour in which these teachers and curriculum leaders engaged their energies and limited discretionary time outside the classroom.

In the professional domain of interpersonal and intragroup relations, the relative unimportance of formal authority combined with an implicit but abiding reverence for teachers' occupational autonomy and privacy to limit the extent to which curriculum leaders could accurately assess their actual influence on colleagues' day-to-day practice with regard to particular curriculum or workgroup issues. In an attempt to illuminate the processes and tensions that were at work in this endeavour, we next turn to an examination of three such priorities in action.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 'AT RISK' STUDENTS AT KAURI

In this chapter the establishment, conduct and administration of the externally funded pilot programme for 'at risk' students at Kauri is examined in greater depth. The rationale for the programme and its establishment are discussed as are the curriculum tensions and practical difficulties that arose once the programme was in operation. The effects of the programme on staff and students are considered. The implications of the programme for our understanding of how teacher 'expertness' and its leadership are developed are addressed in the concluding part of the chapter.

#### INTRODUCTION

In chapter five we examined the ways in which teachers conceptualised their work and what they were trying to achieve with students. In chapter six, the protagonists in the study described the variety of their curriculum leadership and management responsibilities. In chapter seven, their development priorities were discussed in terms of their principal focus. Taken together, the three chapters are insightful accounts of the scope and challenges of contemporary secondary school teaching – of 'expertness' in both teaching and curriculum leadership. In this chapter and those that follow, the focus shifts from what they were attempting to achieve and why, to how they went about their individual and collective work, i.e. the social processes that constituted their attempts to develop teaching 'expertness'. Chapters eight, nine and ten look in greater detail at the enactment of priorities in three specific workgroup settings. In chapters eleven and twelve, we examine the seasonal work of four curriculum leaders during the course of the 1997 school year. In this sense, over the course of the next five chapters, we explore both the 'idiosyncracies' of developing practice and the broader 'emblematic'<sup>7</sup> leadership routines associated with this.'

In this chapter I consider the ways in which the organisation of the At Risk programme, its staffing and management, the strategies and positions of the teachers and other adults involved, and the curriculum offered were all constrained and shaped in particular ways by the demands of an inchoate group of students. As the programme was established, operated and wound down during the course of four school terms, both curriculum content and pedagogy shifted markedly in response to the many classroom challenges posed by these alienated students, funding constraints and the marginal status of the programme within the school. Of particular interest in the context of this study were the differential relationships the students had, with established teachers within the school and with Pauline, the teacher aide, who had day-to-day management responsibility for the programme and continuous contact with the students. Equally, the initiative allows us to explore how the absence of a designated epistemological workgroup leader (to: unite the

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<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, P. Translator's preface. In P. Bourdieu et al. *The weight of the world. Social suffering in contemporary society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. ix.

teaching staff, co-ordinate the programme and implement its distinctive curriculum philosophy), also affected the programme. We begin by outlining the genesis of the programme, its rationale and structure.

### THE 'AT RISK' PROGRAMME

Kauri had a twofold reputation in its secondary school marketplace. First, the school was positioned at the bottom of the local, competitive 'pecking order'. From 1990 to 1996 it suffered from a dramatic shrinking of its roll and although this has since stabilised, at the time of writing it remains the smallest secondary school in the town. The school "has a tradition" of catering for significant numbers of at risk students "who are expelled or "pushed" from other city secondary schools".<sup>2</sup> Second, over time the school had developed a number of novel curriculum and pedagogical strategies, most notably the Individualised Learning initiative established in 1990 by Janette, Frances and three other teachers who had since left the school. Indeed, the "considerable achievements" and the "visionary leadership" of the principal, Janette, drew uncharacteristically fulsome praise from the Education Review Office in its most recent report on the school.<sup>3</sup>

As one way of giving additional support to students in 1996, Janette applied for and received Ministry of Education funding to run a pilot programme<sup>4</sup> that melded the school's experiences of curriculum innovation and empathy with 'at risk' students. In terms of philosophy, proposed structure and epistemology, it also drew directly on Janette's experience of having led the introduction of Individualised Learning at the school some years earlier. The focus in this project, however, was not specifically on curriculum nor pedagogy, but a particular, small section of the student population at Kauri: those 'at risk'.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, learning objectives were specified in the funding application to the Ministry of Education, one of which was:

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<sup>2</sup> At Risk Programme. Kauri School application to Ministry of Education. n.d.

<sup>3</sup> Education Review Office. Accountability Review, Kauri School. Wellington: ERO, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Although, to attempt to protect Kauri's anonymity, I call the programme At Risk, its real title was considerably more positive than the label might imply. Following the publication of the report, Resource Entitlement for School Staffing, the Ministry of Education established a capped contestable fund of \$1.5 million for 'Students at Risk' for use in 1996. Simkin, G. Overcoming the bulk funding blockage. The Ministerial Reference Group on School Staffing. New Zealand Annual Review of Education, 1995, 5, 57-74.

<sup>5</sup> Although these are not by any means a homogenous group of students: "Some of them were [in the At Risk programme] for reasons because they were reluctant to come to school, never came to school and when they were here they didn't do any work, but some of them were well behaved students and some of them attended reasonably regularly and behaved, they had problems in the class, they were not interrupting the learning of others so I'm not sure whether it was a good idea to put them all together". [Mike, Woodwork and Graphics teacher, August]. In their feedback on the draft chapter, both Janette and the Assistant Principal qualified Mike's statement, to the effect that all the students in the programme exhibited challenging behaviour at times.

To develop holistic, integrated, meaningful units of learning based as much as possible on the National Curriculum Framework but with a project approach and using, where possible, kinaesthetic and auditory learning styles.

### *Setting Up The 'At Risk' Programme*

Unusually, Kauri offered three very different classroom environments for its adolescent students: the Individualised Learning programme co-ordinated by Frances, a "conventional" classroom programme and a bicultural or Maori Immersion strand. In addition, for students at risk, there was a "Homeroom" which was supervised by "a superb teacher aide".<sup>6</sup> Consistent with the claims of the principal and staff, an ERO Accountability Review Report completed some time after the fieldwork for this study noted that "Kauri demonstrates some radical successes with students who have not succeeded in previous schools. During the review a number of students attributed their success at Kauri to the commitment of staff and the fact that the school did not give up on them". Unlike these existing classroom and curriculum configurations, the At Risk programme was an entrepreneurial and marginal curriculum offering that was devised to attempt to address the needs of students unable to cope with these other secondary school classroom environments. It was based on a humanist epistemology of children's ethical, social and intellectual development and was targeted at the "sixteen most disruptive" students in the school.

We've based it on this article "Beyond the Pendulum",<sup>7</sup> the fact that you need both the ethical social skills training for students at risk, as well as a good curriculum base and you need the project approach and all that. (Janette, Principal, May).

Although written for elementary school readers, the article's authors' arguments bear a striking similarity with many organisational, staffroom and classroom discursive practices I observed at Kauri during the study. As Janette commented, "it's based on the sorts of things they need that others don't". (The programme design included PE, music, woodwork and cooking for thirteen of twenty-five lessons per week, a day of work experience and seven periods per week devoted to core curriculum subjects in the base classroom.)

This particular programme took place, however, only because the school won Ministry of Education 'pump priming' funding for the project. The original intention, detailed in the school's application for funding, had been to structure and deliver the programme with an unusually high staffing complement, no doubt reflecting the classroom management and "behaviour" challenges which Janette assumed would be presented by having all these students together in the one classroom. Before the classroom programme commenced, a funding shortfall seriously compromised the anticipated staffing arrangements and, instead of a qualified teacher, it was decided that this programme, like the Homeroom, would be managed on a day-to-day basis by an experienced teacher aide, within

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<sup>6</sup> *At Risk Programme*, op cit.

curriculum guidelines prepared by Susan, an experienced teacher and established member of staff. The scheme of work written by Susan for term two explicitly linked the scheme to outcome statements from levels four and five of the New Zealand Curriculum and was prefaced by the statement that:

Students in the At Risk programme are from all levels and have differing abilities. It is therefore envisaged that as far as possible, the programme should be cross curricular and incorporate appropriate skills from the Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English curriculums. The programme is centred around ten different Challenges. These challenges are both academic and behavioural. The ones these curriculum statements are primarily selected for are the Service and Practical Challenges: "Cooking" "Gardening is Fun". [At Risk Programme, scheme, n.d.; spelling errors in original]

My initial involvement was in writing basic programmes for horticulture and cooking, which could follow over a ten-week session and then lead up to actually developing something at the end of it. It was designed deliberately to cover as much of the curriculum at third and fourth form level as it could, including English, social studies, maths and science. It was formally a week-by-week outline of work to be covered. In the four main areas. It was meant to cover their academic requirements. I did actually write the curriculum statements for the work partway into the term two, and then scrapped them when I realised that the students were not covering as much as they could. So I went back and simplified them drastically. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

#### *'Training' The Teachers*

Because of the explicit programme focus on behaviour modification, Janette recognised that the established teachers coming into the programme would benefit from preparatory training<sup>5</sup> and on-going collegial support:

They have to accept and internalise and be comfortable with teaching behaviour as part of their curriculum. It's not just the add on bit, so generally speaking, the teachers become frustrated. They've got their knowledge and skills, their content to get through and anything outside of that is regarded as an interruption, and a distraction. We had our first staff meeting with these people last Thursday, and we're going to have to keep meeting pretty regularly, and I said to them, you will not get through your work as quickly as you think, and anyway your work is the teaching of the students, so noticing things and getting them to problem solve, getting them to take the responsibility ... [Janette, Principal, May]

In her elaboration of the programme's rationale and her account of its inception, Janette provided a prophetic analysis of the difficulties staff were likely to encounter within the programme. In the extract above, Janette highlighted a major pedagogical tension in the secondary school classroom; namely that teachers at Kauri, despite the school's reported commitment to and organisation for at risk students, found it difficult to abandon their entrenched preoccupation with curriculum content (and, since the introduction of The New Zealand Curriculum and National Qualifications frameworks, the need to teach, assess and record prescribed "knowledge and skills"). A shift of dominant emphasis from accreditation

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<sup>7</sup> Lewis, C, Schaps, E. and Watson, M. Beyond the pendulum. Creating challenging and caring schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1995, March, 547-554.

<sup>8</sup> "I trained the staff." [Janette, Principal, May]

and credentialling towards affective teaching and learning objectives challenges existing hegemonic mindscapes of schooling in the secondary sector.

Janette argued that the staff involved were "going to have to keep meeting pretty regularly" for this focus to be maintained and for staff to support each other through the personal professional challenges such a shift in emphasis entailed. In order to help her colleagues become more aware of the specific nature of the pedagogical challenges which were likely to be posed by the students and faced by them, the teachers, Janette took the programme staff through a structured, analytical self-assessment exercise. Equally, her analysis of the teachers' responses below accurately foreshadowed the curriculum and pedagogical strategies that later became deployed in response to behaviours demonstrated during the first ten weeks of the programme by students:

We did a little positive discipline sort of model type survey of where are you in terms of your teaching style, and then think of the class, where are they? They were all to the more adult end of the scale, that believed that people should be able to take responsibility, but they thought the students were at the other end of the scale, needing plenty of structure, and the things that happens often, is that teachers move their style to that end and really they should be moving students up to their end. So they have taken that on board and we're using this behaviour modification to reward the appropriate behaviour and things that they get irritated, but I think they have taken on board quite quickly the idea that they must get the students working in groups, that the whanau, the idea that the family supporting the whole. [Janette, Principal, May] [my emphasis]

The exercise was designed to reinforce the need for the teachers to focus on encouraging appropriate behaviour through reward and positive encouragement. Formal "behaviour modification" strategies were intended to remind both teachers and students of the affective objectives of the programme. Additionally, the emphasis on "whanau" built both on the existing "vertical grouping" pastoral structures within the school; Kauri's explicit aim of teaching "teamwork" and "co-operation"<sup>9</sup> and on the reality that a significant number of students in the At Risk programme were Maori or Pacific Islanders.<sup>10</sup> The interesting point for our discussion purposes is that despite Janette's encouragement to the staff to move the students "up to their end" of the behaviour "scale", what happened to the programme in term three was, in many ways, precisely the opposite: in response to the very real difficulties of classroom control experienced by many of the teaching staff in term two, and the absence of the anticipated regular timetabled meetings for the staff teaching in the programme, Susan and Pauline decided to develop a highly structured curriculum plan for the students."

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<sup>9</sup> Kauri School information folder for prospective students, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Susan, Humanities teacher, September.

<sup>11</sup> In her feedback on the draft chapter, Janette argued that this happened with Pauline "and it is this that led to the "siege" mentality of the group. The students "captured" her sympathies and she became an

### *Support For The Initiative*

While the documented objectives of the At Risk programme appeared to be entirely in tune with an espoused institutional culture at Kauri that aimed to meet "the educational needs of each individual student",<sup>12</sup> it would be inaccurate to imply that all the staff involved were wholeheartedly supportive of the At Risk initiative.<sup>13</sup> After all, one would not expect most secondary school teachers voluntarily to choose to teach the "sixteen most disruptive" students in the school, and these all in the same class! Nevertheless, it is important for our analysis of the processes of curriculum and teacher development within this student-focused programme that the reluctance of some teaching staff to become or continue to be involved in the programme should be acknowledged:

[I] literally talked other teachers into being involved in it. It got so that in term one when they saw me coming some of them tended to vanish [laughs]. But they still put their timetable in. And [female PE teacher] was very good like this and so was Mike [Woodwork and Graphics]. They volunteered time and got it written into their timetables. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

Reluctance, avoidance or oppositional behaviour was, then, implied rather than openly expressed in the staffroom:

Just some of the older people in the staff, that have been there for years. Everyone is entitled to their opinion but I used to get sick of people saying, oh I couldn't do it for all the tea in China; you couldn't even give me Big Ben, just continuous. I felt like saying to them, well [the At Risk students] are not that bad, they are still human beings, come in and have a look at them. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

One highly regarded teacher who had agreed to work in the programme emphatically informed me after one lesson that he was opposed to this programme, "professionally, philosophically and pedagogically",<sup>14</sup> but the positions of others were generally more ambiguous and pragmatic: "Looking at the politics of it all, I was asked if I would do it and I said I'll give anything a go".<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the low status of the programme within the established curriculum and among the staff as a group was reinforced by the limited, short-term nature of the Ministry funding and Pauline's para-professional status.

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advocate for them seeing herself as the only person who did. The rest of the staff did not move so far to the students' end of the scale as Pauline".

<sup>12</sup> Chairperson's Annual Report, folder of information for prospective students, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Dyson and colleagues made comparable conclusions based on their studies of effective special needs practice in a number English secondary schools. Initially, their analysis identified a positive, unified whole school culture towards organisation and provision in the schools. Re-analysis of the data, however, revealed that within these schools there were, in fact, competing discourses and oppositional behaviour from some staff. Clark, C., Dyson, A. and Millward, A. *Dialectical analysis, special needs and schools as organisations*. In C. Clark, A. Dyson and A. Millward (Eds.). *Towards inclusive schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 78-95.

<sup>14</sup> Kauri, fieldnotes, June.

<sup>15</sup> Mike, Woodwork and Graphics teacher, August.

I think they sort of look at you as if to say, well she's with those horrible naughty kids. And so I was categorised as being one of the naughty kids as well. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

These factors were symbolic markers that conceptualised and positioned the At Risk programme in staff members' consciousness in particular ways. Moreover, Janette was unable to devote as much time to teaching in the programme as she had anticipated over terms two and three.<sup>16</sup>

### *Locating The Programme*

The At Risk programme was based in a separate prefabricated building of two linked rooms located on the school boundary next to the playing fields, at the furthest point from the school's administration block but close to the cafeteria. The location was chosen to mirror the Homeroom facility that already existed in the school and where students could spend much of their day.<sup>17</sup> Much of the school was spotlessly clean, with many classrooms maintained in good decorative order. The teaching accommodation for the At Risk programme comprised two bare rooms. The first of these was carpeted and contained a number of wooden desks and chairs, a blackboard, and a teacher's desk. The windows on two walls were above head height and students consequently had no external view. The room lacked display boards and suitable heating and had an old, open fuse box with which, on one occasion, a student had to tinker in order for the lights to work. Typically, during my morning observations in terms two and three the students would be let in to the classroom and stand huddled beneath the inadequate gas heater waiting for the room to warm up. The adjoining room was drab and contained kitchen facilities and some stored furniture together with a trestle table and chairs (set out by Pauline). Both rooms had the smell and feel of disuse despite the fact that they had been upgraded and decorated in 1994 and had been used as a crèche the previous year. Ironically, given the intention to establish a Homeroom environment, the choice of rooms and their organisation proved in the circumstances not to be particularly conducive to good student behaviour:

The classroom environment wasn't the best it could have been. For example, I would have liked to have seen that activities room able to be locked off. Because the students played the system there. They'd disappear in there, they'd make a cup of coffee, make a cup of tea. But if [Pauline had] been able to lock the doors and if she'd had a telephone. That would have made a big difference to controlling them and to the way she managed the class.

Interviewer: When it was being set up had these things been thought through?

Susan: Well, we'd asked, I'd asked about a lock on the door and we asked about the telephone. The telephone apparently was a prohibitive expense. I don't know why the lock

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<sup>16</sup> In her feedback on the draft of the chapter, Janette explained that at this time she was resisting pressure from a neighbouring school that was expanding to take over some of Kauri's property and was also organising the school's jubilee. In her stead, the school's guidance team, the assistant principal and Frances (Individualised Learning) were delegated to provide support.

<sup>17</sup> Assistant principal, written feedback on chapter draft.

never got on the door but it was certainly asked for. And it was actually on my little list. These are what I would like. I had a wish list like a telephone. But the other list, I guess it must have just slipped through the system, getting a lock on the door. I thought it was going to be put in after the holidays and it wasn't. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]<sup>18</sup>

## THE PROGRAMME IN OPERATION

In this part of the chapter, the operation of the At Risk programme and its evolution over the remaining three terms of the 1996 year are discussed.

### *Inside 'the castle'*

During the first active teaching term of the programme (term two) the self-contained nature of the building contributed also to the dynamics of the developing relationship between the students and their various teachers. Most secondary school students move from room to room or block to block within the school buildings according to their seniority and the subjects being studied and, for some of these, will most likely mix with a variety of peers. In contrast, the At Risk programme students spent four days of their working week together during the course of the two terms, mostly attending the same lessons together, and were based within two rooms in a separate building of which they were the sole users. While this unique collective space undoubtedly contributed to and encouraged a welcome sense of shared identity for Pauline and the students, and simplified the organisation of their day, it also reinforced their sub-cultural 'difference' from the rest of the school community. In turn, this created a dynamic that presented considerable difficulties for 'visiting' staff and adults:

[T]his [workshop] classroom wasn't available at the last minute, so I had to go over to their area, and I thought I don't really want to go over here. I don't want to go into their space. That was a real disaster, which in hindsight, I mean I knew "don't go into their space". But I said, I don't want that in the workshop today so, never mind. I don't think they should have a space like that. It's their castle and all the other teachers are going into it and they think they rule the roost over in that corner. If that was changed, I think we would have, it's a control thing, isn't it, we would have more control over them. I mean they spend their entire day trying to see how they can control everyone else. [Mike, Woodwork and Graphics teacher, August]

The establishment of the at Risk programme at Kauri, then, was characterised not only by atypical funding, curriculum and staffing factors, but also by some idiosyncratic institutional features which together served to position the students, Pauline and the staff who taught in the programme at the margins of the school, both socially, physically and

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<sup>18</sup> In their feedback on the chapter draft, the three senior staff in the school catalogued the many improvements that had been made to the building prior to 1996. The Deputy Principal commented in addition on the "constant vandalism" to the two rooms throughout 1996 by the At Risk students and the repairs that were undertaken. It was also explained that the school's PTA, not the MoE, owned the building and the cost of a phone line would have been prohibitive.

metaphorically. Ironically, the decision to bring together "the sixteen most disruptive students in the school" and to separate them from the mainstream of school life for much of their day, helped produce a shared group identity and collective oppositional behaviour that was, perhaps, "an inevitable and logical response of alienated youth".<sup>19</sup> It is within this unique institutional "castle" that the evolving processes of curriculum, pedagogy and programme organisation need to be examined and understood.

My role is much more hands on than I envisaged, when I conceptualised it, because what has happened, without having the experienced teacher, I've had to take a much more hands-on approach, which goes beyond just teaching for one hour a week in the program. I go down every day and work with the students on what has gone wrong and problem-solving our way through that. Also at any time they might come in and tell me that something has happened - what'll we do? So there's very much a hands-on approach. But I don't want it to be too hands-on either, because I think the teachers have to be there. I'm not supporting so much the trained teachers, who are in the programme for one, two or three hours a week, but Pauline, who is our teacher aide, who is very, very good with students, but is inexperienced in the curriculum. I think there have had to be some trade offs in terms of what the vision was, because of that. I don't think the curriculum goals in fitting them from the curriculum, I don't think we've got there yet. We do tend to have underestimated the amount of time that it might take students to change. So we're looking at perhaps having the 16 students, there are sixteen on the course although the maximum is 15, for 20 weeks rather than 10. Because it is a pretty tall order basically. We knew that all along, and we have actually got the 16 most disruptive students in the school, because the other classes now are operating pretty well. [Janette, Principal, May]

The At Risk classroom programme encountered three related difficulties soon after implementation. First, without an experienced teacher to undertake the necessary classroom and curriculum organisation in situ, the programme's formal Curriculum Framework outcome objectives were not being met. Second, the management or leadership 'vacuum' thus produced created its own pressures for Janette herself to take more of a "hands on" role than she had wanted to (and later to delegate some responsibilities for supporting Pauline to senior administrative and pastoral colleagues in term three).<sup>20</sup> Third, the staff involved "underestimated the amount of time that it might take students to change". Similarly, the extract signals some subtle changes in Janette's assessment of the purposes and management of the programme in that she had (i) refined her focus of support from teaching style and strategies for the staff group in the programme to direct support for Pauline, and this specifically in the area of curriculum; and (ii) the slow rates of student progress within the programme had been balanced against the increased stability reported in the classes from which the At Risk students had been withdrawn.

There was another "trade off" hinted at in Janette's commentary. It was to do with the role and status of Pauline among both students and staff within a programme where the objectives were as much affective as they were cognitive. Pauline lacked training and experience as a teacher, and, as a newcomer to the school, a working knowledge of Kauri's

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<sup>19</sup> Pratt, J. Crime and deviance. In P. Spoonley, D. Pearson and I. Shirley (Eds.) *New Zealand Society. A Sociological Introduction*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990, p. 216.

rules and disciplinary procedures. This created considerable problems in terms of students meeting the planned curriculum objectives of the programme, problems that "emerged after about two weeks into the programme".<sup>21</sup> On the one hand, it was precisely her ambiguous, non-qualified teacher status (combined with her extensive experience as a teacher aide in a community high school) which enabled Pauline to empathise with and develop such a rapid interpersonal rapport with this particular group of students, many of whom in the past had belonged only nominally to the school.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Janette observed that to achieve this rapport Pauline allied herself with the students and acted as their advocate before the rest of the school community.<sup>23</sup>

### *Tightening The Curriculum Structure*

The teaching programme during terms two and three mutated considerably, not only because of the practical consequences of the underfunding already identified, but also in order to accommodate the personal attributes, skills, understandings and experiences Pauline brought to her work with the students. In turn, the more arms-length management of the programme alluded to by Janette above and discussed by Susan in some detail below, became an attempt to provide some structured prescribed curriculum continuity for the students by (i) encouraging the affective skills exercised by Pauline in her six hours' direct contact with the students each day; and (ii) recognising the value for students of the health education, personal welfare and work related programmes and networks that were built in to the programme design but put in place by Pauline.

However, despite these undoubted humanist qualities, Pauline also lacked training and experience in the area of the formal, taught curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment). The irony is that, in seeking to create greater prescribed curriculum structure and control in order to compensate for Pauline's lack of pre-service teacher education and the occupational awareness or identity that derives from experience as a teacher ("having an expectation of them achieving something"), Susan was advocating an approach that ran counter to Janette's original "vision" for the programme, i.e. the change was providing more teacher direction and less encouragement of student self-responsibility:

The basic problem was, I took a lot of Pauline's ideas and incorporated them because she said she was familiar with this. Although I went over the outline with her the problem [that] emerged after about two weeks into the programme, was a) the students and b) Pauline's sheer lack of teaching training. For example when I'd say that the garden had to be prepared, she would take the whole group out and say, "Right, now let's weed this" instead of saying, "You, you and you, tidy this corner and do this." She would take them out, give them a very general direction, and expect them to be on task for forty or fifty minutes.

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<sup>20</sup> Written feedback on chapter draft.

<sup>21</sup> Susan, Humanities teacher, September.

<sup>22</sup> "A lot of the students weren't attending at all. Some of the staff hadn't even seen these students - some of them - they knew their name - the name - and had them on the roll but had never met them before."

[Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

<sup>23</sup> Written feedback on chapter draft.

Now, that particular group, unless you nailed them early, said, "You do this, you do this, you do this." they disappear in different directions [laugh]. And this is what happened the first two weeks. My directions in the units weren't specific enough, and Pauline's lack of teaching wasn't specific enough. And it took me a little while because I only saw them a couple of periods a week. I didn't actually see their work and see what they were doing, **so** it took me a little while to catch up with this. And by the time I'd caught up with this it was almost too late to do it. So I sat down and rewrote some sections and said, "Do this, do this, do this." But by that stage I guess the work ethic in some of the students had disappeared entirely, and some of them simply didn't do anything. Some responded very well but others didn't. [...] Pauline's lack of expertise is not in dealing with the students on a personal basis, which she was very, very good at, it was simply the academic background that most teachers acquire or have, and the knowledge of curriculum, and what students should be expected to do, that they've also acquired. She had spent, has spent, many years as a teacher aide in the community high school, dealing with difficult students. There was no doubt that she was ideally suited for that, but actually sitting a student down and having an expectation of them achieving something is a different skill, which she doesn't have yet. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

The extract above is infused with a pedagogical lexicon of control and compliance, a perceived need for the teacher firmly to establish their authority ("unless you nailed them early") with individual students ("you, you and you") in order to keep them on task ("the work ethic") and ensure that learning takes place ("actually sitting a student down and having an expectation of them achieving something"). Yet, approaching the end of their compulsory decade in the schooling system these students' needs were complex, and were both educational, social and emotional. A number of them had exhausted even Kauri's supportive discipline structures prior to the start of this "last chance"<sup>24</sup> programme. Many of the teaching staff discovered during term two that, as a group, the students proved highly resistant to standard expectations of curriculum attainment, conformity with behavioural norms and even participation within lessons:

With these type of students also you've got to be the right person, you've got to have the right teacher in there. It's got to be a peoples person. Somebody that can relate to the students - not necessarily on the same par as them but rather than pulling them up for every little thing they do wrong, start encouraging them with the things that they're doing right. And working on that. Giving them real encouragement in those areas. And then it's like a shell opening, you can see them popping out, you know, little bits of the shell breaking off all round. [...] The maths teacher that we have in there, she tried to come in and like a Gestapo agent I suppose. And they just went woomph, came right up. They were just running in and out of the classroom doing what they liked. And she had no control in the end. [Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

In the "castle" that formed in the two-roomed building in the first few weeks of term two, the typical student behaviour observed was strongly oppositional:

First lesson [of the afternoon] is woodwork with Mike and Pauline in craft block, making garden boxes; [students] have to collaborate to complete [target date is end of term dinner for parents]. Mike begins lesson by reminding students what the task is, where they are at and how much remains to be done. Box assembly already started, some students settle to work, others walking round, exchanging insults, messing with tools. Odd student working individually, lots of calls for help, Mike having to give individual attention to those on task,

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<sup>24</sup> Pauline, Teacher aide, July.

and prevent others from wandering off, into adjoining rooms; little motivation apparent except from one girl. Group of girls talking off task throughout, two boys baiting each other and another; and pretend fighting. Little technical skill with tools demonstrated; one boy banging in screws with hammer, another sawing plywood with inappropriate saw, another hacking into bench with saw, another unable to assemble box because pieces cut carelessly. Pauline attempting to cajole individuals onto task. Very patient non-confrontational approach from Mike. No good relationships established. At clearing up phase, several boys attempt to leave without clearing away, protracted low-key confrontation with one boy in particular. Mike and Pauline do a fair amount of tidying up themselves.<sup>25</sup> [Kauri fieldnote, May]

9.15 am. Observation of Janette taking first lesson of day. Nominally a lesson involving a dilemma on a worksheet about adolescents; students expected to read, make brief notes and discuss dilemma. Six students present. [First part of] session dominated by confrontation between Janette and [male student]. [Male student] refuses to take off hat, sitting leaned back on rear legs of chair directly opposite Janette; challenges Janette to justify uniform restrictions, talks across her to neighbour about money for 'smokes'; comments under breath. Others appear to take lead from [male student]. Discussion shifts to what students want to do with lives.<sup>26</sup> [Male student] talks at length about wanting to go to live with his mother in Hastings and 'cruise'; drink, smoke and survive by shoplifting. Appears determined to be seen not to conform. Janette's counter is a reminder about At Risk programme objectives (which are written on board)<sup>27</sup> and that he can't go and live with mother, the whanau have him here. When he's old enough to leave school then he can go. [Male student's] non-conforming behaviour typical to that [he] exhibited in all sessions observed.<sup>28</sup> [Kauri fieldnote, June]

2.30 pm. session with Deborah from Alcohol and Drug Centre, in late twenties, early thirties, very softly spoken with [timid] body language. About eight students present; session a follow up where she is checking their recall of alcohol content equivalencies in different spirits and beer. Constant shouting out from students, intermittent attention and joking at Deborah's expense - she persists through session with difficulty, calling on volunteers and those with hands up; occasional interjections from Pauline to attempt to establish order. Chaotic session, students want to rush off home at end and destroy end of session for teaching purposes. Almost like a bear in a pit with students baiting. [Kauri fieldnote, June]

The notes from these observations at the beginning of the taught programme are useful not least because they encapsulate well the entrenched apathy and disaffection faced in term two by all of the adults involved in teaching the group, as a **group**,<sup>29</sup> both established teachers within the school and visitors from the various health, community and youth services agencies who were brought in by Pauline. For term three, Susan and Pauline restructured the scheme of work so that the students followed subject-based units of study in

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<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of similar masculine behaviour in a workshop setting, see Dixon, C. Having a laugh, having a fight: masculinity and the conflicting needs of the self in Design and Technology. *International Studies in the Sociology of Education*, 1996, 6(2), 147-166.

<sup>26</sup> In her feedback on the chapter draft, Janette pointed out that one of the objectives of the programme was to encourage the students to speak to one another in front of the class.

<sup>27</sup> As a constant reinforcer of the programme's values. Similar strategies were used in the Individualised Learning programme.

<sup>28</sup> The boy's behaviour is also consistent with that of male adolescents described in Jackson, D. and Salisbury, J. Why should secondary schools take working with boys seriously. *Gender and Education*, 1996, 8(1), 103-115.

<sup>29</sup> I use the term loosely. Although sixteen students were enrolled in the programme, I never saw more than ten students in any session and only a small core of four or five attended regularly throughout term two. In term three, the numbers attending remained also much lower than the official class roll.

the core curriculum areas rather than the integrated topic based approach attempted in term two:

**Susan:** In the second term Pauline requested that it be a lot more structured, which I was all in agreement with, thank you very much and had offered to do it earlier but she said no, she'd carry on with what was done there. And so I got units of work from different sections, went along and said, "This gets done this week, this gets done this week."

**Interviewer:** Was that individualised for each student or were they, they working as a group?

**Susan:** It was not. It was based at a middle range and it was only individualised in the case of one student who has a reading difficulty. I went through and wrote out something that was suitable for him. I gave Pauline guidelines as to how much should be done or covered each week. Or each period. And made sure she had all the materials there.

**Interviewer:** What was the effect of that, do you think, over term three?

**Susan:** Well, there was a sigh of relief from some of the students, a loud groan from others. Some of them worked very well in the new system. And some of them of course were already familiar with it from the Individualised Learning programme. Generally, we found the students liked to know, "Okay, this is done. That's what I'm working on." And they could see it and it was quite clear, which was good, actually having step by step, their written requirements set down rather than assuming that somebody could work from a general outline. Instead of saying you have a daily diary, you say, "Right, turn to page so and so and do these." (laugh) [...] It was far more curriculum based. They were still doing P. E., they were still doing music. There were still outside speakers coming in, like the health speakers and the alcohol and drugs. They were coming in. And I know the social welfare students have a little programme running too, which was built in to it. But the actual school work was far more formal and it was set out clearly so if they were absent the work was still there for them to do. Because in the end of term two, for example, I went through the units, worked out what they should have done, put a chart up on the wall and said, "That's what you should have done this term." - "Oh!" And I said, "Write up a little box and tick off fourteen little boxes. And if you've done all fourteen things, pieces of work, tick it." I made a bit of a game out of it and some of them were quite pleased to discover they'd done an awful lot of it. But in the next term that was actually written down, what they were to do, step by step. And if they missed a bit they could just go back and say, "I've finished this, I'm on that now." [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

### *Successful Aspects Of The Programme*

Despite the obvious struggle to maintain the planned curriculum delivery in the core areas of English, mathematics, science and social studies, there were successes during terms two and three,<sup>30</sup> most notably the PE programme, the relationships established with outside community agencies working with 'at risk' youths, the involvement of fourth year social work students for their practicum, the end of term and programme dinners prepared by the students for their parents, caregivers and families, and the Friday work-experience programme set up by Pauline:

Students get such a buzz out of going to work on a Friday. They're dressed up. They're there on time. They're actually doing things. I've put them into a job that that they want to get into when they leave school, so hope to gain some experience, and they do so well. Their reports are - you know, they're outstanding. Five's been the highest, and a lot of them are fives. [Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

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<sup>30</sup> In her written feedback, Janette also noted that in 1999, two of the students were still at the school and two were undertaking tertiary studies. Nine of sixteen returned to Kauri or the community high school in 1997 and several more were working at a local 'whanau centre': "Without this programme none of these students would have made it through until the end of 1996".

Thus, in addition to the official curriculum-related school scheme of work that had been planned for by Susan and Janette from the outset, a parallel set of experiences drawing on expertise and networks in the wider community became embedded as an integral feature of the programme as a result of Pauline having established productive relationships with various health, social service and community-based youth welfare agencies outside the school:

Basically I'm with them all day every day. We've got a public health nurse Aaron, he comes in and I've organised, when I was setting up the programme I had that in mind, based on the experiences I've had with these type of students before and so Aaron he's involved, he's a public health nurse. He deals with the health and hygiene issues. And I've got Liam from the one stop youth shop - I actually met him through Aaron. He asked if there was anything he could do so I got him on board as well. He's excellent - he takes - remember without the support of the outside agencies that I have got involved it would be tough as it's basically identifying their needs and the problems that they're faced with. Like with Deborah from the A and D [alcohol and drug] Centre. We're really targeting the area that these students are involved in. They're all into drugs and alcohol and I feel that by having people like Deborah in, from the A and D centre, we're actually addressing it rather than sweeping it under the carpet. We're bringing it out - and okay, let's educate these guys, even though they seem to think they know everything about it. It's good to tell them about the health aspect of it. [Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

Furthermore, these informal curriculum activities provided a direct and practical link with the At Risk students' lives beyond the school:

Some of the family group conferences that I attended. Part of the deal was that they had to have A&D treatment or counselling or assessment done which they had already had so it was quite good in the Court's eyes to see that we were doing something about it anyway, that there was a programme set up in the school addressing the kids with those problems. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

### *The Programme's Effects On Students*

In attempting to evaluate the effects of the At Risk programme on students, it is important to acknowledge that many of these students survived at the margins of compulsory schooling and that any criteria adopted for evaluation should therefore recognise the problematic context in which the teachers taught and the students learned:

I think it started off, none of us quite knew what we were trying to do. As it went on we did have to put more authority into it. Overall I think it succeeded in so far as it kept the kids here. It did achieve positive things for some of them. It was not able to rescue all of them but then the kids came in it with so much personal baggage anyway I'm not jolly well surprised. But they enjoyed it. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

For Susan, whose responsibility was the planning of the prescribed curriculum component, the imposition of greater structure or "authority" reassured her that the students' "work ethic" could be more easily established and maintained. She commented favourably on the way in which the school's systems for daily registration, attendance and uniform became more carefully administered by Pauline as the programme progressed and

that this too had beneficial effects. **Pauline's** analysis was more broadly concerned with the changes in students' self-esteem and the personal survival issues they confronted in their daily lives outside the school. Her comments poignantly captured the practical irrelevance of the formal prescribed curriculum to adolescent "street-wise kids" who exist in a vicious spiral of deprivation and neglect.

The whole thing with these guys is that there is so much going on outside of school, they really need to take themselves away from school and come back in five years time when they have sorted all their stuff out in their lives before they can even get on and learn. [Boy student] was sleeping under a bridge at one stage, in the school grounds and wherever he could. No sleep, no food, stealing. That's the thing with the At Risk students is that they were all very street-wise kids and that made it difficult. They could teach us a few things or two about what they are up to. Sad really, cos' you are fighting a losing battle. Even though you get respect and you do see some changes. Like I used to say to them, you have got to, 'You can make a difference, you can make a change', you can stop this cycle and break here and if you really want to be somebody. That was what I tried to drum into them all the time. And I think with some of them it did get through but like I say with so much going on inside their home lives it's hard to focus. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

Some of the students' comments<sup>31</sup> on the programme reflected this ever-present tension between the demands of formal schooling and those of their personal lives. For them, the impact of activities such as the Friday work experience, the trust and team building sessions undertaken in the PE lessons, and the preparation of an end of term meal for their parents and whanau was profound:

Student: When I first started I didn't have any confidence or anything at all. I was nowhere, like, just a bum, doing nothing at school. Then I came here and it just all changed around. I got a job, left school. I've got a long way. I've gone a long way since I've been in the course, I think - confidence. I've built up my confidence heaps.

Interviewer: What sort of things do you do to be more confident?

Student: At the end of the term, when they had that meeting [the dinner], the end of the term I'd done a speech. That built it up. And at work it builds up, working at Cobb and Co as well, working with other people.

Interviewer: Tell me about bumming around at school then.

Student: I just used to not sit in my seat, do no work, get heaps of detentions, don't go to them. Just got suspended. That was because I was a bit depressed then, because things had happened before that. I went to counselling and then I came in here and it just changed.

Interviewer: What's it like being in [the At Risk programme]?

Student: It was good, did more work. I did more work in here than I did in class. Get along with other people better.

Interviewer: How did you get along with them?

Student: Just not being smart to anyone, respect them.

Interviewer: Is this the other people in the programme?

Student: Yeah. It's anyone as well. Speak to everyone now. (Boy student, August)

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<sup>31</sup> I formally interviewed a number of students in both the Individualised Learning and at Risk programmes at Kauri. In contrast to the former who were invariably outgoing, self-confident, articulate and forthcoming about their experiences, the At Risk students, although they were accepting of me as an observer and periodic visitor, were more hesitant, unconfident and inarticulate both in their day to day

Equally, while the bringing together in one class of sixteen students, who presented with extremely challenging behavioural and attendance difficulties, posed major problems for the adults who worked with them, for the students themselves it clearly appeared to provide a group identity and source of mutual empathy and understanding that they had not experienced before. Where I as a white, middle-aged, middle-class observer saw a daily exchange of insults, swearing and oppositional behaviour in various forms, the students experienced a welcome network of peer support:

They're a good bunch once you get to know them, get to know them and they're good to you. They look after you, look after each other, help each other through things, like when you're having a rough time, you can talk to them, well most of them, anyway, like feeling down and depressed or whatever. Yes, you can talk to them. [Boy student, August]

The difficulties faced by the students prior to the programme were not, however, limited to the personal and emotional. The structure of the conventional secondary school timetable and the levels of personal organisation this demanded also presented challenges for the At Risk students:

In normal classes we had different teachers and different subjects. And in the At Risk programme we just had one teacher and most of the time we were in one class. In the normal classes it's difficult to know your timetable. [Girl student, November]

While the at Risk programme provided some respite from this need to organise for and discipline oneself to the requirements of the segmented timetabled day, this was only temporary and, in the fourth term when the students were re-integrated into the mainstream school, they were no better equipped to cope with what for them was the difficult task of managing their daily routines:

I think they just found it difficult to, because I was constantly, even at the end of the whole [programme], the fourth term, they still didn't know what their timetable was, they had to rely on other students or myself to know where they were going next. No pens, no paper. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

Indeed, it was in the fourth term where the difficulties surrounding this marginal curriculum offering were most apparent as (i) the students' reliance on Pauline to negotiate and mediate for them the school's various structures and processes; and (ii) the students' deeply embedded resistance to the school's expectations, norms and routine patterns both began to surface:

The fourth term was to get them back re integrated back into the mainstream. I tried to prepare them, saying to them all the time, look, you have only got another five weeks to

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classroom interactions with teachers, adults and each other, and in their comments on the programme.

go, another four weeks to go, then it's the holidays and then you will be back into normal classes. Initially it was a bit of a headache because there is myself, [and] the two student social workers continuously chasing after these kids. Three of us chasing after 14 students or something. It was just incredible. We couldn't keep tracks on them. They just didn't want to go to classes. Then I found once [the two social work students] left, they settled down a little bit because the majority of them were with me in [name of fourth form class]. But at that time I had that car accident, I was away for two days, they didn't want to go to class because I wasn't with them. They became too reliant on me being there. Some of them had confrontations with some of the teachers like the English teacher in particular with quite a few of the students. Some of the remarks she said to them, that she didn't want them in her class and they couldn't learn. That's what they have told me. That's what they reported to me. So you sort of take it with a grain of salt. There was no way they were going into class without me being there. If I had a meeting or something, they just wouldn't show up. Didn't want to go if I wasn't there. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

The reintegration problems were attributable in part to the relatively short duration of the self-contained programme and its peripheral status among Kauri's curriculum offerings; but also, to the fragile and context bound nature of the self-esteem built up among the students and their unwillingness to give up their new found collective identity. Equally, part of the difficulty also lay in the expectations of some mainstream teachers, exemplified ("a grain of salt" aside) in the reported comments of the English teacher above. Some individual teachers were indeed very reluctant to participate in or persist with a programme that fell outside their normal classroom teaching or curriculum administration responsibilities:

If you had suggested, and in fact it was suggested a couple of times, to the general teachers here on the staff, "Would you like this bunch?" The looks of horror on their faces [laugh]. I wouldn't have coped with it full-time. I certainly wouldn't have taken them on. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

I was pretty disappointed actually because - not saying it was the music teacher's fault - but we were only allocated one time with music a week. And with the music teacher being involved in activities outside the school, a lot of the time he wasn't there, or he was late to class, and it just fizzed out basically in the end. It annoyed me really because he blamed it on the students and it was him really. He should have been looking at - cos' a lot of these teachers are quite quick to point the finger at these students, but some of them don't give them a fair go either. [Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

The ways in which these students had to negotiate other structures, processes and rituals at Kauri conveyed powerful yet unspoken messages about the extent to which their participation was actually encouraged and valued; and, moreover, about how their reaction to such tacit messages was directed towards particular forms of oppositional response. As the At Risk programme was being developed and documented in term one, the focus was, understandably and legitimately, on the idiosyncratic cognitive and affective needs of the students and the development and support needs for staff who were going to be teaching and working in the programme. In terms two and three the programme evolved in direct response to the practical opportunities and constraints that arose. While the programme was self-contained, and administered by Pauline (with support and intervention from senior staff and the guidance team), the position of the students within wider school structures and

established processes was of less significance. In term four, however, the day-to-day practices that had developed within the "castle" challenged the school's prevailing norms in ways that neither Pauline nor the students were able to counter:

[At] the very start of the At Risk programme, none of these kids had any self-esteem. They would have never have got up. If I had said to them, you are going to be getting up in the third form, fourth term and singing in front of assembly, they honestly would have said, "No I doubt it, get lost, I definitely won't be doing that". So that just shows you how far some of those girls have gone. To actually get up and do that. Even in front of their own parents [at the end of year dinner] it was a big thing for them. For some of them it was harder to get up in front of their own family than it was to get up in front of their friends and everyone in the assembly. We had a bit of a hiccup the last day. With the singing thing. [girl student] and [staff member] cos she was singing with us too. I said to them, for prize giving you have got to come full uniform, correct uniform. Everything was perfect apart from the shoes. So [deputy principal] said no, they are not going in like that. And I thought oohhh [resigned sigh]. I said what if we take their shoes off, can they go in bare feet because the Maori Club's in there with bare feet. Can they? One of them said, yes that's fine. And then somebody else turned around and said, no you can't. And [girl student] was doing the rap part you see, so consequently they didn't go to assembly, they weren't allowed in; went and kicked the door in and turned the fire escape hose on and flooded the upstairs English Department out on the last day of school. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

### *The Programme's Effects On Staff*

The adults (Pauline, teachers, senior staff and community workers) who were involved in the At Risk programme consistently argued that the students it served had made tangible progress, both academic, social and personal during the course of the three terms. They were, however, much more equivocal about they extent to which they had enjoyed working in such a debilitating and stressful classroom environment. From their analyses it is possible to identify specific areas where conventional organisational webs of secondary school teaching and learning were missing. The absence of these seemingly mundane rituals of schooling work had major effects on the teaching staff in the programme and their ability to develop sufficient 'expertness' to cope with the challenges it presented.

Janette's prophetic statement in May 1996 that "philosophy is so important, [...] if you don't believe that it can work, then you're going to revert to your old teaching style, or your most comfortable one", was borne out in practice. Without someone from within the workgroup to monitor in detail the programme in action and maintain the 'philosophy' day-in, day-out in the way that, for example, Frances did in Individualised Learning, the formal taught core curriculum programme became more tightly structured in response to behavioural problems presented by the students. Equally, without the regular meetings, socialisation and mutual professional support of the kind that typically take place within a coherent subject department workgroup, the teaching staff involved worked in isolation from each other.

In recognition of the challenges posed by students and Pauline's lack of training and experience as a teacher, the At Risk programme management was structured to provide a range of support mechanisms for Pauline from various people: Janette and senior

colleagues, Susan and pastoral staff. In addition to the systems put in place by senior staff to support Pauline, however, active support was needed for all the teachers working in the programme. Moreover, this needed to be provided by someone familiar with and experienced in the school's systems, structures and processes and who could operate a role similar to that expected of someone in a curriculum leadership position.

[T]he support may be that this is the system and one person is overseeing it. They run it well and that's the best support you can have, if someone is responsible for it. I wasn't even clear whether I was supposed to be dealing with these students for wagging. If there was a wagger it was followed up by who it was dealt with and that would have made everyone's job a lot easier. [Mike, Woodwork and Graphics teacher, August]

Unfortunately, in this respect, Pauline was both a newcomer to the school, and a teacher aide. Consequently, despite her importance to the day-to-day operation and administration of the programme, she lacked the training, socialisation and experience as a teacher either to undertake such a staff leadership role, or to be able to operate the school's control and pastoral procedures as needed for the students:

The uniform question quickly came up and the group question. This again was something where it was perhaps a mistake to bring in an outsider but none of the regular teachers were willing to take it on. But it was quite simple. Pauline hadn't read the teacher's manual. I guess it's a bit funny but most teachers would automatically read it. She'd been at the school for a term but she hadn't come enough to staff meetings. She didn't realise how the group system worked, how the uniform question was dealt with and the students started wagging group. And this wasn't checked because there was a general misunderstanding as to whether they had to go to group or straight to Pauline. And it wasn't dealt with soon enough. There was a lack of communication on both sides. And as to uniform, most of them were in full uniform most of the time prior to the At Risk programme but within a very short time they were out of uniform [laugh]. And playing the system with regards to uniform. Now [girl student] was always a problem with uniform, but the others, most of them were in uniform all the time. Pauline didn't understand the procedure for getting them back into uniform and for dealing with uniform problems. [...] It got better as it went. And she put the systems into place and started pulling things in. It was too late for some things but it did begin to work. And she began to get more support but there wasn't, and this wasn't Pauline, there wasn't a system for dealing with the students who started playing the system early enough. Pauline didn't have the support from the school counsellor who I don't quite think was there often enough. I think [the counsellor] should have given a fair bit more support because a lot of these students would have come in to her anyway. And this is where I am critical. I don't think Janette put enough time into it herself personally. I think she let other things and the general things, administration of the school and other interests, override what I felt should have been a primary interest of hers. Janette is very, very good at dealing with these students, and talking to them and getting them to do things. And she quite literally didn't have enough time in these two terms to put into these students. It would have made a significant difference if she had. It didn't help that [Pauline] didn't have a phone. And was there on her own too many times. [Susan, Humanities teacher, September]

Related to these issues was Pauline's ambiguous positional status. Had this been an established mainstream curriculum programme and Pauline a subject teacher, one imagines

that she would have had: some respite during non-contact times each week;<sup>32</sup> appropriately supportive professional networks of teacher colleagues who taught the same subject inside and outside the school; and, that her position and work would have been more securely integrated with existing management and curriculum structures within the school. As a casually employed teacher aide in charge of a marginal curriculum programme, and someone whose loyalties and affiliations were primarily to the students, she felt she lacked these. Although the superstructure of support established on her behalf by Janette and colleagues appeared logical and sufficient to them *as* teachers, it clearly did not to Pauline who was unable to access and operate it as intended. She turned instead for support to those adults in community health and welfare organisations whose position and goals appeared to coincide more closely with her own:

It's good to have the company in there too. A lot of the time last term I was there by myself. It's hard going when you're there by yourself with sixteen students, that the other teachers in the school can't handle. Or supposedly can't handle. That's why they're in the At Risk programme. [Pauline, Teacher aide, July]

The support from within the school wasn't too great which isn't very good to say. My support was mainly from agencies from outside the school which was good for me. They were my main support people. [Pauline, Teacher aide, December]

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we examined the introduction of an entrepreneurial or marginal curriculum offering outside established curriculum structures at Kauri. Although this achieved some real successes for the students involved, without established leadership roles and structures within a clearly defined workgroup, the staff experienced unhelpful isolation from each other, found it difficult to maintain the philosophical direction of the programme, and were frustrated by the breakdown of basic control systems.

In seeking to understand better how individuals and groups of teachers develop their practice, it seems that the seemingly mundane rituals associated with being a teacher and a member of a coherent epistemological group within the school may provide a secure and relatively predictable occupational context within which such development may take place. In this chapter, these necessary continuities of practice were absent. While Janette and colleagues attempted to establish from the outset an appropriate 'philosophy' and curriculum structure within which the At Risk programme could take place, and to staff it as

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<sup>32</sup> In their feedback, Janette and the Assistant Principal pointed out that Pauline was entitled to non-contact time but chose to remain with the students throughout the teaching day for the duration of the programme. It is difficult to imagine many secondary teachers giving up their non-contact time in this way. It also implies a high level of emotional commitment to and advocacy for these particular students on Pauline's part.

far as they could with individual subject specialist teachers, it did not in practice operate as smoothly or as coherently as they hoped.

In part this was attributable to Pauline's lack of experience as a teacher. Although she was able to empathise with and satisfy some of the affective and basic human emotional needs of the students in the programme (and to do this considerably better than some of the teachers), the structuring of learning within the demands of the official curriculum proved very difficult for her as did the exercise of classroom management and the maintenance of the school's control systems.

However, the qualified and experienced teachers also struggled to cope with the pedagogic challenges posed by a disaffected group of adolescent students. In this regard, it seemed that the structures of occupational certainty, epistemic identity and interpersonal relationships that are most typically found in subject department workgroups would have benefited the teachers working within the programme. Not only might these have provided the forum within which the 'philosophy' of the At Risk programme could regularly have been articulated and revisited, but also, perhaps, they would have provided the necessary impetus and reservoirs of experience for the pragmatic and collective resolution of the control-education dilemmas faced individually by each of the teachers who came into contact with the students.

With these possibilities in mind, we turn next to an examination of how a group of teachers in the science department at Totara developed 'creative responses'<sup>33</sup> to the challenges posed by the introduction of Unit Standards based assessment while, at the same time attempting to further the development of the department and its members in other priority areas.

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<sup>33</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994, p. 17.



## CHAPTER NINE

### ASSESSMENT, PEDAGOGY AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AT TOTARA

In this chapter we examine a curriculum focused development priority in the science department at Totara. During 1996, the department was introducing standards based assessment in a number of courses. The discussion here focuses on the departmental and wider institutional cultures within which the initiative occurred, the collaborative manner in which the development work itself took place, the department's assessment of the worth of Unit Standards, and the effect of the additional workload on the other development priorities that also engaged the workgroup's attention during the course of the year.

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the analysis is of the curriculum focused development priority within the large science department at Totara. During 1996, the department was involved in the school-based trial of Unit Standards in several courses and year groups. The initiative took place within what the Principal, Marian referred to as a "proactive" professional culture where staff were keen to be involved with curriculum innovation. Equally, the initiative took place within a workgroup culture that had recently and successfully accommodated a major change in the assessment of science as a result of changes to their national curriculum prescription.

The analysis in this chapter considers the workload issues involved in the initiative, the relationship between the practitioners in the department and the trainers and bureaucrats in the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and the effects of this initiative on other development priorities within the department: during 1996, the department had also agreed to provide one of its members, Nina, with the opportunity to introduce a novel pedagogy within her junior science classes with a view to its wider dissemination among the workgroup. In addition, Adam, the HoD, wanted to ensure the successful socialisation of a new science teacher within the department.

#### TRIALLING A NEW METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The major development focus for the year within Adam's large science department was the introduction of unit standards based assessment in a number of courses in fifth and sixth form.<sup>1</sup> He and his colleagues had chosen to participate in the national trials of NZQA accredited assessment modes in 1996 while, simultaneously, continuing to assess and prepare students for "norm referenced"<sup>2</sup> School Certificate and Bursary examinations and Sixth Form Certificate.

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<sup>1</sup> The only written feedback received was from Fay, the new science teacher, as a result of which the final section of the chapter was rewritten.

<sup>2</sup> Adam, HoD Science, November.

Adam's concern was not with unfamiliar or novel aspects of curriculum content, pedagogies or assessment per se, nor with the quality of training and ongoing support provided by the external agency<sup>3</sup> in the course of the trial, but quite specifically with technical ("method") and collegial (the "environment") aspects of the "coordinated" in-school Unit Standards writing, moderating and piloting process adopted by the workgroup:

... it's really to do with how much support they think they've got in terms of putting them in place. Just looking at the system to see if they feel it's been implemented the best way. I would hope that what we've got is a coordinated system where nobody's quite sure who was the idea behind the push for the format and the way we're doing it. And [that] they just feel that they're doing it the best way possible, and that's the way it is happening. And that it's useful to them. OK, there's the work loads involved, which is another thing, but the actual process of developing is useful to them. And the environment in which they're working - the method - I suppose the environment that's being created for the development of them, and the method we've followed is useful. Well, I suppose the work load really is an aspect as well, isn't it? (Adam, HoD Science, March)

Being a trial, the workload for the introduction of Unit Standards was additional to other routine staff, subject specific curriculum and whole school development work that was taking place concurrently within the science department. Nina was selected by her colleagues to receive a one year PR/MU salary increment to undertake what she called an "accelerated learning" initiative in her junior science classes. Adam, himself, also had to monitor the induction and socialisation of Fay, an experienced social science teacher at the school who had recently completed a science degree and had started teaching junior science in the department. As in the other schools, these initiatives were undertaken within specific, historically located institutional and workgroup contexts that encouraged and constrained professional practice in particular ways. Thus before we discuss the introduction of unit standards based assessment within the science department during the course of the 1996 school year, it is necessary to describe the institutional and workgroup cultures within which these developments took place.

#### *A 'Proactive' School Culture*

... they've been in every trial except for maths in the first year, and maths is on this year. People are waiting for their unit standards to come out, so they can get it. They don't like being behind, so it's a really proactive and hardworking school. [Marian, Principal, August]

As the recently appointed principal and someone new to the school, Marian was struck by the innovative work ethic that existed throughout the school. Consistently Lillian, Adam, William described their curriculum and workgroup development priorities against a backdrop

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<sup>3</sup> All Science teaching staff undertook three days initial training provided by NZQA in December 1995, and worked with NZQA national staff and moderators during the in-school phase in 1996.

characterised by extended professionalism<sup>4</sup> among their colleagues. Typically these were hardworking, creative, energetic classroom practitioners who uncomplainingly accepted their share of the collegial work of the subject department. Marian, herself a chemist and former HoD Science, had identified particular workgroup strengths and weaknesses in the science department sub-culture:

Adam is a wonderful person - I really do enjoy him. Really sensible, really sound and manages the department well. Really respected by staff, so I think it could be more cohesive - but scientists - although they are used to being in one another's rooms are also quite individual. I think that's real. There's just such a busy life, you've got to prepare practicals, and put stuff away, and it's got other demands that are not in other curriculum fields. They've got some really talented - Nina could be teaching everyone in that department some wonderful skills and somehow or other they're not using her. Adam's given her the responsibility, and a PR to develop stuff, but my fear is she'll develop it and it won't go beyond her. [Marian, Principal, August]

The archetypal occupational tension between autonomy and collegiality<sup>5</sup> was given local colour here. The department worked well and was sensitively led but "could be more cohesive". The unique demands of curriculum delivery and workgroup organisation in secondary school science teaching spawned a subject specific form of approved privacy<sup>6</sup> or individuality that limited the time available for collegial collaboration. And, with regard to the accelerated learning initiative, Marian shared Nina's concern that such individuality may well militate against the ready dissemination of novel, but potentially threatening pedagogies ("wonderful skills"). Equally, Marian commented earlier in the interview that the science department was "into all of the new developments in science, which is too much"

Nevertheless, as Marian observed, the workgroup functioned effectively and, for our analysis of the efficacy of the unit standards trial, it is important to acknowledge that this strong<sup>7</sup> department cohered. It was both disposed toward and organised for collaborative approaches to curriculum development. Moreover, it exuded a strong sense of collective, relaxed, "enthusiastic" solidarity which has its foundation in the established weekly departmental meetings:

**Wendy:** We decided these meetings on a weekly basis started up 3 years ago? - 4 years ago? 4 Years ago we decided there was no way we were going to keep up with curriculum changes

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<sup>4</sup> Hoyle, E. and McCormick, R. *Innovation and the teacher*, E203 Units 29 and 30. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994; Little, J. The persistence of privacy: autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers' College Record*, 1990, 91(4), 491-518.

<sup>6</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Hill, D. The strong department: building the department as learning community. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1995, 123-140.

unless we had a meeting. We decided that lunch time was too short because we get 30 minutes and it's very stressful. You've left one class, going to another, and the only way we were ever going to keep up was to have a meeting. It has been weekly for 4 years. It goes to 4.30pm or quarter to five, we're meant to finish at 4.30 but sometimes we run over time a bit. But that has been absolutely essential to keep up with all the - it started off not for unit standards obviously, but for the changes in the curriculum.

Dave: I only teach one subject, this year, one class that's in a Science subject that's below a 6th form, so I can keep track of what's going on in the other areas. I've got a fourth form only this year - I haven't had a 5th form since I've been here, but I feel like I know what's going on. I know the curriculum and I know the resources that are available and I know how its being taught. I would be just as happy to go and teach it next year. I know where the resources are and I know what everyone else is doing. So its good if you're not teaching across the whole range of classes as well - because you know what's going on. Otherwise I think you become marginalised I think if you didn't teach a lot junior science [if] we didn't have these meetings.

Margaret: And they're used for any new equipment that people have got or toys.

Wendy: "Show and tell".

Margaret: Yes we have these wonderful show and tells where people bring along their latest discovery from the toy shop, or science experiments, or anything they've made that works, or

Dave: That's better than seeing a little drawing on a bit of paper where someone says there is this new resource in a box, you might want to go and look at it. But if you see someone being enthusiastic about it, you go away and use it the next day just about.

Adam: You immediately think, ask, how did you use it? If you've got doubts about the way to use it, you ask straight away and so by the time you leave the meeting I think the resources that are put in front of you are useful.

Nina: And also school stuff

Maraaret: Day-to-day running. You sometimes have the opportunity to unload things that are bugging us about room changes and things.

Wendy: We talk about the labs - the labs upstairs which after they had been supposedly renovated, the problems which are still ongoing.

Nina: And "any other administrative decisions that affect our science teaching" [general laughing]

Dave: Like making sure our Board meeting knows all about it. That's actually quite good seriously, because if you just have little individual groans, but we respond quite quickly as a department thing. You can say "the science department thinks this", and you know that they do, because in the last seven days we've actually all agreed that that's what we think.

Maraaret: We're all very good at sharing things.

Wendy: So we're all behind Adam, saying to go and tell them that.

Nina: like the self-appraisal last week got short shift, and you recorded that the next day.

Adam: We short circuited what was, the staff appraisal came as "Try it with one member of your department" and I modified it to give it to everybody, so at the end of the week you could go along and say that everybody thinks its unsuitable.

Wendy: What was the feedback on it, what did they say? "They"!

Adam: They haven't said anything yet, we're waiting, but I don't think they've got a good response from anybody.

Zena: No I know the English department responded with a swift kick.

Wendy: So that's helpful too, that as a collective group - 10 staff out of how ever many on the staff, we're one of the larger departments, which means that Adam isn't a lone voice.

Dave: Well they are also common concerns, that's the thing. You realise every week that's the same. Concerns are all common ones too.

Adam: You can always go into a forum knowing what the department feels.

Dave: Your HoD's not going to stand up and say that "The science department thinks this ...", and you think "What the .." [laughing].

Zena: "Oh, did we really?" [laughing] [Science department interview, May]

### *A Culture Of Collaboration*

After four years this large group of staff had become very aware of the considerable benefits of working in this way. For Dave, a physicist, it provided a means of keeping "track" of what was

going on in other subject areas and year groups within the department. For Wendy, it was the essential vehicle through which major curriculum change was assimilated and accommodated and, for Margaret among others, the regular communication and discussion of whole school management issues provided a powerful and influential authority of voice for the workgroup as a whole. Additionally, in terms of departmental micro-politics,<sup>8</sup> the approach defined and retained Adam, as HoD, within a mutually accountable collegial workgroup,<sup>9</sup> and not as a directive or managerialist HoD within a more remote whole school management structure. Indeed, the non-hierarchical, collegial ethos of the workgroup was encapsulated in the allocation of teaching loads. In addition to the HoD taking a full ration of five classes:

... we try to spread the teaching load, so that - at a junior level - everybody's got at least one junior class this year. The only time they really specialise is in the seniors. There's very few people teaching say senior bio, and senior chemistry. In fact, I don't think anybody is. They teach fifth form science. And then at the sixth form, they will only teach one science and normally the same science in seventh form. [Adam, HoD Science, March]

Finally, the workgroup's pre-disposition towards collaborative modes of work and curriculum development had been developed and positively reinforced in the preceding four years as the department learned to accommodate prescribed curriculum changes with the introduction of the Science document from the New Zealand Curriculum. Thus, at the point where the introduction of unit standards based assessment was being considered by the workgroup, there already existed a tried and tested, inclusive process of assessment task development<sup>10</sup> characterised by open and "robust criticism":

The curriculum, there was a big change - most of the assessment was basically on knowledge, little bits of, little gems that you had learned and could remember, and then you had to repeat - to the skills. And so we had to change the way we were assessing and what we were measuring so that we were doing far more practical type tests. And looking at the skills - not worrying so much about the context that they were given - but things like drawing graphs, and being able to plan investigations and being able to write up results. It didn't matter what the investigation was about, it was how they actually could structure it and write it up. It was a big change in the way we did things because, before, our skill was chopped up into little topics, you know - physics, chemistry, bio. and this is the important part of this bit, and that's the important part of science. Going much more to the - it blended with the skills. We had to develop

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<sup>8</sup> Ball, S. *The micro-politics of the school. Towards a theory of school organization*. London: Routledge, 1987, chapter nine; Johnson, S. The primacy and potential of high school departments. In M. McLaughlin, J. Talbert and N. Bascia (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1990, 167-184

<sup>9</sup> The workgroup was a stable one. At the time of the research, for example, Adam had taught at the school since 1986 and had been appointed HoD on the internal promotion of the previous incumbent, who had herself taught at the school for seventeen years, to the post of deputy principal.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the national curriculum developments here were described as 'assessment' changes across the department as a whole and were therefore very similar to the collective process required for the introduction of Unit Standards. In contrast, Nina's initiative was described in terms of changing personal pedagogies in the teaching of junior science and proved much more difficult to disseminate across the group.

assessment methods for that because what used to be the most important thing no longer was. It was only 50 percent of what was important. I went to a year long course on assessment. They'd have three or four sessions, and then brought that back to the department, and went through the ways that it could be implemented. We found by writing, by having everybody write assessment tasks that were used by the whole of the department, it meant that they were getting feedback from a lot of staff. Whereas if they'd written them just for their classes, and said it worked for me, you don't get the feedback across the whole department. People are far more focused on making things that are suitable when they know that 8, 9 of their colleagues have to use it. We'd got an environment where people didn't get precious about what they'd developed either. That's a key step cos' people can be quite snitchy about criticism. That was really a thing of making sure the department was quite cohesive in that respect, that you have an environment where you could have robust criticism of what people had done.

Interviewer: Is that unusual, or is that your experience of working in science departments?

Adam: It's hard to say - no I don't think it is that usual. We got around it by saying, if you say you don't like something, you've got to put up your replacement proposition as well so that the writer goes away with something they can work with to incorporate in it. No, I've never worked in another science department where we did it. But I haven't worked through the same number of changes in another science department either. Going to courses, other HoD courses, a lot of HoDs see it as their role to go away and write the material and then give it to the department and then convince them what they've written is suitable. Where I didn't see that as the way to go about it. [Adam, HoD Science, March]

To summarise, the trial introduction of Unit Standards based assessment in the science department at Totara took place within a reportedly innovative and self-confident occupational sub-culture. Weekly departmental meeting provided a focal point for professional discussion, the sharing of ideas and resources and the articulation of a collective workgroup response to whole school management issues.

For Fay the 'novice' science teacher, the weekly meetings were, in fact, considerably more than this, but the personal professional insights they provided was "oblique", incidental and fortuitous:

It has been really the most important event in my week in terms of what I do because I get feel for how they go about their job. I know how a social studies teacher goes about doing their job and a Geography teacher goes about doing their job, in general, but it is in terms of the science teacher managing in the classroom and the sorts of activities they do. All I've had to start off with was a textbook and the scheme so those little details of exactly - it comes out in oblique fashion sometimes as to how they go about it, in their meetings and they have been very important to me. It's been a point of contact with the other people, because they are all busy people too, so they are the key to my development here. [Fay, Science teacher, December]

In order, then, to analyse and evaluate the ways in which the workgroup managed the introduction of Unit Standards based assessment it is important that we understand the existing dynamics of the sub-culture within which these took place. This workgroup culture was one in which an established "method" and "environment" for curriculum change at the workgroup level already enjoyed the commitment and confidence of participating staff. The "robust criticism" that existed was justified by the fact that everyone in the department would use the resources so produced and was also positively mediated by the requirement to put up alternatives. Nevertheless, the extent of this professional collaboration was at least tacitly

delimited. The dynamic collegial processes that existed had emerged to provide for the development of common assessment tasks only. The "show and tell" segments of the weekly departmental meetings were generally understood to be about sharing "resources". That is, they were examples of provisionary or hortative professional advice" and not the more potentially unsettling questioning of personal classroom practice that would sooner or later be required if Nina's pedagogic initiative was to receive widespread acceptance in the junior science scheme. Nevertheless, despite the privacy and individuality characterising personal classroom practice, it would appear to be the case that the workgroup, on the basis of the successful introduction and accommodation of national curriculum prescriptions in science, had developed a valued and workable set of collaborative processes within which their voluntary participation in a national trial for Unit Standards based assessment in the senior school might successfully be negotiated.

### **THE SCHOOL-BASED TRIAL OF UNIT STANDARDS**

In this part of the chapter, I report on the internal workgroup issues of workload and organisation faced by the science department during the trial development of Unit Standards; on the mediating influence exercised by bureaucratised NZQA structures and processes on the professional work undertaken by the teachers; and the teachers' responses to these. In the following section, I consider Adam's evaluation of the trial and its effects on the other two departmental priorities: the accelerated learning initiative within the junior science scheme and the induction and socialisation of Fay, the new member of the science department.

#### *More Bureaucracy And Workload*

**Adam:** It's just the amount of work. Once again, we set it up - I went through and standardised the format of how we were going to present these things and how we were going to record them. [I] put out what I thought was a standardised way of doing it because there's a whole lot of information you've got to present when you present the Unit Standard. I went for using answer sheets as well, because you've got to be able to - students are after their mark - they've got to be able to be re-presented with their corrections. So if you haven't got standardised answer sheets, you'll never find them, the bits. So we went through that - piloted those, and people edited those and we decided which ones we'd stick with. Then we've used those in our writing - we set up a system whereby two people were responsible for each, for one to write it, and a third person would moderate it after they'd written it. That worked quite well. It worked better at the end of last year, when the seniors had gone. You had far more free time for the two people to sit together and discuss it. What we've tended to do now is the two people discuss the basic format of it, one of them goes away and writes it, then they come back and go through it again, and then it's sent to the third one for moderation, and they run ...

**Interviewer:** And the choice of people for particular units, is that on the basis of personal preference, or Hobson's choice, or you're at the top of the list?

**Adam:** It's a bit of both, really. We've tended to put them with people's areas of expertise, but we've also tended to pair - if it's a chemistry unit, we'll put a chemist and a non-chemist

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<sup>11</sup> Harland, 1990 in Galton, M. Teaching, learning and the co-ordinator. In J. O'Neill and N. Kitson (Eds.). *Effective curriculum management. Co-ordinating learning in the primary school*. London: Routledge, 11-19.

together. This is in the fifth form science area. One's a check and a balance on the other. At a senior level they're being written by specialist subject areas. We've tried to mix people up, so that you don't get cliques, you haven't got two people that work best together and have two people that nobody wants to work with at the bottom. Oh, not at the bottom, but struggling through. We've mixed people up so everybody gets a chance of working with somebody different. [Adam, HoD Science, March]

Unlike Eric's department at Rimu (chapter ten), this science workgroup could draw both on established collegial processes and a large internal group of staff with appropriate subject expertise to develop Unit Standards in a relatively straightforward manner, hence Adam's opening remarks: "It's just the amount of work. Once again, we set it up". Much of the workload was bureaucratic, and therefore predictable, and related to the exhaustive, "time consuming" quality assurance requirements demanded by the external accrediting and validating agency, NZQA. Notwithstanding these administrative pressures, the experience of introducing the Science curriculum document, published in 1993, had evidently stood the department in good stead. Thus, the development of units for standards based assessment posed considerable problems of workload but few in terms of professional expertness, not least because any potential difficulties with those who were "struggling through" were obviated by having a large pool of subject specialist staff from which to create pairs or triads of people to develop and moderate the proposed units. Furthermore, in a large science department, the numbers of staff available provided a "check and balance" on the work itself and allowed Adam to "mix" the writing teams to avoid "cliques" developing. Of course, the departmental sub-culture and patterns of weekly meetings also served palliative and preventative functions for the staff involved in writing, moderating and piloting the chosen units, notably in terms of alleviating potential stress and preempting a duplication of workload (precisely the concerns articulated by Eric and Rita at the much smaller Rimu in the next chapter):

Adam: It has been straight forward, hasn't it? It has just been time - a lot of it. Once you've done the first one or two, and even that was sorted out last year really in the training, the actual doing of it isn't difficult other than time consuming really.

Zena: You spend an awful lot of time reassessing and marking. Marking has just multiplied up phenomenally. It just means that you sit down with your pen and you're getting information which is the same as 'marking' in old fashioned language and that takes an enormous amount of time.

Interviewer: So they can just be reassessed whenever they want?

Wendy: No it's just not practical for science, because if we're doing something which is the practical you have to get all the gear, you have to be in a lab - no it just doesn't work like that. We have a bit more structure.

Adam: We use that meeting for deciding how many times they were going to be reassessed and what we were going to do for that. Anything that's going to have variation isn't it? and cause people a lot of stre- a lot of extra work that is not necessary - we've tended to cover here. For the writing of them, for the Bio. ones, Paula and I have found it so much easier to work together initially, because of the way they're written and what particular task you are going to use are not always that clear-cut.

Zena: But then you have to come in the weekends or do it in your holidays, that's when you're doing it isn't it?

Adam: That's what we've found we had to do.

Wendy: It's holiday work - it has been a lot. [Science department interview, May]

The production of units to a customised template and the identification of the most appropriate individual tasks for standards based assessment was a precise and time-consuming professional activity while the bureaucratised assessment and reassessment process itself had "multiplied up phenomenally". The workgroup at Totara found that professionally, "it [is] so much easier to work together initially". Even with this support, though, the burden of "dual assessment", i.e. trialling standards based assessment alongside existing national assessment and accreditation mechanisms, meant that much of the development load became "weekend" or "holiday work". As an aside, this has considerable implications for (i) the health and well-being of teaching staff in secondary schools generally; (ii) the levels of support that are provided for staff by validating and accrediting bodies; and, (iii) particularly in smaller schools and departments, the extent to which it is realistic to expect teachers to want or be able independently to develop their own banks of approved assessment tasks and associated accreditation mechanisms. At Totara, existing collegial processes and previous experience, together with a critical mass of subject specialist staff in the science department, meant that the principal issues in the introduction of standards based assessment were those of actual workload and potential stress. For other workgroups, like those of Tim, Eric and Rita at Rimu, the need for externally provided networks of training, support and expertise was much greater.<sup>12</sup> So too was the possibility that teachers' control over the production of their work could become compromised<sup>13</sup> if they were forced to cede *de facto* control over the production of the assessment tasks themselves to external authorities.

#### *The Quality Of External Support*

At Totara in fact, there was some frustration expressed, particularly by Wendy, both at the quality of initial training and the ongoing support provided during the trial. It was apparent that the workgroup's success was attributable much more to the internal resources of expertise and support they could draw on than to those provided by the hard-pressed external agency. In terms of this contractualised curriculum development relationship between workgroup and external quasi-governmental agency, two crucial tensions were evident in the next two extracts. First, and explicitly, this group of teachers responded disparagingly to the restrictive terminology and

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<sup>12</sup>In chapter eleven for example, at Rimu, Tim who was actively committed to the introduction of standards based assessment from the third form in the English department, debated the merits of purchasing customised assessment units designed by a self-employed educational consultant. Also, in the course of a curriculum development contract undertaken in 1996, Tim and his colleague Helen relied heavily on the external contract facilitator for advice and feedback on their in-school development proposals.

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Apple, 1986, on the deprofessionalisation of teachers and their work. Apple, M. *Teachers and texts. A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. New York: Routledge, 1986.

associated discursive practices of the accrediting and validating body, NZQA. Second, implicit through the account was the way in which NZQA engaged in strategic attempts to manage the trial process, juggling professional and bureaucratic discourses<sup>14</sup> in order to ensure that a politically-driven Heath Robinson trial timetable continued at its frantic "pace".

Interviewer: Did you have some training for writing Unit Standards?

Dave: Three days.

Wendy: Three days, a day apart at the beginning of December, while people were on camp, people were going to Athletics, people were doing all sorts of other things that we'd actually planned to do in Jan - in the middle of the year, we'd made commitments to do things

Zena: That's not standard though. [Wendy: It happened for us] It happened for us, for science, but I know that other subjects like Hort. it certainly wasn't like that. They had theirs spread through the year, they'd have a little practice, they come back two months later and have another little practice and a go in the trial unit.

Wendy: Some of the tasks in our booklets said write a Unit Standard, trial it with your 5th form. Well unfortunately they'd left in November to sit School C. The people running it acknowledged that but the booklet didn't assume that we would have training a day apart, in December.

Adam: I found the training quite all right. I was much better informed at the end of it than I was at the start.

Wendy: It would have been very difficult without it.

Zena: We had double training because we had science and Bio.

Adam: Yes, a lot of us had 6 days of training.

Wendy: Well five, because we missed the first day.

Nina: We missed the first day.

Wendy: We missed the first one of the seven subjects.

Nina: We were exempt from the first day.

[talking over each other]

Adam: So the training was useful but the problem was that NZQA were making it up at the time.

Nina: Those people who took us had only been trained the weekend before.

Dave: Oh no. some of them were twenty minutes or half an hour ahead of us in some things

[talking over each other]

Zena: Holding the phone.

Nina: And on the phone too.

Dave: On the phone.

Adam: They had to have them in pairs because one would be out ringing up to find the answers to the question while the other one was running the next session (others laughing).

Wendy: By the time you got back three days later it possibly had changed anyway.

Zena: And the exemplars aren't very good too.

Nina: Actually we've finally got our, are they "moderated exemplars"?

Wendy: No. We were promised all sorts, like moderated exemplars which haven't ever come about, and then the Chemistry exemplars that we got, and thought we'd use. It says things like - you've got to get 6 out of 7, but there were only 6 examples. And then some of the model answers which aren't called model answers, they're called "evidence", were wrong, so that you've got exemplars to use, but you can't actually just use them, you've got to modify them and make them right.

Dave: I agree with that, because I went to use some of the ones from the Physics, two times went to use some Physics ones, and found that I actually had to reformat and retype it because they were incorrect which is just a [Nina: pain in the neck] symptom of the pace really.

Wendy: Nothing has been checked. [Zena: they haven't been trialled basically] They haven't been trialled, they haven't been checked and then they are given to us as exemplars, but that's the problem because we then have to trial them, we have to check them and rewrite them, we just can't go and think here's a whole bundle of things that we can use as it is, because you can't do that.

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<sup>14</sup> See for example, Smyth and colleagues' analysis of different forms of direct and indirect control that are exerted over teachers' work. Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London: Falmer, 2000, pp. 37-46.

Adam: The training used for the support material has been marginal (Wendy: and late) and the biggest problem has just been the time involved.

Zena: I suppose the most useful thing is being a trial school. Because every Unit Standard we've done, there have been things, little things, that we will shift, change, modify for next year.

Dave: I've just realised that the date is coming up, July, that's not very long.

Zena: That makes a big difference having actually, until you put it in front of the students you just don't really know, especially when it comes to their answers.

Wendy: I've just been doing the Physics one and my students - I mean I don't know what their reading ages are now, but they just don't understand when it says "write a sentence", "write this symbol" - they don't read well enough to do Unit Standards.

Zena: I find, because I'm a bit further ahead than you, now that they've done more Unit Standards, the language you use is the same each time. Now they all know what an SI unit is, they all know how to write a sentence, they're certainly getting better at getting them. My mark book now has got lots of ticks for completed Unit Standards.

Wendy: In the past we've taught to School C., and by the end of the 5th form we've got them up to speed, whereas now we're doing School C. type language and problems or questions, in February, and they're really just slightly grown up 4th formers.

Dave: They're still really at the stage of wanting to (Wendy: play) stick some things together with paper and make some cardboard posters which is jolly good I reckon, but...

Wendy: "Well why can't we do a word find on this Miss?". Well sorry dear its not 4th form. We're trying to do what we used to do at the end of the 5th form, at the beginning of the 5th form and they're just not quite grown up enough really. Not all of them, some of them.

Interviewer: And you can't vary the rubrics at all?

Paula: Well you can't do them all in November - you couldn't.

Wendy: No.

Dave: Especially with exams still there

Wendy: There wouldn't be enough time anyway by the time you've, the amount of assessment we've done is horrendous.

Zena: The marking, it just takes so long to do all the marking.

Dave: I tell you what, why don't we get them all together, and you write this, put all the Unit Standards onto a piece of paper and put everyone in a hall then give them all out.

Wendy: It's hard to mark them, and for the first time in my life I've marked an exam twice. I was quicker the second time. [Science department interview, May]

In the course of the discussion, Adam's comments on the training shifted from "quite all right" to "marginal" and it is the distinction between the two which is important for our purposes. His positive comments, we might reasonably assume, describe the initial conceptual and administrative consciousness raising sessions as a result of which he felt "much better informed". The negative comments related to the tangible, concrete support they were promised for the development of in-school resources and the unwanted additional workloads their non-appearance created for him and his colleagues. Adam's changing analysis was also partly attributable to Wendy's persistent recounting of the recurrent training and information problems encountered with NZQA (to which the others contributed the slapstick anecdote of the trainers who had to work in pairs so that one could stand at the end of a phone to receive answers to questions the practitioners had posed) and her negative experience of trialling the standards with fifth form students.

Her account, then, contained negative evaluations of both classroom and administrative aspects of the trial and illustrated well how the workgroup as a whole coped and overcame the problems presented by the lack of adequate "support material" and "exemplars" from the external agency. Thus it was not surprising that, in addition to the routine issues of adaptation

and uncertainty<sup>15</sup> that accompany any curriculum innovation, their collective experiences during the trial depicted a constant discursive tension between, on the one hand, the rationalistic assessment model and accompanying technicist demands of the validating and accrediting agency (e.g. "the language you use is the same each time"); and, on the other hand, the emerging, detailed and applied, assessment craft knowledge<sup>16</sup> or expertness among the staff involved in writing and trialling units in their classrooms with live students (e.g. "now we're doing School C. type language and problems or questions, in February, and they're really just slightly grown up 4th formers"). Indeed, given what we have been told of the institutional and departmental cultures operating at Totara, it would be very surprising if this close knit, "proactive" workgroup made up of well-qualified, high achieving subject specialist teachers (who claimed to have previously and successfully introduced large scale national curriculum changes) were not to feel frustrated by the perceived inefficiencies of the training and support programme, nor to question the lack of professional purchase and control they were able to exercise over the work they developed in the course of the trial.

#### *Resisting The Official Discourse Of Assessment*

As the trial progressed, and workgroup confidence and experience developed, the staff clearly became more attuned to the way in which the external agency sought to manage the Unit Standard development process ("The trial schools solve the problems for the trial schools rather than the support people"). By their own admission, they had become cynical about the manner in which their grounded professional expertness and hard work appeared to be routinely exploited by NZQA without reciprocal support. They were, moreover, critical of both this and the alien technicist terminology and practices that pervaded official discourses and which they and their students were required to negotiate:

**Dave:** The impression that I've had is that when the people who support us say they're going to solve a problem, what they in fact do is ask us to solve the problem and then they put it into some sort of standard format and circulate it. The trial schools solve the problems for the trial schools rather than the support people. I don't know if that's the way it was envisaged or intended or whether they're actually trying to give the impression that they are solving the problems, but that's definitely not what's happening.

**Adam:** I think the fax that came for Friday's meeting is basically a list of things they haven't worked out yet, so things like how you're information recording sheets, so they want us to bring along them. I think this is going to happen across the country and they'll just pick from what comes in the best one and send it out.

**Paula:** But they not only pick the best one, they pick the one they can produce. In the exemplars anyway, they are picking very concise Unit Standards to send out, they're not picking long ones (**Dave:** the seven page ones), not the ones like we sometimes produce. They never come out in the exemplars. They are very concise. They are very picky about what they choose.

**Nina:** To save on photocopying etc.

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<sup>15</sup> Fullan, M. *The new meaning of educational change*. Second edn. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Grimett, P. and Mackinnon, A. Craft knowledge and the education of teachers. *Review of Research in Education*, 1992, 18, 385-456.

Paula: I think so.

Dave: We've come to the conclusion in the Physics one that you give them the minimum task to satisfy them - what the absolute simplest minimum task involves but nothing else. So they've ended up being smaller.

Wendy: But see with that first one that I had moderated eventually. They had to draw a [inaudible] diagram, so I put in one example, and the moderator said no it has to be two, so then I thought well that's fair enough. So in my judgement, they had to get one right out of two, and the answer came back that no, they had to be both right. Well if you have to get them both right, why can't one be enough?

Paula: Why not three?

Nina: Well someone said that it had to be a minimum of two, but we couldn't find where it said a minimum of two in the PCs or anything, in the range.

Wendy: Well the Unit Standard didn't say anything so I had one. The moderator said to make two and then I thought well that's okay, draw two and get something wrong and one, you're still going to pass, if you got one right. Oh no, you have to get them both right.

Dave: Go to the regional moderator because that sounds wrong.

Adam: The Maths have got a term for it haven't they, they call it, you've got to repeat it.

Dave: "Sufficiency". We get that in Physics too, although my cynical opinion of that one is that it's the way to deflect critics who say you only have to swat up this little wee bit of the curriculum and then you can forget about it. It is all compartmentalised. So they say you've got to be able to demonstrate "sufficiency". In all the meetings when we've tried to nail people down on what "sufficiency" is they don't reply. They say its down to you, you as a teacher need to be able to show that the kids show this "sufficiency" thing and they won't really define it.

Nina: [sardonic tone] I went to a course on "sufficiency" (general laughing). That woman spoke about "sufficiency" for almost the whole morning and she was [inaudible] at NZQA.

[talking over each other]

Nina: It's a loaded word.

Zena: Well you've found your "sufficiency" wasn't sufficiency, didn't you!

Wendy: And then I thought it just means different things to different people. I've decided. I think my moderator can get lost, I will just stick with what I know, I'll use my "professional judgement", which is another classic term which they hand out. When you ask them a question and they don't unders - that they can't answer or they're not sure about, they say "Well use your professional judgement", so I'm using my "professional judgement" about "sufficiency".

Dave: The opinion seems to be that in fact they don't have to pass the formal to get things in the ... If they can demonstrate "sufficiency" and not pass your formal tests. You can award unit credit and not pass the formal test, but I don't think very many people would do that. [noise on tape] You can tick them off ...

Adam: I think the weakest link in the whole system is the fact that where they do the assessment, you mark it, you hand it back and they have the opportunity to correct it. Now one of the ways that you can record their corrections is by saying they "orally corrected" it. You can just write down beside it - orally corrected. Now there is absolutely no check whatsoever of what you've done. So the standard of what we might accept could be vastly different to the standard that is being accepted somewhere else.

Zena: We have no feedback on that.

Adam: We're sitting here with say sixty percent getting the Unit Standard. Then we may be tighter because there is no concern that nobody's getting it. But if you're where nobody has got it, you're going to try and get at least one or two through aren't you?

Interviewer: So there is no local moderation done .....

Paula: There is moderation but the thing that concerns me is that you don't hear if you are being too tough. You hear if you are not being tough enough, but you don't hear - ever - that you are asking too much, and that's a concern. [Science department interview, May]

In their reflections, the members of the workgroup exhibited a practical, experiential understanding of the way in which the technology of monitoring, self-monitoring and

surveillance<sup>17</sup> operated within Unit Standards based assessment, but, to my mind, only a partial understanding of its underlying homogenising purposes. Thus, in this extract, the workgroup astutely recognised that the more intractable assessment issues were given back to the schools by NZQA to resolve *in situ*. The tactic was routinely presented by NZQA as an opportunity for teachers to exercise what they were told was their "professional judgement" but, as Apple points out,<sup>18</sup> such introspective formulations of professionalism are sanctioned purely in order to allow practitioners to provide solutions to technical conundrums. They do not permit any fundamental, critical questioning of the programme or development process themselves. Consequently, Wendy's assertion that "I think my moderator can get lost, I will just stick with what I know, I'll use my 'professional judgement' " was likely to provide only a temporary respite from the professional frustration she encountered in her dealings with the validating authority. Similarly, this workgroup's experiences taught it that language was used to fragment potential opposition or resistance to the conceptual assessment model, in short to "deflect critics": thus the term sufficiency "means different things to different people". Paradoxically, a specific, elaborately technicist, non-educational lexicon had been coined and deployed by the central agency to provide a veneer of scientific efficiency to assessment processes that were in practice problematic, underdeveloped and poorly understood.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the ways in which control and power operated in the contractual relationship between central agency and individual schools was alluded to indirectly on several occasions in the extract.

The language used by the teachers throughout the extract was very revealing in this regard. It was both significant and symbolic, for example, that contact was maintained via fax - an immediate, 'high-tec', impersonal and intrusive medium used increasingly for rapid communication purposes. The locus of control in the de-personalised relationship lay with the central agency. It was difficult to "nail people down", to get them to "define" or even "reply". Work was "put in" for approval. An "answer came back" to Wendy as a ruling but without explanation or justification. Exemplars were selected by the agency "to satisfy them" according to unstated, and therefore unchallengeable, criteria. Materials produced locally by practitioners that failed to meet these same nebulous criteria disappeared and "do not come out" for general dissemination. Finally, there was neither "feedback" from NZQA to individual schools, nor it would seem, the encouragement of lateral relationships between schools outside the contractualised moderation process. The routine accommodation made by the Physics group of the science department to NZQA's 'strategic unresponsiveness'<sup>7</sup> said much about the covert,

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<sup>17</sup> On the disciplinary effects of surveillance and examination, see Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish. The birth of the prison*. Second edn. Trans. A Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 170-228.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1986.

<sup>19</sup> On the technical shortcomings of Unit Standards, see Elley, W. Unresolved issues in fitting academic courses into the Qualifications Framework. *Delta*, 1996, 48(1), 67-76.

deprofessionalising influence which the agency was able to exert on in-school practices from a distance:

We've sort of come to the conclusion in the Physics one that you give them is the minimum task to satisfy them - what the absolute simplest minimum task involves but nothing else. So they've ended up being smaller. [Dave, Science department interview, May] (emphasis added)

Similarly, Adam had no knowledge of how the term "orally corrected" was being interpreted in other institutions. More generally, the manner in which rigorous self-monitoring was encouraged within the schools was beautifully captured in Paula's Kafkaesque observation that: "You hear if you are not being tough enough, but you don't hear - ever - that you are asking too much".

At this chronological mid point in the trial, then, the accounts of those involved suggested that the development of standards based assessment had proceeded relatively smoothly at Totara, individual and collective workloads notwithstanding. As the trial progressed, teachers and their students reportedly became aware of and responded to the subtle and specific challenges posed by this novel mode of assessment and teachers adjusted their administrative and classroom practices accordingly. Tensions that did exist had their origins outside the workgroup. They arose and were maintained because of (i) the poor quality of exemplar and other support material promised but delivered "late" by NZQA; and (ii) resistance to the imposition of alien vocabulary and accreditation or approval procedures on established professional workgroup practices.

Below, in the final part of this discussion, we shift our locus of analysis to the end of the school year and consider not only the Unit Standards initiative but also the other development priorities that engaged people's attention in the science department during the course of 1996.

## **EVALUATING THE UTILITY OF UNIT STANDARDS**

... dual assessment is a nightmare, particularly with one's norm referenced and one's standards based. [Adam, HoD Science]

One of the problems for the department that arose during the course of the year derived from the need to maintain existing terminal examination based assessment and accreditation regimes while experimenting with and developing Unit Standards that required teachers to periodically assess and record student attainment against a statement of competence (more or less precise). As the workgroup discovered, the two systems did not dovetail readily and this resulted, in effect, in separate parallel assessment mechanisms. Apart from professional curiosity and the

political desire to influence national assessment developments via their involvement in the trial, it is difficult to see why the members of the department should have chosen and later persisted with activities that, on their own admission, added considerably more work to an already stressful occupation.

As Adam acknowledged at the end of the year, from an educational point of view one system would indeed have been preferable. But, assessment and accreditation systems are not developed in a social, political or historical vacuum. With Unit Standards, both political and community uncertainties surrounded the future direction of assessment policy in 1996. The staff in the school needed, therefore, to negotiate differential community and governmental expectations and, in effect, hedge their bets:

We would rather just have one or the other. But the danger is we can stick with Sixth Form Certificate because we think at the moment, once they leave school, that's the one that people are understanding at the moment. Because of things that are happening, the political situation, they are not quite sure of what the lifetime of Unit Standards is going to be. There is still a lot of development to go on so that's why we are staying with Sixth Form Certificate. But we are still going to offer some Unit Standards because we still want to have contact with the system. We still want to know what's going on in this school. [Adam, HoD Science, November]

#### *Unit Standard Strengths And Weaknesses*

The decision to continue to offer "some Unit Standards" made sense. The difficult development work had already been done, after all. Yet, in terms of the principle of Unit Standards based assessment Adam was able to give only muted or qualified support based on their experience during the trial:

People have found them useful. In certain areas they are good, particularly identifiable skills. They are a good way of giving people credit for those. They are quite good in terms of training students to see what you are asked to do, work out what you have to do, and do it on the day. You get the credit for it and so that's quite a useful discipline for them. That's why we stuck with them but in terms of extending capable students or separating them out they're not very good. [Adam, HoD Science, November]

There were a number of obliquely coded comments in his evaluation. Most notable were the related observations that standards based assessment is (a) a "useful" means of awarding "credit" for "skills" demonstrated "on the day" by students who may be "train"ed to "benefit" from such "discipline"; but (b) unlike norm referenced national examinations, standards based assessment fails to sufficiently differentiate between students and does not extend the more capable. (These are, after all, two of the principal outcome objectives of meritocratic compulsory mass schooling). In this sense, Adam was repeating one of the commonly expressed criticisms of standards based assessment criteria (i.e. that they assess and encourage competence not excellence). Also, in terms of the decisions taken about continuation within the department,

he was reinforcing the historical and hierarchical division between vocational training in skills and content based academic curricula, a schism that, ironically, competence based assessment regimes such as the New Zealand Qualifications Framework were specifically intended to overcome.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the trial process provided for the workgroup a nationally recognised vehicle for recording scientific skills and process attainment by some students that previously would have remained unaccredited. And, if we recall, from chapter five, Julia and Isadora's plaintive cry for an alternative to "School C." and a "damn curriculum" which "makes demands that they can't do", this was no mean achievement in a national secondary school accreditation regime dominated for decades by a dysfunctional norm referenced terminal examination system.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the day, Adam was content insofar as the previously established "teamwork" and "standardised" approach to unit development enabled workgroup members to cope with the "horrendous workloads" of Unit Standards writing and marking. He argued that it had "gone quite successfully in terms of getting ourselves through it". However, there had been costs, both financial,<sup>22</sup> human and opportunities lost:

The effect of the workload in developing all these assessments, it cuts down on time that people have got to spend in other areas. There's still been the innovation and people still present things that they are doing, but I don't know if everybody's had the time really to look at what they are doing in junior science and because it comes quite close on curriculum changes that we are still working through. I think the danger is if you load people in too many directions, some things start to suffer. So that's the big concern, to make sure that you're still developing what you do in the junior level. [Adam, HoD Science, November]

#### *The Pedagogical 'Costs' Of The Unit Standards Trial*

The hiatus in "junior science" developments was a reference to Nina's accelerated learning initiative. I have already suggested that because it challenged traditional science teaching pedagogies practised by individuals it was potentially a more threatening workgroup innovation than either Unit Standards based assessment or the earlier changes demanded by a national curriculum shift in emphasis from content to process. Thus, Adam's observation that "because of the Unit Standards workload people may not have been able to embrace it and develop it as much as they otherwise would have", while accurate, did not acknowledge the extent of the challenge "it" posed to prevailing departmental pedagogical norms.

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<sup>20</sup> Hood, D. *Our secondary schools don't work anymore*. Auckland: Profile Books, 1998; Hargreaves, A. *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Openshaw, R., Lee, G. and Lee, H. *Challenging the myths. Rethinking New Zealand's educational history*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1993, chapter twelve.

<sup>22</sup> In terms of the financial cost to the department of taking part in the year-long trial, out of a total department budget allocation of \$14,500, "... it has put our photocopying up by about 3-4,000 dollars. ... so that's 3,000 we couldn't spend elsewhere". [Adam, HoD Science, November]

At a personal level, the initiative proved a spectacularly successful personal achievement for Nina whose objective at the outset had been to fundamentally change her students' conceptions of science:

I have had some fantastic times this year. The best times for me in the classroom have been where they are all doing something different, that they have decided on for themselves and they are just getting such a buzz out of doing that. They're actually learning things they didn't know before, being surprised by their results, and plann[ing] experiments and investigations and that sort of thing. That is really exciting for me and that's why I teach really. [Nina, Temporary MU, December]

The significance of the initiative for Nina lay in the personal reaffirmation of her long held commitment to student-centred learning. This had been revitalised by the holiday course she attended, and endorsed as an important junior school science initiative by her departmental colleagues:

The accelerated learning idea, I'm getting a bit sick and tired of that because it's so overused now. There are people making a lot of money out of running courses on it and all that sort of thing. I have turned off that side of it but to me, it's just making learning fun, making things different so you remember easily, and that works wonders for the seventh form. It's what you tend to do, I think, what a lot of teachers, or some teachers tend to do naturally. I know that I used to do that naturally but having been on that course in the holidays and just with the being given full licence to do it this year, I know that I have really developed that and I'm keen, been given permission to really go for it this year. [Nina, Temporary MU, December]

Despite the personal enthusiasm expressed in such animated fashion by Nina, the initiative, as Marian feared and Adam conceded, had not been "fully embraced" by the workgroup. If truth be told, it had had no effect on junior school science teaching at all and Nina's account below provides at least four possible reasons why the initiative may have exerted minimal influence on department-wide practice:

Last night I had to do my presentation thing in the Science room because that's one of the reasons the Science Department did that. They were quite keen to get other teachers; we have an image problem in Science, the kids hate it. They think it's boring and they think it's mainly writing. That's one side of it, getting me to do these with my classes. Now the trick is to try and encourage other people, but you can't make people do what they don't want to do. I chose some activities to show them last night that weren't that threatening. They were genuinely fun and a much funner way to do things. I chose some things for early next year, so they could see there is another way, you just don't have to go through from page one to whatever.

Interviewer: Is the rest of the department heavily reliant on the textbook?

Nina: Absolutely. There's one or two teachers who veer from it quite a bit but they wouldn't do without it. None of them would do without it. When we re-ordered textbooks that came out. That was last year. This year when it came up again I just noticed it was interesting no-one was prepared not to have books. [Nina, Temporary MU, December]

First, although Nina had the approval of colleagues to experiment in her own classes, the "licence" did not extend to theirs. Thus, as a professional development initiative it was limited to the provision of suggestions and exemplars and the modelling of good practice.<sup>23</sup> Such an approach may well have enhanced Nina's credibility with colleagues but it did no more than this because she could only influence their thinking, not modify their pedagogy with her "presentation thing in the Science room". Second, the manner in which the initiative was organised provided her colleagues with neither structured opportunities nor the requirement to reflect on their own personal practice and, as Nina knows, "you can't make people do what they don't want to do". Third, Nina was working counter-culturally<sup>24</sup> with regard to established pedagogical and epistemological norms in the workgroup, norms that required a lot of student writing and textbook-led teaching approaches. Both of these were, on her account, entrenched classroom practices. Initiatives that threatened these norms were likely to be questioned. While Nina enjoyed the approval of her HoD and workgroup colleagues for the initiative in principle, she had no critical mass of support<sup>25</sup> for radical change: "no-one was prepared not to have books". And, fourth, in response to these powerfully conservative pedagogical norms, Nina adopted a similar approach to the "show and tell" sessions which were a regular feature of the weekly departmental meetings and provided a few activities which "weren't that threatening". However, the point is that the initiative by its very nature was profoundly threatening to established practices. Without a mechanism to break the existing patterns of curriculum organisation and delivery, the likelihood was that any suggested lesson activities would be assimilated by her fellow teachers into their existing pedagogical mindscapes<sup>26</sup> and normal desirable states of activity.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Socialising A New Science Teacher*

The normalising effects<sup>21</sup> of the departmental scheme and textbook were evident too in the way in which Fay became inducted within the department. Although she had taught social sciences in a number of schools, including Totara, over seven years, and therefore might reasonably be defined as a competent rather than a novice teacher:<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Galton, *op. cit.*, 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, G. *Images of organization*. London: Sage, 1986, chapter five.

<sup>25</sup> Fullan, M. Research into educational innovation. In R. Glatter, M. Preedy, C. Riches and M. Masterton (Eds.). *Understanding school management*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1989, p. 197.

<sup>26</sup> Sergiovanni, T. Landscapes, mindscapes, and reflective practice in supervision. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 1985, 1(1), 5-17.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, S. and MacIntyre, D. *Making sense of teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993.

<sup>28</sup> Foucault, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 177.

<sup>29</sup> Berliner, 1992, in Galton, *op. cit.*, 1996.

... because it was my first year teaching Science I have got the scheme and I have worked quite closely to that and I have used the textbook because I was told at the beginning "Use the textbook and if you don't deviate from that, you will be fine". So it's fairly clear cut and structured whereas Social Studies has a lot more flexibility. [Fay, Science teacher, December]

Thus Fay was inducted into the, for her, different and comparatively inflexible canons of secondary school science teaching. She explained that she had been advised to follow the textbook because of her lack of experience and knowledge of how best to present material to students. The advice given to Fay emphasised how important the textbook was to the encouragement of commonalities of content, pedagogy and activity within the workgroup.

However, our principal focus in this discussion is the Unit Standards trial and its effects on workgroup relationships and practices. In this regard, just as Nina's junior school curriculum initiative received less attention than it deserved as a result of the NZQA trial, so too did Fay, as a newcomer to the subject, in terms of her personal professional socialisation within the science workgroup. The collective workload for the writing and piloting of the written standards came to constitute an all embracing and time consuming set of practices for those involved during the year. Fay was new to science teaching and consequently, although still a member of the science workgroup, did not participate in its most consuming activity during 1996:

I'm sure, there's always been someone that I could ask if I really needed to ask someone but I felt everyone has been really busy. They have been doing the Unit Standards trial and things like that here and I have always found that everyone is just so busy. So, I have had another department I have been working in so I felt OK about being here.

Interviewer: So if you had to compare the support that you had been given in the Science department with the other department, what would be different about it? Is it just access to people? Or are there more tangible things?

Fay: I think it's communications between me and each department and maybe because they have been busy in the science department with all these Unit Standards. I've thought, oh right they are very busy and they really are too busy to deal with someone new to the Department and who's not full-time and is not part of their circle involved with Unit Standards trialling. I've thought right, they are just too busy and I have got another area where I can turn to if I need support and people who I have got to know really well, who I can turn to if I need supporting. [Fay, Science teacher, December]

In this last extract, the word "busy" was used six times in rapid succession to describe Fay's observation of the frenetic workloads of her new colleagues. Fay's personal experience of being outside the group of science staff involved with the major workload of Unit Standards contrasted both with the way in which Marian, Sophia and established workgroup members described the collaborative and mutually supportive professional relationships within the department throughout their interviews; and the evidence of my informal observations of prep-room, weekly meeting and staffroom interactions. Thus, Fay's experience not only illustrated, from outside the established workgroup, the demanding effects of Unit Standards writing and development on collective workloads; it also confirmed the extent to which this one initiative

dominated and subordinated other essential curriculum and workgroup development activity within the department. As Adam observed:

... the danger is if you load people in too many directions, some things start to suffer. [Adam, HoD Science, November]

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the school year, Adam and his colleagues had identified three important work-related priorities: the induction of a new teacher within the epistemological tradition of secondary school science; experimentation with new pedagogies and curriculum delivery in the junior school and the trialling of a new form of assessing and recording students' learning in the senior school. The existing culture of the workgroup was broadly collegial and collaborative and the staff had enjoyed very recent successful experience of introducing complex, prescribed curriculum and assessment change. Equally, as a group they could draw on huge reservoirs of enthusiasm, epistemic expertise and the 'expertness' that derived from their previous experiences of curriculum change. In short, they appeared to have in place the successful pre-conditions to handle successfully their three identified priorities.

During the course of the year, the trial of Unit Standards assessment, although technically straightforward, came to dominate the work, energies, thinking and meeting time of all the staff involved. As a result, the other two development initiatives were given less attention than they, or the teachers involved, deserved or needed if they were to succeed. Ironically, had Fay been moderately more experienced as a science teacher, she would no doubt have been intimately involved with the development and writing of the standards that so heavily engaged her new colleagues' attention. In this sense, her induction and socialisation might well have been achieved without any difficulties. Fay would, one assumes, have quickly become one of the group.

However, it is difficult to conclude the same about the challenge to existing pedagogies, norms and routines that Nina's initiative would undoubtedly have posed had it been more to the fore. The easy collegiality and collaboration, even the "robust criticism" that marked the writing and trial of unit assessment tasks in demanding circumstances, threatened no-one's personal practice and classroom norms. Nina's initiative undoubtedly would have done simply by encouraging staff to move away from the familiarity and comfort of text-book structured teaching. Thus, while we may speculate that "proactive" groups of staff in subject departments in secondary schools may readily collaborate on the development and production of the increasing number of school-based assessment, record keeping and administrative accountabilities they now face, it would appear from the limited evidence of this chapter, that

pedagogical change among groups of teachers may still be considerably more difficult to achieve and, if nothing else, needs the active support and focused involvement of both teachers and the HoD.

In the next chapter, we complete our examination of the enactment of curriculum leadership priorities during 1996 by looking at staffing issues in a small rural secondary school. This provides a useful contrast with the processes and issues faced in this chapter by the larger workgroup at Totara.

## CHAPTER TEN

### SUPPORTING STAFF AT RIMU

In this chapter, we complete the in-depth analysis of three development priorities identified by the curriculum leaders in the study during 1996 by examining the discursive practices of support for new staff that existed at Rimu. The chapter considers the institutional context and idiosyncratic occupational culture within which this activity took place, the expectations of new staff as they began their work in the school, and the lack of support and encouragement provided for them. In the second part of the chapter, the lack of support provided is considered against the peculiarly 'small school' pressures experienced by several Heads of Department, with only limited resources at their disposal, to provide normative levels of support to new staff.

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is nominally about the quality of support (human and material) given to new staff at Rimu. In addition, however, the discussion engages more broadly with the coping strategies of teachers and curriculum leaders in a small rural school. Irrespective of its size and the lack of depth of curriculum 'expertise' in some areas and among some teachers, Rimu was required to deliver the same 'broad and balanced' national curriculum as other secondary schools. Like any other school in the country, it operated knowing that periodically it would be held publicly accountable by the Education Review Office for the quality of its curriculum delivery. In terms of the purposes of the study as a whole, this chapter provides an opportunity to explore how teachers and curriculum leaders attempt to develop their 'expertness' in difficult occupational circumstances where normative epistemic and epistemological practices are under constant strain.

When Alice began work at Rimu as Assistant Principal, one of the responsibilities she took over from the previous incumbent was the induction of staff new to Rimu. Having inherited an apparently piecemeal, undocumented approach, she wanted to develop more formal procedures to provide structured and tangible support for incoming staff, be they students, beginning or experienced teachers.

The work-stories told by Ivan, Ruth and Tim in chapter five revealed Rimu to be, in Tim's words, a "challenging" teaching environment. For example, students needed to be taught co-operative skills, their aspirations were perceived by staff to be low and motivation could not be guaranteed even on entry at third form. Considerable parts of each lesson could be spent in ritualised struggles to ensure that homework was handed in. Their accounts suggested also that many classroom teachers were burdened by the multiple administrative and subject teaching responsibilities that characterise employment in small secondary schools. Classroom management, pedagogies and workgroup relations were often

restricted<sup>1</sup> and teaching practice was variable across the school (particularly the lower forms) in terms of formal planning, resource use and evaluation. Yet, teachers were reported to be mutually empathetic and actively supportive of each other with regard to student behaviour. New members of staff were provided, if not always with comprehensive written schemes, with nominated support colleagues, and they had the opportunity to observe established colleagues, such as Tim who were considered to embody good teaching and HoD practice within the school.

These examples give us some indication of both the particular occupational environment that new members of staff encountered on entry to the school, and of the formal and informal support structures that they might expect to be able to access. However, they provide no knowledge of the lived experience of individuals as they learned to negotiate unfamiliar workgroup, staffroom and classroom relationships and in so doing became socialised<sup>2</sup> over time within the various occupational sub-cultures and professional norms at Rimu. In this chapter, I discuss the distinctive features of Rimu's institutional culture using the reflections of an eclectic group of teaching and non-teaching staff on their socialisation. As a counterpoint to this, we consider Eric's analysis of the staff support and related challenges he faced as an established HoD in the same small institution.

## **SUPPORT FOR NEW STAFF**

To the extent that complex human interactions may be captured in a single word, the process of socialisation into Rimu's institutional culture was one of learning to be 'staunch'<sup>3</sup> - masculine, heterosexual, independent and self-sufficient. These were consistent and recurrent themes in the individual accounts and group discussions of recently appointed staff at the school, particularly but not exclusively among the women. This is not to suggest that manifestly gendered attitudes and a lack of human warmth or support for incoming staff were actively maintained and promoted across the institution as a whole by all established staff. Rather, dominant patriarchal<sup>4</sup>, masculinist<sup>5</sup> discursive practices had

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<sup>1</sup> Hoyle, E. and McCormick, R. *Innovation and the teacher*. E203 Units 29 and 30. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as "the development of sets of behaviours and perspectives by an individual as he [sic] confronts social situations". Lacey, C. *The socialization of teachers*. London: Methuen, 1970, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Rout, B. Being staunch. Boys hassling girls. In S. Middleton and A. Jones. *Women and Education in Aotearoa 2*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1992, 169-180. For an explanation of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasised femininity', see Connell, R. *Gender and power: Society, the person and politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985, pp. 183-188. James and Saville-Smith provide a useful analysis of New Zealand as a gendered society. James, B. and Saville-Smith, K. *Gender, culture and power*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989. Hegemonic masculinities within secondary schooling are discussed in Mac an Ghail, M. *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> "Patriarchy operates as a kind of conceptual prison, producing and reproducing organizational structures that give dominance to males and traditional male values." Morgan, G. *Images of Organization*. London: Sage, 1986, p. 211.

become normalised, at least within some staffroom and workgroup sub-cultures. For example, Judith, a former staff member referred to her distressing experience of these as “staff relationships, dynamics and abuse”.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Dominant Sub-Culture*

Over time, a distinctive sub-culture at Rimu had developed to the point where, as we shall see, isolation and distress were, in effect, considered professional ‘virtues’. What Harry called the “insensitivity”<sup>7</sup> of some HoDs was encapsulated in Vera's experience:

I have actually ended up in tears. I asked about the assertive discipline programme which I have found very difficult. I sat down with a certain Head of Department and he made me feel a total failure. I just burst into tears. I got myself together again but I know I'm not a failure. I know I have done really well in here but I just felt devastated for a certain period of time. [Vera, new Commerce teacher, December]

Feedback and support were not offered freely but needed to be “strongly”<sup>8</sup> sought out.

Here are two things that I ought to say, for me and possibly for everybody else. They were the two biggest negatives. They actually take place outside the classroom. The staffroom.<sup>9</sup> Walking into this staffroom, and I have worked in a number of staffrooms and this probably would be the least welcoming staffroom environment that I have ever. There's lots of little power groups all around the place and they always have their own designated little areas. Unless you are assertive or you're confident people like myself and Craig it would be difficult to feel like you belong even if you work separately. We just go ahead and it doesn't make any difference. [inaudible] If you're not that way inclined it would be quite difficult to feel that you were a part of the overall staff because there is nothing really happens in there, regularly enough, to make people feel accepted. I know myself, a number of staff don't come into the staffroom for that reason. That's auxiliary staff as well because they don't feel comfortable. They go somewhere else and I have never really come across that before. The other thing that I see as being a, not so much in my own case but I certainly know that it affects a lot of other people, has been the ... lack of support, the stress or the insensitivity shown by some of the HoDs and senior staff. [Harry, experienced teacher new to Rimu, November]

The ‘difficult beginning’<sup>10</sup> is a typical and largely unquestioned rite of passage or early career phase for beginning practitioners in secondary school classroom teaching. Indeed, Alice herself referred almost affectionately to the formative experience of having to cope, without support, on her own as a beginning teacher in a difficult school. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the extent to which some of Rimu's staffroom and workgroup sub-

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<sup>5</sup> Blackmore, J. Breaking out from a masculinist politics of education. In B. Limerick and B. Lingard (Eds.). *Gender and changing educational management*. Rydalmere, NSW: Hodder Education, 1995, 44-56.

<sup>6</sup> Judith, Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November.

<sup>7</sup> Experienced teacher, new to Rimu, November.

<sup>8</sup> Craig, new HoD, Maori studies programme, November.

<sup>9</sup> The staffroom atmosphere was noted by other newcomers also: "One of the teachers that was here relieving, who has just gone, said to me, 'I have never been in a staff room like this staff room. It reminds me of [an] old folks home, where everyone sits around the outside.'" (Betty, new Para professional, December)

<sup>10</sup> Huberman, M. *The lives of teachers*. London: Cassell, 1993.

cultures appeared, as a matter of course, to demand and inculcate independence and self-sufficiency among all its members who were new to the institution.

Harry explained this requirement in terms of the need to be "assertive" and "confident" (to which he and another male colleague were "inclined"). However, his analysis, albeit empathetic, glossed over the way in which the dominant staffroom sub-culture marginalised or excluded staff who could not or did not choose to conform with such narrow behavioural norms. Indeed, there was enough in Harry's comments (for example, the observation that "auxillary staff" go elsewhere) and the experiences of the women interviewed to suggest that the dominant institutional sub-culture was profoundly gendered and patriarchal. What Harry and Craig called "assertiveness" was, arguably, the celebration, reinforcement and valorisation of staunch behaviour. The likelihood that this was so was reinforced by the experiences of Betty, on her own admission someone who was inclined to be gregarious, not "timid and shy":

I honestly think the stuff is just a time factor thing but I also did feel it was really hard to integrate myself into the staff when I came, very hard. I'm actually really quite an extroverted person, so I don't have a problem. I'm not timid and shy, but I don't want to push myself. I just wanted to take it slowly especially when I wasn't sure. I know schools really have a quite a hierarchy, so I didn't rush and I took it quite slowly. Every time a staff member asked me to do something, I did it well and then I would go the extra mile as well. I just was trying to establish my credibility a little slowly [rather] than rushing in and saying, well, give me a break, I'm an OK person. But it took time, two terms, which is 20 weeks of being here to feel comfortable. Perhaps they could have been a bit more friendly, perhaps it was my problem, as a new person, who knows but I feel fine [now]. Because I had those problems I have tried very hard to be supportive of Vera and also Sharon. I have invited her to my house and done things like that for her because I know it's been hard. The staff, I look at who's somebody who has come from overseas with no friends. She can do with all the friends. I don't know how many of the other staff have put themselves out for her in that respect, whereas they should have thought of that. It's always the same teachers I presume. [Betty, new Para-professional, November]

### *Learning To Cope*

It is significant in terms of the analysis of the socialisation process at Rimu that someone who perceived herself to be confident and outgoing, and attentive to teaching colleagues' needs should nonetheless have taken half a school year to feel "fine" or settled within the institution. In addition, the coping strategies adopted by Betty and others were themselves revealing of the manner in which they individually and collectively had to look outside established institutional, staffroom and workgroup sub-cultures to find adequate sources of personal and professional support.

Consistently, the newly appointed women remarked that, apart from Alice, it was difficult to find someone ready to listen to their concerns and with whom they felt comfortable enough to disclose their experiences and difficulties:

I found too that when you did ask for help with the kids I soon worked out there are certain people you don't talk to about your problems. I boiled it down to, Alice was the only

reliable person I could find to talk about the problems with students or otherwise it was turned back on me. [Vera, new Commerce teacher, December]

They all referred" to partners or friends outside the school or teaching colleagues in other institutions in their attempts to cope. In response to administrative and collegial indifference, then, we can also see the emergence of a feminised sub-culture or network of mutual personal support as Betty recognised and empathised with the isolation of Vera and Sharon. (Indeed, it is no coincidence that since her appointment, Alice, rather than the officially nominated buddy teacher or HoD, appeared to have become an important source of support for many newly appointed members of staff.) Moreover, Betty observed that not many staff "put themselves out" for newcomers.

This claim was repeated in the comments of other newcomers but, while it is reasonable to argue that certain, mostly masculine, qualities were informally valorised, it would be wrong to suggest that established staff were universally chauvinistic and completely insensitive to the needs of newcomers in the first crucial weeks and months of their employment within the school.<sup>12</sup> As Betty commented, much of the insecurity and discomfort felt by newcomers was attributable to inadvertent thoughtlessness (i.e. "they should have thought of that") as opposed to active sexism:

... if you have a question, most of the staff will help you. I think, reflecting on it more after I was finally able to blow up a little bit, they really don't have much time. But I still say that it only takes you one second to smile at someone and say, "How are you?". [Sharon, new Teacher in charge of Art, December]

As Sharon discovered, and pointedly stated, at Rimu everyone was very **busy**.<sup>13</sup> This may seem an innocuous enough observation but in a small secondary school, extreme busyness (within a profession that is characterised<sup>14</sup> by high and increasing levels of distress and workload) has marked effects on the quality of both human and professional relationships. Thus, at **Rimu** it was routinely assumed that newcomers like Sharon would

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<sup>11</sup> Nias, J. Reference groups in primary teaching: talking, listening and identity. In R. Glatter, M. Preedy, C. Riches and M. Masterton (Eds.). *Understanding school management*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988, 293-303.

<sup>12</sup> Among this group, the most difficult rites of passage associated with socialisation at Rimu appeared to be of relatively short duration. Interviewed on their own after the initial group focused interview at the end of the school year, Betty, Vera and Sharon, for example, all stated that they felt more comfortable and established within the body of staff. Arguably, of course, they had learned to cope by identifying particular members of staff in whom they could confide and the development of an informal mutual support network among the new staff themselves. There was, in contrast, little evidence that established staff had modified their practices or, indeed, that staffroom or workgroup norms had successfully been challenged by the end of the school year.

<sup>13</sup> This echoes Fay's observations as a newcomer to the science department at Totara in the previous chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers. A national survey*. Final report. Massey University, Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December; Harker, R. Gibbs, C., Ryan, H., Weir, K. and Adams, D. *Teacher 2000 Project: An international study of teacher satisfaction, motivation and health. The New Zealand report*. Massey University College of Education, 1998, September.

request information or help if and when they needed them. Equally, the softer, more feminine aspects of socialisation such as a smile, or genuinely solicitous personal exchanges - were, in her experience, absent from daily routines. In order to cope as an individual, Sharon's analysis suggested that she, like others, found ways to accommodate and position themselves with regard to this dominant sub-culture - at least until the group interview in the final weeks of the school year when she "was finally able to blow up a little bit".

### A Challenge To The 'Staunch' Sub-Culture

Typically, socialisation occurs when individuals learn to negotiate and position themselves within a new and unfamiliar occupational environment and its constituent social practices. In this instance, as Eric, a long established HoD in the school, observed, the sheer numbers of new staff coming into the school in 1996 presented a challenge to the prevailing, staunch sub-culture and the norms of self-sufficient, independent, coping behaviour this demanded:

... "They are an interesting bunch" might be the way of putting it. They are a significant group as well in terms of number. We have put new staff in over the years, one or two per year and then they sort of become part of the college culture but this is a group that isn't [inaudible], they're very interesting as a group. [Eric, HoD Science, November]

The introduction of "one or two per year" is unlikely to constitute a threat to an established institutional culture. In 1996, though, the appointment of Alice, an outsider, to the position of assistant principal, with responsibility for induction, coincided with the influx of a sizeable cohort of seven<sup>15</sup> new teaching and one para-professional support staff member to Rimu. This created both pressures and the opportunity for change and, just as significantly, legitimated challenges to the prevailing socialisation norms, in particular to what two of the new male staff labelled the "need to be assertive people":

I think that comes out very strongly, that people who come to Rimu are expected to be, need to be assertive people. All that support probably is going to be lacking unless you're seeking it out strongly yourself. In my case I never really had an induction at all, when I was told to come to this room, I had to ask where it was. [Craig, new HoD Maori studies programme, November]

### Embedded Sexism

In contrast to Craig's relaxed acceptance of and in the prevailing staunch culture, many of the women in this sub-set of interviews felt frustrated, angry and hurt by their encounters. As Judith noted in her resignation letter to Alice, at Rimu she had "become invisibilised and dehumanised"<sup>16</sup> by the social and professional norms that obtained among some staff (and whose modelling behaviour, according to her, had been appropriated by some senior

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<sup>15</sup> The Ministry of Education database shows a full-time-equivalent teaching staff establishment of twenty six for 1995 at Rimu, thus the newcomers comprised nearly a quarter of the staffing entitlement.

students). More specifically, aspects of the hegemonically masculine, staunch culture were experienced in differing institutional arenas by Sharon, Betty, Vera and Judith.

They don't really think about anything. They are really out to lunch a lot of the time. I had to deal with a sexual harassment case last week, involving myself, and then there is another sexual harassment case at the school between some students. Everyone was put into their houses and split up into boys and girls because there was a talk about it, because things were just getting pathetic at the school. You deal with it a lot anyway but then I had teachers making jokes about that lecture right in front of me. I finally had to say, when one actually directed a comment to me, just mindlessly, so thoughtlessly, that that was still a sensitive issue and please don't joke about it in front of me. But to me they never even think about things like that. I think they are so wrapped up in their own little world that they are just going straight ahead and they can't diverge at all. But, there is some really nice people. Once they clue in something happens and they clue in, oh yes, she's new here. She doesn't know what's going on. [Sharon, new Teacher in charge of Art, December]

Sharon's narrative contained several illuminating strands. First, having to "deal" with sexual harassment was a feature of her gendered occupational existence at Rimu and regularly had to be negotiated ("you deal with it a lot anyway"). Similar "case[s]" occurred among students and it was only to be expected that the school would take active steps to address inappropriate student behaviour. The school's intervention strategy of putting students into pastoral groupings separated by gender in order to "lecture" them could equally be interpreted as enlightened or conservative.<sup>17</sup> However, the noteworthy strand of Sharon's account, in terms of Rimu's hegemonically masculine, staunch culture lay in the reported response to the official intervention of some male staff members. Clearly, they felt sufficiently immune either from tacit disapproval or direct censure to direct comments "mindlessly" and "thoughtlessly" to their new female colleague.

Second, and related to this, was the implication that the hegemonic masculinist staffroom sub-culture was rarely challenged from within. It was, for example, the students who were given the "lecture" but not the staff. The dominant sub-culture existed as a "little world" microcosm that did not encourage individuals to either question, reflect or "diverge". Moreover, Judith's damaging personal experience in classrooms as well as the staffroom led her to suggest that the 'alinearising' socialisation rites that existed among some adults in the staffroom were appropriated and reproduced by some students:

It is also my belief that some staff at Rimu set up new staff to fail, at whatever level, in order to boost their own self esteem. I was continually being told that Rimu was a difficult institution to teach at and required a special type of teacher and I do not dispute this. However the alienation of new staff by existing staff sets up a model which is readily adopted by students to further alienate and sabotage new staff. As in the staff model this falsely boosts students self-esteem and gives them power at the expense of new staff. [Judith, Year One teacher, Letter to Alice, November]

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<sup>16</sup> Judith, Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November.

Third, the staffroom culture, like that in any secondary school, was not homogenous. As Sharon has found, there were "some *really* nice people" with whom it had been possible for her to establish comfortable professional and personal relationships. There was, then, as one might anticipate, a complex of competing norms and behavioural constraints operating within interconnected staffroom, workgroup and institutional sub-cultures. Dominant among these was a sub-cultural text of staunch socialisation.

If we draw together the common elements of the various experiences recounted in these work-stories, we may reasonably conclude that this staunch socialisation of newcomers was actively practised by a limited number of more established male staff. It was, in turn mimicked by a certain proportion of students, and tacitly accepted by some of the most senior staff in the school. As such, it was misrecognised and consequently condoned by others as a necessary rite of passage associated with learning to teach at Rimu and thereby becoming "a special type of teacher". Furthermore, it appeared to have been differentially experienced by most **men**<sup>18</sup> and women newcomers.

The arrival of Alice to a senior position within what appeared to be an established patriarchal structure provided a novel emotional outlet and professional source of collegial, empathetic support for new staff members. Equally, the arrival of a significant number of new staff in the same school year enabled them as a loosely-knit group to identify and empathise with each others' experiences and to find ways to support each other that circumvented the prevailing norm of self-sufficiency. Yet, at the same time, the enduring influence of the staunch culture, and the pervasive, gendered attitudinal norms and behaviours this perpetuated was considerable:

I will say that Ivan does support me when I ask him, but on issues of sexual harassment, he's been really weak. I finally had to put my foot down this last time and say, "Look this is the third time, please know that I can't". I just said "I can't take any more". Literally, threatening to leave unless something is done or I would have taken it to the police if they hadn't done something, so just really ridiculous. [Sharon, new Teacher in charge of Art, December]

A senior staff member openly commented on my sexuality to another staff member in front of me. [Judith, Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November]

I have been terrified at the two meetings I have had because, call it sexual harassment if you like, but he puts me down like this. He calls me a girl and refers to Alice and me as the two girls in this department. I suppose it's quite a privilege really but, perhaps behind my back I'm an old girl. [Vera, new Commerce teacher, December]

These independent stories of gendered experiences at Rimu straddled a number of interrelated power relationships in which a hegemonic, sexist sub-culture was both tacitly

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. Rudduck, J. *Developing a gender policy in secondary schools*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> But not all. For example, John, a Year One teacher for a number of reasons manifested what Connell (op. cit., 1985) would call a form of subordinated masculinity, i.e. lacking in self-confidence and unassertive. He struggled to establish himself both with some staff and some students.

and explicitly maintained. Sharon occupied the ambiguous (in terms of status and affiliation) positions of both Teacher in charge of Art, the only specialist art teacher, and a newcomer to the school. She acknowledged that senior management colleagues willingly provided professional support for her on request with regard to networking, professional development and classroom discipline:

I was having problems with that class. Alice arranged that she would come in one period in a cycle and another support worker would come in the two other periods. Before that happened, I would run around and say to different people, could you please pop into my class at this particular hour because I have [third form class] and it's very difficult for me. Ivan even came in. The Principal even came in. I had, one day, the Principal and the Vice-Principal come in and that was really good support. Although I was not getting so much as quickly from the other people I was getting it from the top and I really needed that." [Sharon, new Teacher in charge of Art, December]

However, Ivan was, on Sharon's account, far more circumspect in dealing with sexual harassment.

Judith's experience of having her sexuality "openly commented on" suggested that this sexist sub-culture at Rimu was not only masculine but aggressively heterosexual and that the "dehumanising" of junior women staff by *some* senior colleagues was legitimated and encouraged by prevailing hierarchical and patriarchal norms. The normalised subordination of women extended to workgroup relations in an unspecified number of subject areas within the school. For example, in Vera's department, both she and Alice (a senior member of staff who was nominally superordinate to the HoD in the school hierarchy) were routinely defined as "girls" in positions of 'emphasised femininity'.<sup>19</sup>

These explicitly gendered and sexist practices were undertaken, it must be emphasised, not universally but by *one or more* senior staff, *some* HoDs, *some* staff and *some* students.

We need to consider, therefore, the incidental effects of these legitimated norms on other socialisation practices within the school and the related influence of the latter on both newly appointed members of staff and, in the case of the analysis below, established heads of department. After all, explicitly sexist behaviours were reportedly manifested by only a minority of staff. "Most" colleagues would provide support on request and, apart from Judith who "resigned after only two terms", the other interviewees, both male and female, had reached the point at the end of the school year where their working situations were at worst tolerable, and in most cases enjoyable. Yet, although aggressively heterosexual masculine norms were openly espoused by only a small number of established staff, the other element of Rimu's staunch culture, i.e. self-sufficiency, was deeply embedded in the recurrent patterns of both induction, administration and personal professional practice across the staff as a whole.

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<sup>19</sup> Connell, op. cit., 1985.

### *The Expectation Of Teacher Self-Sufficiency*

In terms of the socialisation of new members of staff at Rimu, I want briefly to examine three ways in which an expectation of self-sufficiency substantively influenced routine professional interactions within the school. Building on this, in the final section of this chapter we then consider the normalised effects of institutionalised self-sufficiency on the roles and behaviours of established heads of department, with particular reference to Eric.

#### 1. Induction

I was never trusted with the keys to start with. I had to get ringing (name) the Head of Department to say I was coming out on a certain time of the week before school started, so that he had control over the room. In fact my first entrance to this room was through the back door a week before school started and this was my greeting: "I have got some work for you to do". Not even "Hello, nice to see you". [Vera, new Commerce teacher, November]

Although Vera's specific experiences were acknowledged both by her colleagues who participated in the group interview and by Alice (the other "girl" in the department) as extreme, even by Rimu's standards, there were also some generalisable induction practices that merit brief discussion.

Recently appointed members of staff repeatedly referred to problems they had accessing workspaces, resources and, even, keys,<sup>20</sup> the lack of practically useful administrative, pastoral or curriculum information and schemes of work provided for them in their subject area, and the absence of a formal tour of the school or introduction to key staff. We could perhaps simply attribute these perceived shortcomings to the "thoughtlessness" that appeared to pervade the induction practices experienced by the overwhelming majority in this cohort. But beyond this, the repeated absence of essential material support for newcomers gave more than a little credence to Judith's "belief" that "some staff at Rimu set up new staff to fail, in order to boost their own self-esteem".<sup>21</sup> In Vera's case, the distress of her induction was made more acute by the frosty, task oriented, "insidious treatment"<sup>22</sup> associated with her first working encounter with her new HoD: "Not even "Hello, nice to see you"". This was, without doubt, an unnecessarily callous introduction to a new working environment for anyone to have to experience but it was, again, entirely consistent with and given legitimation by Rimu's de facto requirement for new staff to be, or rapidly learn to be, self-sufficient. In terms of a lack of basic human warmth, it also mirrored the experience of Sharon, Judith, Betty and John and, consequently we are unable to dismiss Vera's experience as an isolated, atypical incident.

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<sup>20</sup> For example: "In the staffroom I was talking to one person who recalled their own induction at Rimu seven years earlier. This person was given a bunch of keys on arrival and commented 'I don't know what they're for'. 'You'll find out' was the response." [Rimu, fieldnote, December]

<sup>21</sup> Judith, Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November.

## 2. Administration

The other man I can't stand, he's full of shit, to be perfectly honest. Excuse me. I'm going to say this. I don't even care if he finds out. But when [name] was saying that he doles out, gives all the information out and how he just missed Harry. No-one knows what he is doing. He doesn't tell anybody. He's full of crap. Men can spew it out so much. No offence, it is being sexist. I see some people in positions of responsibility are able to dole out the crap and make themselves sound like they are doing what they doing. But women, this is a gender issue with respect, and women tend to be more self-effacing. So they could be doing a job much better than their male colleagues but they will typically not boost themselves up and be continually critical and not think they're doing a very good job. Which I tend to do. I had no idea of how I was doing until Thursday night. We had a 'do' and my Dean was drunk and was talking to me about how I was doing. Well, I'm glad now that I seem to be doing all right. But why did it have to wait until the end of year, when everybody is drunk and I finally get to hear something. I felt amazingly better afterwards. [Sharon, new Teacher in charge of Art, November]

An essential component of Rimu's requirement for self-sufficiency was the ability to survive one's induction period without regular information, support and positive feedback from more senior staff, such as curriculum and pastoral leaders. Sharon's analysis, based on her experience of observing men and women in positions of responsibility, would suggest that, typically, this requirement privileges men and actively disadvantages women. Specifically at Rimu, it allowed some curriculum leaders to act as powerful gatekeepers to knowledge and resources.<sup>23</sup> We noted earlier that Harry and Craig were quite comfortable with the need to be "assertive" in the staffroom and that Betty, for example, struggled for twenty weeks in this regard despite a disposition in both social and previous work settings towards gregariousness and sociability.

If Sharon was accurate in her assessment<sup>24</sup> that women (as a group) are more self-effacing and underestimate their performance while men (as a group) overestimate theirs, this simply reinforced the institutionalised difficulties women (and, more generally, any newcomer who was unassertive or unconfident) faced in terms of learning to survive at Rimu. Moreover, as Sharon pointed out, her dean first gave her positive feedback on her work only in the last few weeks of the school year, and this at a social function while everyone was inebriated! Her reaction to receiving this morsel of praise, "I felt amazingly better afterwards", reveals the extent to which the dominant, self-sufficient, "invisibilised and dehumanised"<sup>25</sup> sub-culture of the school did not fulfil her humanist expectations and those of the other women newcomers at the school. Also, and more significantly, it failed to provide for their personal, professional *needs* as members of staff within a hierarchically

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> For example: John, a beginning science teacher, had trouble gaining access to laboratory resources and common tests in the junior school, Vera was not allowed to purchase essential classroom hardware and Betty's working environment was deliberately sabotaged by the outgoing postholder.

<sup>24</sup> Empirical work undertaken in this field (e.g. Shakeshaft, 1989, 1995), although it essentialises differences between men and women and among women, tends to confirm Sharon's claims. Equally, Shakeshaft's work claims that women administrators in education give more direct and specific feedback and provide greater personal and emotional support for colleagues than do male administrators. Shakeshaft, C. *Women in educational administration*. New York: Sage, 1989; Shakeshaft, C. Gendered leadership styles in educational organisations. In Limerick and Lingard, op. cit., 1995, 12-22.

organised workgroup setting. This very evident need for human, relational engagement was in direct opposition to the position adopted by Craig (new HoD Maori studies programme, November):

I don't feel bad about going to the staffroom if people don't talk to me simply because I know that those people, while they are talking around like this, their head is spinning too. Their mind is in the classroom, their mind is over there, there's about three or four things happening in their room, while they're smiling and go yes, yes, yes and say cheese. You know that their heads are working cos' my head's working. It just doesn't worry me if they have a cup of tea and smoke and let's just sit around and light talk. That should be placed on new teachers: say "Look, people that ignore you in the staffroom, don't worry about them. There's a 1000 and 1 things happening in their heads."

### 3. Personal professional practice

I thought at one stage, Ivan doesn't know, I just come to work, he turns a blind eye, he's too busy, he's got no idea what I'm doing. I have made myself so ill over this. I was so ill I wasn't sleeping and I was just absolutely a mess for a while. My husband was really upset with me, he wanted me to chuck the job in, and [it] took me quite a while. I went to a therapist for a little while but mostly I went to the doctor and he helped me with the sleeping thing. It was just an anxiety thing, all these factors. It wasn't a depression or anything, it was just an anxiety thing but he put me on some medication which has really helped. I feel fine and I just intend to go off it but the idea is wait until the school year is over. I feel really good now. [Betty, new Para-professional, December]

We have already noted both the unusually busy nature of the occupational environment at Rimu and the institutionalised lack of human warmth experienced by newcomers. On the basis of Craig and Harry's comments, I suggested that, initially at least, men may have found it easier to position themselves within these discursive institutional practices than women. Betty's experiences illustrated how, when "normal human social"<sup>26</sup> interactions were absent from staffroom and workgroup relations, the negative and damaging consequences of this emotional vacuum, and challenges to these, were also silenced. Thus, for example, Judith noted "the inability of senior management to support new staff if this requires challenging the status quo".<sup>27</sup>

Betty, like Vera (who turned to other teachers in Rivertown) and Sharon (to her mother, also a teacher) had to look outside the institution for support and coping strategies (her husband, therapist and doctor). In effect, then, the need for personal support during the induction period was not removed with this demand for self-sufficiency, but merely exiled beyond the confines of the institution. In Betty's case, where she ignored her husband's suggestion that she should "chuck the job in", the effects of institutional self-sufficiency were extreme, extending to her self-esteem, health, sleep patterns, and relationship with her partner.

However, the causes and effects of these discursive practices and texts were not limited to newcomers. As we see, below, in the case of Eric, more established members of

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<sup>25</sup> Judith, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Betty, new Para-professional, December.

staff at Rimu also struggled to cope with the professional demands being made upon them. If this was the case, we need to ask why and how such demeaning and debilitating practices were maintained within the institution. It seems only logical, after all, to suggest that these illustrative rites of passage experienced by new staff at Rimu were paradoxical and counterproductive if only inasmuch as they appeared to produce, prolong and exacerbate feelings of anxiety, poor self-image and, in effect, dependency by newcomers on established staff.

### **DIFFICULTIES OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN A SMALL SCHOOL**

One premise underlying my discussion of Rimu's socialisation processes, thus far untested, has been that the patriarchal staffroom and workgroup sub-cultures served the needs and interests of established structures and groups of staff and worked to the advantage of individuals within them. On this logic, in an overly busy and stressful occupational environment the dominant behavioural and attitudinal norms which obtained thus provided a necessarily harsh induction experience that enabled new staff to rapidly acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to be able to grapple with the particular curricular, pedagogical, and administrative challenges posed by Rimu's students.

Below, I want to question those assumptions and show that the socialisation processes that existed at Rimu in 1996 were caused partly by the organisational constraints within which small secondary schools operate. Irrespective of their size and staffing establishment, all secondary schools are required to deliver a broad curriculum, covering each of the essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum, and these, in most cases to seventh form level. In schools like Rimu, this presents two principal problems, both of which relate to the numbers of staff in the school.

#### *Small School HoD Workloads*

At Totara and Matai, the full time equivalent staffing entitlements in 1995 were more than double that at Rimu. At Totara, as we saw with the example of the Science department in the previous chapter, major curriculum areas comprised groups of up to a dozen mostly full time specialist staff. Most or all of these were qualified to teach to Bursary level.

At Rimu, in contrast, subject departments were small and, in order to maintain a broad range of curriculum options to seventh form level, the school deployed non-specialist staff across many curriculum areas.<sup>28</sup> This meant that there were additional burdens placed on specialist staff, particularly the HoD who, as a consequence, had to provide comprehensive schemes, unit and lesson plans and other forms of ongoing support for teachers. Self-evidently, at Rimu there was a much smaller pool of specialist staff among

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<sup>27</sup> Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November.

whom this load could be shared. Thus established staff, particularly heads of subject departments, were faced with a double bind. They were expected to prepare schemes of work and associated material in considerably more detail than they might have to do among a workgroup comprising subject specialists and, at the same time, the additional workload thus created was shared among a smaller number of staff than in the larger schools. Indeed, at Rimu the workload issue for established staff was compounded by the fact that many subject HoDs were also deans and many other things besides:

**Eric:** I think it comes back to the old cliché, you need time and resources. In this school HoDs have exactly the same number of classes as everybody else and so if you were taking five classes a week, the time that you have got for doing housework with staff is very limited.

**Rita:** Yes, cos' as HOD too you are often called upon, something in another project, to do something else in a non-contact time and you don't have that time for the administration which does make things very difficult.

**Eric:** Maybe that's the culture of being a small school. HoDs are naturally picked on to be deans, to do administrative work, for example the Qualifications Authority liaison now is quite a lot of work involved as well as doing your ordinary HoD work. I'm afraid you have to cut corners.

**Rita:** And it's something that's constant.

**Eric:** If you can't cut corners, you'll go mad. [Interview with three HoDs, November]

In this extract we are provided with the beginnings of an explanation as to why apparently "thoughtless" or "dehumanising" socialisation and support practices existed at Rimu and how these had become ingrained and generally accepted as part of the hegemonic status quo. What Eric and Rita here respectively called "housework" and "administration" competed with other pastoral and curriculum related obligations for which they received no timetable remission. It was, therefore, not surprising that established HoDs should seek to find ways to "cut corners". In this regard, the socialised requirement to be staunch and self-sufficient that newcomers encountered was accorded a partial, rational and logical justification in terms of the unacceptable workloads endured by staff, particularly more senior and established staff, in a small secondary school such as Rimu.

### *Rationalising The Lack of Support From HoDs*

The logic of this justification was not entirely lost on recently appointed staff, who at the time of the interview had been working at the school for up to a year. It exerted a modifying influence on their assessments of the levels of support they might legitimately expect to receive:

**Vera:** I found too that I had no scheme of work.

**John:** I think some department have no scheme and I think it is a duty of HoD ...

**Vera:** It is.

**John:** ... to tell class teacher what equipment is available and what we can do. All of those things depends on the relationship between teacher and HoD.

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<sup>28</sup> *ERO, Effectiveness Review Rimu, 1996, September, p. 8.*

Sharon: But it shouldn't, you know, it should be given to people that - That's what they are getting paid for . They are getting paid to do that and they don't do it.

Patty: They are getting paid \$1500 a year to do twice the amount of work though. I think we have got to realise that we are complaining, not just about people, but about a system that isn't working because those HoDs are not being paid anywhere near enough for all the extra work.

Vera: I don't think that my HoD should getting one single cent because I should be getting his money.

[talking over each other]

Patty: ... teach more hours than me, and do more and all he is getting, he's got less non-contacts in a week than me, my HoD. He's not only got to do all his teaching and lesson preparations which is going to be greater because of the number of contact hours that he has got but on top of that, he has also got to do all the administrative things and all the other things and all the other things and all the other things. We're not, we didn't face up with a system that's not working. We are just faced up to a bunch of people that are overworked and haven't got any energy left to smile at anybody at the end of the day. Cos' that's what I feel like, that I can't be bothered.

Vera: It's not the personal problem, it's the system, the HoDs' system. They don't have enough time to do what they are suppose to be doing. [Interview with new staff, November]

The passage neatly illustrates the process of rationalisation of institutionalised lack of support at Rimu. Both Sharon, Vera and John agreed at the outset that newcomers were entitled to expect a scheme and resources from the HoD and that this was part of the HoDs' remunerated responsibilities, i.e. it was both a moral and contractual obligation.<sup>29</sup> By the end of the extract, however, and following Patty's empathetic justification of the lack of material and human support received from HoDs ("We are just faced up to a bunch of people that are overworked and haven't got any energy left to smile at anybody at the end of the day. Cos' that's what I feel like, that I can't be bothered."), Vera, despite the evidence of her personal experiences, conceded that it was the "system" rather than individuals that was failing.

Arguably, it was this sense of mutual professional empathy that allowed the majority of new staff to eventually accept, or at least accommodate, the effects and consequences of Rimu's staunch socialisation process. In effect, they misrecognised, and therefore excused, patriarchal, masculinist socialising texts and practices as survival or coping strategies necessarily employed by their more established curriculum leaders.

However, there are undoubtedly many secondary schools, including small schools (e.g. Kauri), where new staff are not subjected to such blatant expectations of self-sufficiency, and where both material and emotional support are more evident. At Rimu, established staff like Eric were having to contend with a complex array of changing curricular, management and personal pressures that sought to define their role and work in particular ways. But, even if we accept that the workloads and multiple responsibilities of established staff in smaller schools are unusually onerous, we should not unquestioningly accept that there is a linear relationship between overload and lack of support. At most, it

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<sup>29</sup> Sharon's half completed sentence suggested that she believed HoD responsibilities should only be "given" to people who were prepared to carry out scheme preparation and support for staff. Elsewhere in

can provide only a partial, contributory explanation of the routine, impersonal patterns of social and professional interaction that were experienced by such a large proportion of the staff within the school at the time of the study.

#### *New Management And Leadership Uncertainties*

One of the major hiccups currently is the new systems and programmes and ideas being put in place. What I knew previously, how it would work and the time lines and the deadlines and the pressure points within the system are no longer obvious. I don't think really that enough looking ahead goes into the things that are consequential to new things that you put in place, the things that follow on from the new things. That has caused extra stress for people who are responsible to the people who are new. They come here and say, "What's the problem?" or "What's the story?" and you think, well, I'm not sure, but I'm sure there is an answer. [...] I think one of the pressures of middle management at the moment is that all the things that we previously have been able to say we have got under control, like our classroom teaching and our curriculum programmes, having then to review and revise all of those, and then to also have your other middle management resource management responsibilities and then your staff things. Major hassle. [Eric, HoD Science, November]

In an earlier chapter, Ivan, the Principal, described the way in which prescribed national curricula and his definitions of good classroom teaching practice were challenging a number of planning, resourcing, pedagogical and assessment shiboleths at Rimu. This pressure came externally from external accrediting and accountability agencies of the state, national curriculum documentation. It also arose internally both from senior management and a vocal and sizeable cohort of new teaching staff. The combination created some "major hiccups" that had levered a considerable number of anticipated and actual changes on Eric's taken-for-granted ways of organising and coping with the various professional demands made upon him. In the process, this had taken away the independent "control" that he was able to exercise over his work and had led to "extra stress", and a "major hassle". It was clear from his analysis that he not only felt under pressure from all quarters but that the 'expertness' he used to deploy with apparent success and satisfaction as HoD no longer work in a shifting curriculum context.

The fact that he was unable to provide answers to new staff was a cause of some concern for him. He attributed some of the blame for this to senior staff, in particular, for a lack of support. There was also, he suggested, insufficient recognition that curriculum change creates uncertainty, and that the provision of support for "their" staff is only one of an HoD's many responsibilities:

One thing that [senior staff] could do is support the middle management staff who have got the responsibility. Support them in terms of explaining to their staff where in fact they won't have all the answers because things are changing, that in fact they have got other responsibilities as well ... [Eric, HoD Science, November]

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her interviews she argued that such remunerated responsibilities should be removed from those who failed to perform in this regard.

For Eric, and other established HoDs, the requirement for new staff to be self-sufficient was therefore justified in a number of ways. Systems were in place because they worked well enough in the past but, to Eric's annoyance, existing systems were not publicly endorsed by "senior administration". HoDs also had limited time and new staff should "pitch in and help themselves". There was, moreover, a criticism that too much prescription in schemes of work stifles "initiative"; and, from Eric, the suggestion that senior staff encouraged newcomers to expect unrealistic levels of "detail":

**Eric:** I think there is also a responsibility for new staff. There is something that sits with them, that in some ways needs to be stated. I have talked about it in terms of support from senior administration, something to the people saying, "Well listen, the way things happen are this way because that's the way it has worked and [was] deemed to be the best way of approaching things in the past". There are some new staff around who are quite unaccepting of what is now going through and they state it. They are attacking the people who are responsible for those systems, and I think that's unfortunate.

**Rita:** Yes, you do also get staff that come in and they do expect everything to be done for them. They want everything from the HoD on a platter. They don't want to have to actually pitch in and help themselves. The time constraints on the HoD are just too much, you haven't got time to spend ...

**Toby:** But I think that's partly our fault too. I don't think we encourage people to use their initiative because it's almost laid down that we do this with our schemes. You virtually put a scheme, a day by day how you do things and you expect the staff to stick to it so you have taken away the ability for them to use their own initiative and to think for themselves. That disturbs me a wee bit.

**Eric:** Yeah. I struggle with that expectation that our scheme is. There is more required of it than what's in it at the moment, significantly more. But then I'm told that at the end it should have enough information in it that anybody's who's not even an expert in a field or with any background and working in a laboratory would be able to deliver the programme, cos' we are getting more and more non specialist teachers required to teach outside their field. I'm thinking, that's an impossible ask for a HoD and yet the suggestion seemed to be there and it seemed to be passed onto new staff that that's what they should ask for and look for - that much detail. [Interview with three HoDs, November]

One has to sympathise with Eric and his colleagues insofar as they were being asked to develop curriculum documentation and associated resources to an extent that would be unnecessary among specialist subject staff in a larger institution. In this sense, his description of the task as an "impossible ask" was a reasonable one. Nevertheless, what stood out in his commentary was not so much the supposedly Herculean nature of the curriculum responsibilities themselves but, rather, the way in which he appeared to try to hang on to the certainties of the past. Unwilling to fully embrace, or unable to cope with, the various curriculum and administrative changes being "put in place" he felt sandwiched between two groups of staff - senior management and newly appointed classroom teachers - neither of which, in his view, understood the difficulties he faced as a curriculum leader.

### ***Support For Overloaded HoDs***

In response to a question about the socialisation and induction of new staff, Eric argued that there were practical ways in which these two groups might usefully and actively contribute to staff development within the school. The line of argument Eric pursued was that with

more resources and support from senior staff, and active participation in scheme development by new staff, the workload would become manageable. But, these things had not happened. Here, as elsewhere in his and others' accounts at Rimu, there appeared to be breakdowns in communication among the staff and, derived from the requirement for staff to be staunchly self-sufficient, an unwillingness to articulate and share the experience of being under stress and unable to cope:

Interviewer: If we accept that you are being asked to do too much as it is, the likelihood is that there aren't going to be significant extra resources or significant extra non-contact time. So how does the induction and development of new people get done then? It's obvious that you can't do it on your own. You can only do certain things as HoD's. How does it get done? How can it be done better?

Eric: Well it becomes a compromise. It's done but not as well as it could be done or it's not given the priority at times that it needs and you end up dealing with emergencies and sort of (inaudible) trying to pick things up and put things back together. Somehow or other the senior management [have to] give the time to the middle management to do their job because they have an ability to do it. Then senior management have got to keep themselves available to support middle management. I know that sounds very simple but there are too many things I'm seeing that end up with the senior management that probably shouldn't end up there. Some of the things that they deal with are ridiculous. Maybe they are doing it because they're seeing middle management under pressure but they would be better off catching up with middle management at times and saying, "OK, what are your priorities and how do you think things are going? What are the important things that you are not getting to?" One of the issues that I had, I do not get my head clear enough, if that's the way of describing it, to deal with schemes in term time. I've found I take it home with me and commit myself to spending time there. Now maybe that's the way everyone does it, but it strikes me as if I would like to be making ongoing progress with it for the rest of the year as well.

Rita: Unfortunately because that happens, you are left to do it yourself because the rest of your department is not there to help.

Eric: Well, I don't. I get frustrated I suppose that there aren't ideas or suggestions that come from some of these more recently trained people. They don't say, "Hang on, we could do it this way or that way". There aren't the enthusiasm or initiative or responsibility that was alluded to, this expectation that they're just there ready to take. So I think you do end up doing. There doesn't seem to be anybody else. In my particular position, there is no other experienced teachers even just to share ideas with. [That's] just the experience and make up of the department at the moment. [Interview with three HoDs, November]

Ironically, in calling for senior staff to communicate more with HoDs and to "ask how do you think things are going?", Eric was articulating many similar concerns as an established HoD at Rimu to those expressed by the recently appointed Sharon, Judith and Betty. The common elements in the various analyses were, again, the discursive requirement to be self-sufficient and to cope, and the lack of human warmth or empathy received from colleagues. Both of these we can attribute, I would suggest, to the normalising demands of the dominant staffroom sub-culture.

### *Silencing Stress and Failure*

While the experiences of the recently appointed staff discussed above suggested that these institutional norms existed largely to socialise staff as task-oriented, self-sufficient classroom practitioners, it appears evident from the experiences of Eric and other HoDs

that these same behavioural and attitudinal norms constrained and delimited the ways in which more established members of staff should think, act and speak. Running across the accounts as a whole was a noticeable absence of communication, specifically that which allowed for the "recognition and support" for people's work and the admission of failure to cope:

Eric: A little bit of recognition and support I think goes a tremendously long way. I see that in the management team. I guess I'm including people in me with this. I feel it myself anyway that it is really easy to be undermined and to have your own security and position challenged if enough things go wrong so that what goes right, needs to be equally recognised. I think there are middle management teachers, middle managers who are struggling to come to terms with the preparation of schemes and the delivery of new curriculums because they haven't really got the time to sort it out. They are getting left behind and that's sad if those people get further and further undermined in terms of what they are delivering and how they just aren't coping with their jobs. That's a fairly strong way of putting it but I think that's what it comes down to.

Interviewer: Do you get the impression that the sorts of things that Rita was talking about in terms of Social Studies, how that year's program of work is being developed<sup>31</sup>, are other departments and HoDs aware of the way that some departments are coping?

Eric: No.

Rita: No, they are not.

Eric: No. For example, we have HoD meetings. There is an agenda that is big enough that there's not a lot of sharing of ideas. Something as major as the new curriculum, sorry the new Qualification Framework, the Unit Standards, there is all sorts of departments around who are doing bits and pieces of Unit Standards but none of them knows what anybody else is doing. No one knows how someone else's system for recording the result, for managing the assessments and all those other bits and pieces. We are all reinventing the wheel individually and it's a waste of time and energy [Rita: It is] and yet I am not too sure quite what the forum is that allows it to happen cos' another meeting isn't what you want. It's like going to in service courses. The best session is the one over lunch and the informal contact and the chat and the sharing. You go and see someone from another school and it sounds like we could do a bit of that and you arrange to get hold of their resources and offer them something back in return.

Interviewer: So is it fair to say that what you are talking about is HoDs being isolated?

Eric: Yeah 'isolated' is a good [word], I was just going to come up with that. We're getting frustrated because you could have done (inaudible). You go around and around in circles.

Rita: Yes, in many ways the buck stops with us and we are supposed to have the answers to the problems. We are accountable to what goes on in our department. But we don't get any help on it and we don't know what the other departments are doing. You suddenly do hear down the track that you should be doing it like this. Well it would be nice to know that early or to have a chance to see it.

Eric: One of the things that has been suggested and I would agree with it, but I can see there's limits to it, is that we need to have ongoing educational development for ourselves and be encouraged to do courses. But you can quite often feel that at this stage of your career that you haven't got the time, or the energy or the inclination. Or maybe you have got other commitments, you're thinking, oh those are the priorities of your life, like another life<sup>31</sup>. But the senior management is keen on it and I think it would help people in that they were continuing to train and to educate. But there is the limit.

Rita: And a lot of the in-service that HoDs go on is administrative, for example the new Special Ed grant that is coming in next year. I had a whole day in-service just spent on that whereas not an awful lot of practical things came out of it. I have been on that many in-service days because of that. The same with Social Studies development contract. You at least did get something out of that but your administration type courses or in-service that we go on, and nothing that we can really get an awful lot out of.

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<sup>30</sup> Rita described the way in which social studies units of work were developed collaboratively by all the teachers involved over the course of a year and stored centrally as a shared resource.

<sup>31</sup> Huberman, op. cit., 1993.

Eric: The principals have their meetings to talk about how they stretch their budgets, how they can use the systems, how they can make things go further. I see HoDs needing the same sort of input in terms of the solutions to some of the challenges. There's been a Science HoD's forum set up. That's been last year and the beginning of this year and it was a good thing. You saw people. You know there are issues there that you are thinking: budgets today. If you do it according to the letter of what's required you're putting yourself in a real straight jacket but there are ways, there are ways to cope. [Interview with three HoDs, November]

There are two issues here that reflect the relatively isolated nature of specialist subject teaching in small schools generally and, at Rimu in particular, the way in which this was further individuated.

First, in terms of the school-based development of unit standards teaching, separate departments at Rimu were "reinventing the wheel individually and wasting time and energy" because practices were not shared across departments. This happened, paradoxically, despite the smallness of the institution, the fact that many staff taught in more than one subject area, and the existence of a whole school HoDs' forum<sup>32</sup> (albeit with an agenda that did not allow for "a lot of sharing of ideas").

Second, without a core of colleagues in the same subject specialism with whom to discuss curriculum related issues, and with an ineffectual HoDs forum in this respect, HoDs were forced to look outside the institution for curriculum and management related strategies and support (in, it should be noted, much the same way that the women newcomers looked elsewhere for the emotional support they needed).

Finally, and perhaps his analysis as a whole should be seen in this context, Eric faced the additional mid- to late-career hurdle of maintaining his enthusiasm ("time, energy or inclination") for fresh challenges, conceding that he had developed "another life" outside teaching. In practice, without an institutional culture that encouraged and legitimised the open discussion of failure, and pressured, in his view, by a "senior management" that did not "understand" the "challenge" he faced, Eric acknowledged that in order to "cope", he had withdrawn from certain areas of activity and responsibility:

Eric: I guess there are people who have suggested to me that I deserve a medal for some of the new staff I've been being working this year. But I think that it hasn't come through from the senior management and I sometimes wonder whether they are aware of the change it has been, or the challenge that it has been. One way that I've found to cope with it is just to remove myself from it, just not try and deliver all that's re-, all that's expected or all that I would probably prefer to be able to deliver well. I would say I had to remove myself. Because of that the need to cope. That's had repercussions you know (laughs). You can't walk away from something like that and not have someone notice sometime. [Eric. HoD Science, November]

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<sup>32</sup> Although, separate parallel developments also took place in the other schools (and, for example, at Totara this was justified because of the different types of assessment that each subject demanded), the situation at Rimu was more acute. Lack of collaboration occurred within as well as between some departments: "Resources and written unit standards were guarded and not shared between staff." [Judith, Year One teacher, letter to Alice, November]

One was left with an abiding sense of Eric's frustration and inability to cope with the personal and interpersonal demands made upon him as an established head of department at Rimu. Somewhat ironically, Eric articulated much the same sense of isolation and disorientation as did his recently appointed colleagues. This isolation was attributable not only to the idiosyncratically staunch staffroom sub-culture within the institution but also, and in great part, to the smallness of the school and its constituent departments, the absence of similarly qualified subject specialist staff with whom to discuss one's curriculum concerns and share curriculum and administrative workloads. This impoverished personal and collegial occupational environment contrasted markedly with that which reportedly existed in the science department at Totara, in chapter nine.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, we have seen how the institutional sub-cultures and socialisation practices affected new staff members' identity and work. At Rimu, the most significant staffroom and workgroup sub-cultures uncompromisingly required new staff members rapidly to become independent and self-sufficient. The work-stories of men and women demonstrated that they accommodated and positioned themselves within these sub-cultures differently. While it may have appeared that the purpose of socialisation practices was to develop an idiosyncratic, functional form of 'expertness' among new staff, the experiences of some established HoDs suggested a more complex set of factors at work.

In order to compensate for the small number of staff and a lack of curriculum expertise across the school as a whole, subject specialist HoDs were expected to take on increased curriculum and pastoral responsibilities and, at the same time, prepare detailed schemes of work for non-specialist teaching colleagues. The 'staunch' sub-culture that existed at Rimu both exhorted new staff to be self-sufficient and prevented established staff from admitting their difficulties in coping. The working context for teachers and curriculum leaders at Rimu contrasted sharply with that in the science department at Totara.

Taken together, these three chapters have shown the interdependence of student-curriculum- and staff-focused priorities, and the importance of curriculum leadership to the orchestration of the workgroup's activities. At Kauri, the needs of the student group created particular pedagogical requirements that, arguably, would better have been articulated, reiterated and developed had staff worked more closely during the programme within a coherent and pragmatically led epistemological workgroup. At Totara, the existence of a large number of specialist staff and successful experience of previous curriculum change meant that Unit Standards development work could be shared widely and collaboratively. In contrast, at Rimu, in this chapter, the shortage of curriculum specialists, the smallness of the staffing establishment and the teaching 'challenges' posed by the students all helped to

generate a particular set of institutional practices and sub-cultures that adversely affected both new and established staff identities.

Despite the differences of working context in each of the chapters, all the curriculum leaders, to use Eric's words, had to "cut corners" to a greater or lesser extent. In the next two chapters, I want to explore in greater detail the ways in which curriculum leaders attempt to orchestrate their work and that of colleagues over the course of an entire school year, to balance development priorities and ensure both that students continue to learn, staff to develop their 'expertness', and that the official curriculum is delivered.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### FOUR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AT WORK

This chapter examines the work of four heads of department over the course of the 1997 school year. This work is described as a 'tapestried' form of labour, seasonal and repetitive in its enactment. The chapter is organised around nine aspects of the work. It examines in turn: schemes of work; workgroup relationships; support for individuals; the review of practice; working with other HoDs and senior staff; maintaining professional networks, the advancement of departmental objectives, workload and the use of meeting time.

#### INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters we have described the recurrent motifs of day-to-day classroom work for the secondary school teachers in the four schools in the study; analysed the variety of major workgroup priorities identified by them as curriculum leaders; and, explored three of these development priorities in detail.

In this chapter, we return to the broader conceptualisation of teachers' work as patterned or tapestried labour, often repetitive and seasonal in its enactment, and to capture this by documenting the work of four heads of department across the 1997 school year. As suggested in the conclusion to chapter ten, the HoDs (and curriculum leaders) in this study attempted to orchestrate the work of their department (or programme) and, in effect, to mediate the multiple demands made upon their workgroup. This required them to make choices and set priorities from among the development priorities they faced. In this chapter, we examine these practices of orchestration, mediation and priority setting as they took place over four terms of the 1997 school year.

Just as the focus in chapter five was uncovering the thinking that underpinned the development and maintenance of day-to-day teaching routines, so here with the practice of curriculum and workgroup leadership and decision-making. In this case, the interest lies in the ways in which these four curriculum leaders attempted to provide a social space where teacher 'expertness' might be further developed and the curriculum delivered. As in chapter five, the discussion aims to reveal the reasoning that underpinned the strategies and actions of the four protagonists as they attempted to gain greater influence over the circumstances in which they and their colleagues undertook their work. This chapter focuses on nine specific areas of curriculum leadership activity (see below).

The chapter once again contains a large proportion of interview data: forty eight extracts that together comprise sixty percent of the twenty two thousand words in the chapter. Again, though, I decided that this approach was essential if we were to privilege the work-stories of the participants and through these uncover both "the nature of the forces that cause

them to operate in the way they do" and the "concrete action for change"<sup>1</sup> that they, for their part, engaged in as a response.

### **HODS' WORK AS TAPESTRIED LABOUR**

Just as the secondary school teacher's work is shaped by the organisational demands of a compartmentalised, subject-driven timetable and the assessment of student progress towards the attainment of national credentials in each area of the prescribed curriculum, a large proportion of the work of heads of department and deans is similarly shaped:

Each level is working to a basic schedule. Our Form Five schedule looks like this. Each one of these things that has got change over by it is where the books that you are currently using you must have returned so that the next person booked in for them can uplift them. Now if your teacher falls sick on the 24th February, the class has still only got two weeks with those books before they must yield them. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 2]

Like classroom teaching practice, this curriculum work (content, pedagogy, assessment) is also refined in particular ways by the idiosyncracies of subject matter and institution. These in turn are mediated by the embedded practices (theories, positions, priorities, agendas and personalities) of those who comprise the workgroup sub-culture. Thus, while these various functioning groups of professional teachers did engage with major curriculum and organisational developments during the two years of the study, such demands were always accommodated against a background of the many routine, predictable and recurrent patterns of activity that take place in all secondary schools during the course of a school year and into which tapestry the threads of innovation have to be carefully interwoven. The metaphor of secondary school teaching and management as an endless narrative tapestry in the process of being woven is a useful image for our purposes; but it does challenge prevailing normative, rational and cyclical models of teacher and curriculum development.<sup>2</sup>

There are, in effect, three principal difficulties with such compartmentalised conceptualisations of review, planning and innovation in secondary schools. First, it is assumed that national policy initiatives are static or predictably incremental within a review and action cycle that is itself seamless and unproblematic. As we shall see in this chapter and the next, this is not the case. The politics of curriculum and assessment proved unpredictable and shifting and, particularly in the case of Unit Standards development during the two years of the

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<sup>1</sup> Smyth, J. *Teachers as collaborative learners*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1993, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Caldwell, B. and Spinks, J. *The self-managing school*. London: Falmer, 1988; Hargreaves, D. and Hopkins, D. *The empowered school. The management and practice of development planning*. London: Cassell, 1991. In New Zealand, two of the most influential texts have been: Prebble, T. and Stewart, D. *School development. Strategies for effective management*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1981; and

fieldwork, they rendered rational planning at department or subject area level highly problematic.

Second, such models assume that teachers have the freedom and energy to devote significant additional time to curriculum, classroom and organisational innovation whereas the evidence of this study showed that developments took place in fragmented, non-linear fashion. Teachers became ill or moved on and others arrived, changing the dynamics of the established workgroup as they did so; while, on occasions, important policy was discussed and decisions emerged from 'meetings' that took place opportunistically with colleagues in the corridor or in the staffroom over a cup of tea.

Third, ideological consensus among the participants is assumed in many development planning models whereas in practice, individuals in this study engaged with curriculum innovation for many reasons and with differing purposes,<sup>3</sup> thus what was actually achieved was arguably more the result of pragmatism and compromise than of universal endorsement. As a consequence, curriculum leaders were constantly having to judge the acceptability of current workgroup practice against the perceived motivation and energy levels of their colleagues in the context of a normative vision of what they themselves wanted to achieve.

In this regard, metaphors of schools as "mobiles",<sup>4</sup> or "moving mosaics"<sup>5</sup> attempt to capture in words the complex ways in which repetitive patterns of work and innovation exist in constant mutual tension. Yet, although in one sense wholly predictable to anyone who has ever worked in a school, in another, these recurrent and seasonal patterns of work in schools provide only a veneer of stability. Timetables still have to be constructed, subject specialist teachers appointed, relievers found when necessary, lessons prepared, assignments assessed, classrooms managed, individual student learning encouraged and "fires"<sup>6</sup> doused.

Moreover, Thrupp<sup>7</sup> has argued that each secondary school community's socio-economic student 'mix' exerts a marked influence on the practices of curriculum, classroom management, discipline, and routine administrative activity that are pursued within the school. Similarly, Neville<sup>8</sup> has painted a rich picture of the ways in which two enduring secondary

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Stewart, D. and Prebble, T. *Making it happen: a school development process*. Palmerston North; Dunmore Press, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Olson, J. *Understanding teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1992, chapter five; Paechter, C. *Crossing subject boundaries. The micropolitics of curriculum innovation*. London: HMSO, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Nias, J., Southworth, G. and Yeomans, R. *Staff relationships in the primary school*. London: Cassell, 1989, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Weick, 1983, in Owens, R. *Organizational behavior in education*. Fifth edn. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Thrupp, M. *Schools making a difference. Let's be realistic*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999, chapter seven.

<sup>8</sup> Neville, M. *The teachers know my name. Two case studies of value-added secondary schools in New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Education Research Division, 1998, April.

school cultures have developed from the idiosyncratic patterns of day-to-day routines, rituals and ceremonies enacted consistently by successive generations of people within them. Thus, as Morgan<sup>9</sup> aptly puts it, to understand the organisational processes at work in this chapter, we might well:

Imagine a whirlpool in the river. While possessing relatively constant, recurrent and stable form, it has no existence other than in the movement of the river in which it exists ... Such imagery invites us to search for the basic dynamics that generate and sustain organizations and their environments as concrete social forms.

The discussion that follows attempts, via the work-stories of the four principal informants, to uncover the "basic dynamics that generate and sustain" the functioning groups within which these heads of department worked. Below, I introduce the four protagonists whose work is the subject of the chapter. I then explain the origins of the interview schedule. This also serves as the structure within which the data are presented and discussed.

#### *Four Heads Of Department*

All four heads of department were experienced classroom teachers. William was in his mid-thirties, the others were aged between 45 and 55.

From a PR2 position at another local school, William was appointed to HoD Mathematics at Totara in mid 1995, at the end of a protracted appointment process and in preference to the incumbent and more experienced and long-serving female acting head of department. In 1997, William was therefore in his second full year as HoD. The previous year, his priorities had been to establish his credibility among new colleagues and students both as a mathematics teacher and head of department; and to begin the process of moving towards a more collegial form of departmental organisation:

I'm interested to know how people think I'm doing my job because it's a balance between making all the decisions and seen to be too authoritarian and them not having a part in it, or involving them in the decisions to the extent they feel that no decisions are ever made. I'd like to tread that fine tightrope that goes down the middle but I want, I wonder and I fear whether people are concerned we're not making enough decisions or I can't make a decision or that I'm making the decisions without due consultation. I think it's probably that they feel I don't make enough decisions, I don't know. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, March 1996]

The large department was stable and, in addition to William, had ten full-time specialist mathematics teachers most of whom were qualified to teach to Bursary level. William had taught mathematics at schools in New Zealand and overseas.

In 1996 Isadora moved from Totara, where she had been fourth form dean and a specialist English teacher and assistant HoD, to Matai as HoD English. In 1996 she had

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<sup>9</sup> Morgan, G. *Images of Organization*. London: Sage, 1986, pp. 234-235.

unsuccessfully applied for the vacant Assistant Principal position at Totara. She attributed her non-appointment to her absence of documented experience as a curriculum area HoD and expressed considerable doubt about whether she wanted to commit several years to an HoD role, which she clearly saw as a sideways move, before applying for more senior management positions:

This is a real question I am now facing. Do I have to go down the HOD road? As you can gather from my comments it's not where I choose. I really want to move into the admin, upskilling on the curriculum side wherever I have to but I don't want to put another five years in there because then I'll be fifty one. And it's five years too late. [Isadora, Totara, Dean, March 1996]

During a career break some years earlier, Isadora had jobs outside education. While in 1996 she and her partner, also a secondary school teacher, had taken a decision to remain in the local area so as not to disrupt their teenage children's education, she was prepared to look outside education to pursue her career trajectory

Frances was a BEd qualified teacher of mathematics at Kauri who co-ordinated the pedagogically innovative Individualised Learning programme that she had helped establish together with Janette, the principal, and several others in 1990. In 1996, the programme catered for one hundred and ten students in forms three to five with seven teaching staff and some teacher aides. Frances saw herself, and was considered by colleagues who teach in the programme, very much as the cultural guardian or 'priestess'<sup>10</sup> of the pedagogically challenging Individualised Learning philosophy. The purity of the philosophy had become threatened as the overall school roll shrank and the programme was consequently required to accommodate some students and some teachers who had not explicitly chosen to work in it:

I see it as my job to, every two or three meetings to have a professional development type meeting to revisit the Individualised Learning philosophy. I write the [special lesson] out. [Special lesson] is a one hour a week which is compulsory in Individualised Learning for social skills. Quite often that is revisiting the code. What does it mean to be motivated, or what do these things mean that we've said? The students and the teachers revisit again through that the philosophy of Individualised Learning. ... I think we have to keep returning to it, because it's so easy to slip into what they're used to, or what feels comfortable, and what you always have done. It is very easy to slip into being in control, but if we're revisiting once a three weeks with the students and once in three weeks with the teachers, then quite often in the meetings it will just be a two minute flash-back. Remember this is our philosophy, and just sort of reminding them all the time about those things. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, May 1996]

Frances also had responsibilities for special education provision across the school and was Assistant HoD Mathematics. In 1995 she won a year's study award to undertake further

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<sup>10</sup> Bolman, L. and Deal, T. *Reframing organizations. Artistry, choice and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991, p. 301.

professional development. In 1997 she considered resigning from her post in order to travel overseas with her non-teacher partner. Frances had adult children.

In 1996 Tim had been working at Rimu for sixteen years, was HoD English, a dean and in addition has a management responsibility for the school library. He had school age children and served also as a local authority councillor. He led a fragmented department comprising only two other specialist English teachers, including the deputy principal, and a number of other full- and part-time non-specialist teachers who worked in several curriculum areas in the school:

I have at the one extreme another colleague who is totally conversant with where English is and is going and that's Helen, and at the other extreme a person who came to me a week or ten days ago and said they were ready to move into poetry. They're taking the same class for English and social studies, it's a bilingual class, and said what would be the appropriate resources that I feel? I gave them a couple of suggestions of collections that are in our whare pukapuka, a sort of book resource area, and they said now what sort of particular things at this year, third form level is valuable? We looked at the scheme together and I said "Well you'll notice there, it says to teach a simile and metaphor at that level" and they said, "Now, what's a simile again?" [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, May 1996]

In 1996 Tim had two major curriculum priorities. First, to introduce a department-wide homework policy in the face of chronic student apathy and resistance. Second, within a Ministry of Education funded professional development contract with the regional English Adviser, to rewrite the third form scheme with Helen, the other full time English specialist, so that it more clearly specified the prescribed learning outcomes and assessment tasks for each unit of work and also provided sufficient guidance for the majority of non-specialist teachers who taught the subject.

#### *Interview schedule*

The four heads of department were interviewed at the end of each term throughout the 1997 school year. The interviews varied considerably in length from half an hour to nearly an hour and a half. The schedule for the interview was constructed from a preliminary analysis of the interview data gathered in 1996 and represented the full variety of management issues reported by the participants in the first year of the study. The schedule was loosely constructed according to an experience sampling method" that provided a range of possible topics from which the informants selected those which were relevant to their personal experience. Individuals were asked to recount specific incidents as examples of the topic in action. The list of topics was as follows:

- continuing to develop schemes which meet official external requirements;
- building and maintaining relationships within the department;
- identifying and supporting the specific needs of individual colleagues;

- reviewing existing practice;
- working with other HoDs and senior staff in schools;
- maintaining networks outside school;
- working on one or more specific development objectives within the department;
- keeping workload manageable;
- the profitable use of limited meeting time.

During the course of the year the structure of the interviews became looser and more informal both as themes and priorities emerged in each working context, and as the understanding<sup>1\*</sup> between interviewer and interviewee developed. After the first round of interviews the list of topics was used more as a checklist to ensure that everything relevant had been covered than an agenda to drive the dialogue.

Below I present and discuss selected work-stories taken from the sixteen interviews. These extracts have been chosen not only to illustrate the analysis and positioning of the protagonists with regard to each of the relevant topics but also to attempt to convey something of the changes and nuances in this practice during the school year. In the next chapter I discuss a further set of emergent themes<sup>13</sup> that unfolded during the course of the second year of the fieldwork.

## **DEVELOPING SCHEMES TO MEET OFFICIAL REQUIREMENTS**

From the early 1990s, New Zealand secondary school classrooms were the laboratory for the experimental, stepped imposition of a compulsory national curriculum Framework comprising essential learning areas, essential skills and values. In the same period, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) championed the development and use of competency-based modules of learning, known as Unit Standards. These were the National government's preferred (but still, in 1997, optional) mode of accreditation for individual student attainment. As we saw in chapter three, the Curriculum and Qualifications Frameworks enjoyed the support in principle of the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA). NZQA's Qualifications Framework straddled both compulsory and post-compulsory, non-university education and the industrial, service and commercial business sectors. In the latter, occupationally specific, vocational Unit Standards were developed for NZQA validation by Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). In order to become eligible to offer Unit Standards based learning,

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<sup>11</sup> Kitwood, 1977, in Cohen, L. and Manion, L. *Research methods in education*. Third edn. London: Routledge 1989, p. 247.

<sup>12</sup> Habermas, J. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Trans. C. Lenhardt and S. Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990, pp. 25-26.

<sup>13</sup> Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine Publishing, 1967.

prospective education and training providers, including secondary schools, were required to meet the elaborate quality assurance of systems and documentation criteria set out by NZQA.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Participating In Units Standards Trials*

In 1996 and 1997, schools could choose to participate in NZQA trials for the introduction of Unit Standards based assessment in secondary school subjects such as mathematics, English and the sciences. For the schools in this study, the lack of certainty over the political and financial future of NZQA meant that subject departments were unwilling to abandon traditional accreditation structures such as School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate. Consequently, they developed dual modes of assessment which enabled them to 'hedge their bets'. The complexities of choosing and then having to cope concurrently with dual assessment regimes were considerable:

Although we still have serious reservations based on philosophical issues about the whole Unit Standard concept and I'm not quite clear and neither is my Department whether the vision that NZQA has and the working model that's in schools are matched, we decided that the best way to mould the Unit Standard assessment procedure to meet our needs, at this school, was to be within them and so we could make informed comment. So this year we decided to do it, to continue to trial it and expand at Fifth Form School Certificate level, so we have got more Unit Standards there, still not a whole course. We also have them in the Fifth Form Maths Applied Course, the Sixth Form Maths Applied Course, the Sixth Form Alternate Maths Course and the Sixth Form Certificate Maths Course, so it's a total of five courses, not all of those. All of those courses are dual assessed. They have some other form of assessment as well so none of them are solely on Unit Standards and we are working through the issues associated with that. [William, Totara, Hod Mathematics, Term 1]

In order to influence or "mould" the introduction of a novel form of assessment, William and his colleagues chose to participate in the school based trials of mathematics Unit Standards despite some, unspecified, "philosophical reservations" about the model and its practicability for schools. Having trialed Unit Standards in some sixth form courses the previous year, they decided as a department to increase their involvement for the second year of the trial but were doing so in a cautious manner, running Unit Standards assessment alongside existing assessment and accreditation structures in the fifth form, with all the workload "issues associated with that".

Toward the end of 1997, the actual strengths and weaknesses of the assessment and moderation model became apparent to the group. A collective decision was made about their future use at Totara (significantly, they would continue only in "the lower level vocation

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<sup>14</sup> *Designing the moderation system; Guidelines and criteria for accreditation to offer National Certificates and National Diplomas; Quality management systems for the National Qualifications Framework; Guidelines and criteria for the registration of units and qualifications.* All cited in NZQA. *Tomorrow's Learners. An approach to implementing the Qualifications Framework in New Zealand secondary schools.* Wellington: NZQA, 1994, pp. 66-67.

courses”). The decision was based, as William repeatedly commented, on practical experience and emerging craft knowledge, not ideological resistance:

... it's been a very good term. We've come to, as a department, quite a major decision in that we won't be having Unit Standards in the fifth and sixth form courses next year, apart from the maths applied courses which are the lower level vocation courses. Our work in Unit Standards, we feel quite good about that because we now have people coming and asking us for our opinion. We had some people come from the Ministry in Wellington to school, because the school's involved in finding out what was wrong with the moderation system. So we actually feel like we've got a fair bit of credibility when we talk about it. And I think that has meant that, some people were saying, "Well, the work that you've done over the last two years is a waste of time". But I think more, what you end up with might be due to people like us having an input. So I think the department felt valued. But when it decided not to do Unit Standards I think it was also pretty happy about that decision. After we'd made the decision one of the teachers who didn't happen to be at the meeting, she said, "Oh that's really good because I was going to tell you I wasn't going to take the fifth form if you ..." (laugh). There's quite a bit of negativity towards them but not towards the work that we did, if that makes sense. They were happy to do it because that's what we agreed to do, but they didn't like it. During this term we did what's called the Nationally Prescribed Activities, which are the Unit Standards set down by the Government. They write them, they send them, we do them, we mark them. We send them to moderators. There were just so few of our kids got them, like we're talking maybe two a class if we're lucky. That's so different from anything. That actually highlighted a whole lot of points as a department where you have a common mistrust, dislike, philosophical uneasiness about the whole thing. And the term has seen, I think, the department strengthen even more. When things like that happen they seem to move together. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 3]

At Matai, Isadora's working context was subtly different inasmuch as her curriculum area, English, overlapped with programmes in both Humanities and Transition Education, so the decisions about whether or not to introduce Unit Standards were influenced by broader considerations than appeared to be the case with mathematics and science at Totara. Equally, their introduction at Totara had been more leisurely and took place over both 1996 and 1997, whereas Isadora's English department intended to develop and use Unit Standards across the sixth form as a whole in both "mainstream" and "alternative" programmes for the first time in 1997. This created considerable challenges not least because of the lack of knowledge in the department in this area at the beginning of the school year.

#### *Helping Colleagues To Cope With Innovation'*

I must be stupid here. We not only brought in sixth form Unit Standards in our mainstream classes but responding to real need and pressure from other areas of the school, especially in the Transition Area, we reviewed the programme at the end of last year that we had been offering in sixth form Alternate English and found that it truly wasn't meeting the needs of the kids. It was a pretty feeble affair and we decided to bring in Unit Standards in Communications English at that level ... We are having our first major workshop for that, in the second week of the holidays and we are going to push that through, with me there to show them how to do it because they are all brand new on how to do it. They have never done Unit Standards at all, trained or anything for it. I will gradually get them to do more and more of it. Once they have written, like we will write the second one together and then the third one they will write as a team and just show it to me when it's done because the only way to, you have got to train for autonomy real fast in this job. You really do. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 1]

It is important to recognise that the documentation provided by NZQA for each Unit Standard was merely a template that comprised standard criteria for the development and writing of the assessment tasks. These were validated by the Authority and their interpretation and assessment moderated in a local cluster of providers. The actual development, writing and delivery of the units was conducted within each school by the staff involved (or alternatively, as in Tim's venture with a local polytechnic, schools could decide to purchase a complete scheme of 'registered' work and unit assessment tasks from the institution which had developed them). In Isadora's case, the development difficulties were compounded by the fact that none of her immediate departmental colleagues involved with "Communications English" had any experience of writing, delivering or assessing units of learning to this model.

### *Cautious Innovation*

Although the support provided by NZQA and their local cluster proved beneficial through the 1997 year, and reportedly enhanced the ability of the department to develop and offer the units they intended, at the end of the year Isadora's pragmatic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the model was, like William's, both informed and "cautious". Having experienced the development and implementation process through 'trial and error', the actual opportunities and constraints provided through this new mode of assessment and credentialing could be described in detail:

... things have changed so much within a two year space about the rate of implementational change in things like Unit Standards, that we are really at a stage where we have got to keep all our possibilities alive because one isn't sure which way things are going to jump. The latest rumour to be abounding is that the whole moderation system to Unit Standards is really on a fall down basis, that the funding just isn't there to support it on the level they want it where each school had a local moderator and the local moderators have a regional moderator, you know, all this wonderful and the funding has just dried up from the top down ... This year we have double assessed but our intention in October '96 was that by February '98 we would be on Unit Standards only at sixth form because that was the word. Everybody in New Zealand was going to be. Well, bollocks! So I'm glad that I didn't feel as a team that we were confident enough of what we were doing to make it our only source of assessment this year. We couldn't [give] our clients a good enough product in a trial situation to axe the one we knew how to do. Boy, am I glad I was cautious cos' now we have got both systems and we can work it fine. Unit Standards don't suit everybody and it's certainly not the only method of assessment I would ever like to see. If it's your only method of assessment, it's just not OK. As a method of assessment, it's really good and provides a wonderful opportunity. They will have heaps of other ways of doing it. Like you have got to be able to get, assess kids' essay writing a piece at a time to develop their writing. You can't just say "three pieces to publication standard at the end of the year". That doesn't develop anything. So it is a form of assessment, not the form of assessment. But it's good for some things. It just needs a lot of work on it yet John. It's got to have a merit system brought in, got to have that. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 4]

### *The Enormity of Curriculum Change*

At the time of the study both Totara and Matai were oversubscribed and, consequently, comparatively large schools with approximately twelve hundred students in each. As such, the

high status departments of English and mathematics had large numbers of well-qualified subject specialist teachers. This was not the case at Rimu where Tim had only two fellow English specialists, one of whom was also the deputy principal. This constraint notwithstanding, Rimu, like all other secondary schools in the country was required individually to develop, deliver and assess a documented scheme that incorporated all the statutory components of the official curriculum prescription. At the same time, Tim and his colleagues were beginning to engage with the complexities of introducing Unit Standards based assessment and incorporating this within existing programmes of work:

... the Framework is this year's big initiative which we are also doing at the same time. Which is why we want to wipe the [reformatting of the] fourth form [curriculum] quickly out of the way in term one. There is actually some big issues there John because, somewhere along the line, the whole thing has to make sense sequentially. We have done our third [form] and we virtually have done our fourth but it is going to hook into the Unit Standards and what are going to be the gaps that are revealed between the expectations of Form Four and with Form Five with Unit Standards? So that is going to be a really interesting one. I went to my first course on Unit Standards last week and what a number of teachers, who are further advanced than us have said, the ones on the trial schools, is that it's been very useful because the Unit Standards and what they are developing up there show that they really have to get to grips with a metaphor much earlier down here or there. They have showed the need for greater sequencing. It has been very valuable educationally from that point of view.

Interviewer: You are acting in a very relaxed manner about these big changes that are coming on board. Is that the way it is or is it a huge burden. Is it really worrying?

Tim: Don't be fooled by the body language. It's actually terribly scary and in fact teachers at the course, it was reassuring in that they were all slightly glazed of eye by the end of the day and thought, how are we going to do this? It's meant to come in January next year. Some indications are that the government may be prepared to be flexible, or NZQA or whoever it is. PPTA I know, has real concerns about the stress but no, at the end of the day, John, it is three fifths of your programme for the school being reformatted with new assessment tasks according to the Unit Standards way of doing things but also multiplied by two or three because you have to give opportunities for reassessment. So it is absolutely enormous. As if that weren't enough, it's pieces of the jigsaw. So we can't say to [Deputy Principal/English teacher], Helen and me, [DP/English teacher] you are driving fifth form, I'm driving sixth form, Helen you are driving seventh form. We have to say, but wait a minute, what are you doing in Fifth Form, how's that impacting on what, so there is that whole macro planning and so on. So no, it is enormously, it is really scary. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

The enormity of the task for the small group of English specialists at Rimu was soon confirmed as the initial deadline for "reformatting" the fourth form scheme was missed. Much of the workload, as with the third form scheme in 1996, fell on Tim and Helen. They had to support and encourage others, including several unconfident, non-specialist English teachers in their fragmented or loosely bundled<sup>15</sup> workgroup whilst simultaneously carrying out the necessary updating of the curriculum documentation and associated activities. The workload pressures were compounded when Helen announced her resignation mid-way through the year,

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<sup>15</sup> Siskin, L. *Realms of knowledge. Academic departments in secondary schools*. London: Falmer, 1994, chapter five.

leaving only "the one or the one and a half or whatever" to, in effect, carry out precisely the same work that would be shared by a larger pool of knowledgeable people in a bigger school:

We haven't met. We gave a deadline which was the end of term one that we'd have that job done. We haven't met that clearly. It hasn't really affected matters greatly but it's just that it's a deadline that wasn't met ... In the case of [DP/English teacher] it's not a problem because he has real blocks in terms of the new curriculum. [laughs] He's fifty and he's not sure about a lot of this stuff, but he actually just very competently and with a wink and a nudge goes away and does all these quite trendy little things. So he plays these little games that a competent teacher can play. [Female teacher], on the other hand, really is much further behind because she's HOD Special Needs and she's primarily Social Studies is her other area and she's a reluctant draftee into English because it's not an area where she feels particularly competent. She feels vulnerable because a number of the mechanical skills of English she's not good at. She happens to be a hopeless speller and that makes her feel vulnerable but that's off-set by the attitudinal thing which is really positive. It's just a leadership thing to really, she's someone who we can say to, look try, we will help you. Try this by this deadline and she's the sort of person who will deliver. There have been real complications again, and it's just this whole thing about time management I know, I'm not making excuses but Helen herself has had extraordinarily demanding term. She's [female teacher]'s off-sider, in terms of responsibility she has got, she's the PR person in the school in terms of the prospectus, there have been Drama things which are coming to fruition tomorrow night, and she's been preoccupied plus she found out that her husband, early this term, has been appointed to a job up in Auckland so Helen's resignation has been in with us. She goes in a week from now and so there has been all that shifting stuff going on too and so, again, yes it's seeming to come back again to, driven by the one or the one and a half or whatever.

Interviewer: How relaxed are you about the fact that you are behind in the schedule you set yourself?

Tim: I'm not very relaxed about it because I think there is a couple of key things that have to happen, curriculum and assessment things, before I can really say that I'm adequately delivering the new curriculum. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 2]

At the end of the year, although Tim was noticeably more relaxed about the delays, and clearly thankful for what he saw as a more collegial approach to the department's work, the revisions to one fifth of the scheme documentation remained incomplete. This, it should be noted, was in a department where a detailed, written scheme was consistently described as an essential resource of support for the non-specialist teachers who were required to teach the subject:

... we made the goal of rewriting the Year Ten [fourth form] part of the scheme. Still not finished. We have still a few bits and pieces to go. [laughs] That was going to be finished end of term one I think this year. That will now happen 1998. It will happen, full script. It's slower but it's better because we are all doing it and that's been a big shift. We are all doing it, all the fourth form teachers, all of them means three, but rather than just the HOD. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 4]

### *Preparing For External Accountability*

Frances also intended to devote some time in the first term of the year to revising schemes of work, although her immediate impetus was the prospect of an Education Review Office inspection in the near future and the need to refine curriculum paperwork in preparation for this ("I'm doing it for ERO but it needs to be done"). Frances was a long established head of

department-curriculum leader and, other things being equal, might reasonably have expected to complete the task without too much difficulty as planned in term one. This she eventually did during term three in 1997 in collaboration with the other HoDs in the school whose curriculum responsibilities overlapped with hers. However, delays in appointing new staff until after the 1st of March date for confirmation of student numbers to the Ministry of Education, meant that none of the planned revisions were carried out in the first term:

... I was very busy because of the Special Ed. appointment not being made until eight weeks into the term so I took on that load as well and we didn't even have a reliever in. We just had staff doing 'pinkies' which is strictly unsatisfactory. Last term was very busy teaching. I was teaching and in the class a lot of time and so the admin. and building schemes...

Interviewer: All of that just went out the window?

Frances: Just went out the window. This week I have got together some of the things to make my scheme up. It's very difficult. Individualised Learning isn't a department. We have got the Individualised Learning booklet that we have written. We have got the manual for teachers that I have written and from that I am collating it and making it into a scheme for ERO. Not for me, for ERO. [laughs] That's what I have been asked to do.

Interviewer: Would you have planned to do anything in that first term?

Frances: I had planned to get all the policies revisited as a professional development one night but I haven't. We haven't revisited them at all.

Interviewer: Would that have been for ERO or is it something you

Frances: Well it needs to be done, I'm doing it for ERO but it needs to be done. [laughs]  
[Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 1]

... we have started, all HoDs this year, this term renewing their schemes. We are working through that with deadlines each month of getting four sections done, getting another four done and things like that which has been good for me. I have been thinking about it for a long time but it made me actually reach the deadline and get the first four policies and things in place. I have summarise[d], cos' we are not a department as such, it's quite different cos' we are cross curricular so I have looked at the essential skills and things, that area, as my overall departmental statement rather than the individual. Each department will do their individual curriculum type stuff and I have been looking at the overall learning how to learn and those sorts of things rather than concentrating on content, curriculum content and things like that.

Interviewer: Is it simply a case of updating the documents or are you doing more than?

Frances: Well I have been finding the documents. (laughs) That was number one. That was quite difficult finding the policy documents and things like that and then I'm just rewriting them to suit. We have got an outline of what a scheme, what ERO is looking for in a scheme really and so we have got to put it into these twelve headings and

Interviewer: Is that the purpose of the exercise, the accountability thing?

Frances: It is the accountability and to have it ready for when ERO, ERO must come this year or next year, plus we haven't had anything for a long time. But also I'm actually quite pleased to get a document. I had one document but it got lost the year I went away. So everything had to be found again (laughs). It is going to be very important. I started to rewrite that, and I have done the first four. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 2]

### *Preparing The Ground For Appraisal*

In addition to curriculum and assessment, and as a result of their collective contract settlement, secondary schools experienced significant changes to the procedures for the assessment of teachers' work and the remuneration of additional responsibilities during the course of this study. Most notably, in December 1996, the Secretary for Education gazetted new requirements for the annual appraisal of all schoolteachers. During the course of the 1997 school year, the

introduction of more bureaucratic approaches to the formal appraisal of their departmental colleagues' classroom teaching was referred to briefly by both Tim and Isadora:

... it's like saying to somebody, I have to shoot you, would you like the blindfold on or do you prefer it off and just shut your own eyes. As a manager you are in a situation where you have to deliver the obligation [i.e. annual appraisal and attestation of satisfactory performance] but you have to deliver it in an edible package and at least people feel that what their feedback on it. Oh God, I wish you and your machine had been at the meeting where we raised the issue because all the defences went up and all the fears came out. At least people felt free to air them. But they were vehement about their professionalism being challenged and how dare any organisation require them to be monitored, these people who like to tick and correct every spelling mistake in a child's work. It was delicious but it was also real. In a departmental meeting, [HoD Humanities] and I together, we raised the issue of how to go about appraisal and it's certainly, people were able to fully and freely, or they choose to fully and freely describe their anger, which was the way their fear first came out. From that we were able to then work through to systems of, OK, well being as it has to be done how is it best to be done. Some people will never be comfortable with it, ever, ever. And that's OK too but it's still going to happen. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 4]

### **BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.**

The processes of building and maintaining workgroup relationships infused every aspect of collective activity (i.e. meetings, professional development, curriculum implementation, assessment, record-keeping, and reporting procedures, staffroom relations and social occasions both in and outside school) for all four heads of department but these were manifested and orchestrated in different ways.

#### *Changing The Workgroup Culture*

At the beginning of 1997, for example, Isadora had been in post for only two terms but, even so, was able to describe a marked change in workgroup relationships and departmental culture:

... all of us are learning new things with the new curriculum and the Unit Standards and all of them are learning to work in a new team way because there were some major dysfunctionality problems prior to my arrival which had meant that people had behaved extremely territorially because they had no options and that co-operative work had not been really much of a goer. Well actually they are flourishing too. One of the keys is that whoever they employed in the job I do now, had to be able to function well with the Head of [humanities] Department because we have to work very closely. Luckily that's happened. The chemistry is all there. She's a fabulous lady, she's just wonderful and a wonderful professional. That's opened up immense possibilities like I have got her working in the Senior English area of the school which she wasn't permitted to do previously. She takes fifth form so all of a sudden she sees all the flow-on effects of where the junior programme leads to and where the [humanities] programme leads and da da da and I'm looking at her programme doing Third Form [humanities], so I can see how it functions. It all works well but all that has created new possibilities so that people are volunteering to do things. That probably ends up being a lot extra for them because instead of just retreating to their own quiet corner and just trying to survive, they are doing creative things. In [humanities] we had a meeting last night from 4.30 to 9 O'clock where we were doing follow through work on the curriculum. We had all agreed that that would be the time to do it cos' we didn't want to use professional development time where we would have to take time out of our classes. We had already done that once this term and we didn't feel we could do it to the kids again. They had

had other disruptions like schools trips and all that hoo-ha, athletics days and that. We just wanted their day to go smoothly and there are all these mad people on the second last day of a term, cranking it out. It's pretty good really, isn't it? And volunteering, we didn't say wouldn't this be a lovely day, they had said, how about that day. [HoD Humanities] was organising the running of it but it was very much driven by those people.

Interviewer: You have been talking about that as if it's just evolved, part of the consequence of somebody being in post, you being in post, that they have started to work more closely together. That's just happened, has it? (Isadora: I haven't done anything.) You aren't taking conscious steps to say, even to yourself

Isadora: When I first moved in, [the principal] very carefully backgrounded me on the problems that had existed so that I knew but lots has emerged subsequently. I spent a lot of time last term, that last term of last year just people working. Lunchtime was very important. Friday afternoon drinkie sessions. Blah blah blah. And I still do spend real energy networking. If I have got a staff member's away because they are crook, I flip them a phone call and say, giddy or, just keep the good oil flowing. Because there was no communication. This [departmental office] was a locked room. It wasn't used but it was locked. Nobody in the Department could get to the phone or anything. There was a lot of hoo-ha things but none of those things matter. It's just that you then have to just deliberately dismantle that and make it different if you want it to function differently.

Interviewer: So that's what you have done that dismantling.

Isadora: Yeah, it has been a dismantling thing. But it's not that I want anyone to like me, that's not it, but what I do want is functionality. The people in this Department are very able, they are very able but they have thought of themselves as being really quite hopeless. Or, not really very responsible, and they are not. That's really what's emerging, that someone has given them the permission to be fabulous and to a bit creative and to contribute without being squashed and they are going like bombs! [Isadora, Matai. HoD English, Term 1]

It is difficult to give much credence to Isadora's self-effacing "I haven't done anything", for her comments in term one directly echoed those of a few months earlier<sup>16</sup> when she described how much, if not all, of her available non-teaching time was spent actively building trust among new colleagues and constantly talking and listening to them in the staffroom. Beyond this, however, the changes were attributable not to conventional interventionist management strategies, but to apparently mundane and subtle shifts in emphasis and routine: the symbolic opening up of the departmental office for communal use, her personal "chemistry" with the HoD Humanities, improved workgroup "communication", encouraging and giving "permission" to colleagues to become actively involved in curriculum and workgroup development.

### *Monitoring Stress Levels*

William had experienced this preliminary shift in departmental culture and workgroup relationships the previous year when he, too, had been new in post as HoD. His concern then had been to encourage a move away from the traditional deference to hierarchy that he sensed had historically operated at Totara and toward a more collegial mode of workgroup organisation. During 1997 he was very aware of the pressures caused for colleagues by Unit Standards development and dual assessment and was acutely attuned to the need for him as HoD to monitor energy and stress levels within the workgroup:

... there have been some things within the department, like with the databasing of our records which hasn't gone to plan, but I have made sure that I have not been judgemental of the people involved because I know they are under a lot of work. Although it's not happened to the time scale that we originally set down, equally I don't think that if I had been doing it, I could have necessarily done any better, so I shouldn't be critical of them. I am probably making those sorts of judgements on an ongoing basis, not sticking to the time lines. I still believe that the best resource I have is the staff. And it's that maintaining relationships with the staff which is of major importance because if you want to get a lot, if you want to flog them to death later, you have got to look after them now. Got to pick your moments when you are gonna have to work hard otherwise when you really need it, it's not that they won't do it, it's just that they won't have the energy to do it effectively and I don't think that helps anybody. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

William, then, saw a need to "pick your moments" with staff in order to ensure that things went well when the pressures were most intense.

### *Normalising Mutual Support*

Frances' situation was different again. She knew from extensive experience that the Individualised Learning programme was personally and pedagogically demanding for all the teachers involved. Consequently, she needed to provide regular opportunities for them to meet and talk together about the students and the day to day classroom management issues they faced, in a formal yet comparatively relaxed forum. It was, in effect, the weekly staff meeting, complete with the ritual sharing of a bag of lollies, which acted as the catalyst for building a workgroup culture and maintaining relationships:

I think we have had meetings every Tuesday except for one and every second one I tried to make professional development. That's been good because they are just getting to know the programme and things like that. The staff themselves have been grateful and there's been no query of, "I don't want to come". There's been no anti-feeling of having a meeting every week, which there had been in the past. People openly voiced that they were gaining from the meetings, they actually gained support and it was one of the strengths they saw Individualised Learning was with the teacher support so that it's been good. The new staff are getting there. It's a programme that takes a long time to actually take on board completely and carry it right through and of course what happens is people tend to revert back as soon as things. We had it this morning in English. They reverted back to old ways of, if things don't, if they feel that they can't let go, and it really is hard to let go of control of that learning. If you still think you are in control of it, it's very hard to let go. So they've started to pull the reins in for the kids now.

Interviewer: As a group, the mixture of old and new staff and people who have been in a long time like [English teacher] and considerably less time like [HoD Humanities], how are they with the individualised Learning philosophy do you think? Is that strong?

Frances: I think it's coming, but then they will make a comment and I will have to go back to the philosophy but generally I think it's building up. I found the momentum is building up and the belief and the understanding that it can work. I think [HoD Humanities] in particular has come a long way this term. He's let go of a lot of things and accepts, particularly with some of the clientele that we have got, that some of kids just don't work. If they don't annoy others, it's OK. But they wouldn't work in a normal classroom either so it's accepting  
[...]

Interviewer: How did the newer staff come to terms with that? Have they been accepting?

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<sup>16</sup> Isadora, Totara, HoD English, November 1996.

Frances: Yeah it's coming. [New teacher], she only has them two hours a week too, next term will be even better, she's got four, and there's some choice in there for her 'cos her kids don't have choice at the moment so they come in disgruntled and I have to be here and that sort of thing. So she's struggling quite a bit and she's actually reverted quite a bit to traditional, formal work because she feels they are not doing anything. She feels that they are not progressing, she's still taking responsibility there. But that's OK and I have let it go and just encourage her to try but next term when it's four periods she might get a different feel for it.

Interviewer: The impression I have got again, just observing those two meetings, is the relationships as a group seem quite strong, people appear to be open with each other.

Frances: I think we look at everything as a problem to be solved. There's no judging. There's no judgemental. Everybody has these problems and can anybody help them solve it? Rather than, "I'm not going to say anything because I will be afraid, everybody else is doing so well". We don't, everybody's different and we try to make them feel. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 2]

In this sense, the building of relationships took place in both formal and informal settings: the daily staffroom discourse and the workgroup routines. Equally, as William noted, the process of openly discussing externally driven curriculum change itself strengthened the relationships and encouraged communication among the members of the workgroup:

I think that the fact that we have had those open, frank discussions" about Unit Standards as a sort of catalyst has strengthened the department. They do feel that they can say things and I can say things. As a group we've arrived at decisions. I think I've said this before, things don't go my way all the time, and I've got no problem with that. I'm just the paper pusher and the spokesperson for a group of people. It's not my decision to make so, yes, I can say that Unit Standards have (inaudible) [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 3]

Nevertheless, the fact that these four heads of department appeared self-confident, accepting of their role within the workgroup and self-effacing about the manner in which the reportedly collegial workgroup sub-culture was maintained, should not lead us to conclude that the process of creating such a collaborative working environment and keeping "the good oil flowing" was straightforward either in its establishment or maintenance. Indeed, there was enough evidence in the study as a whole, and the anecdotal accounts of the very different sub-cultures that obtained in some of the neighbouring departments in each school, to suggest that these particular departmental workgroups were successful, to the extent that they were, in no small measure because of the time, thought, care and energy devoted to them by William, Frances, Isadora and Tim:

... the Maths department next year is going to be run as a co-operative with, [female DP] and I leading it but not, we are going to share it all, share that work. Two PRs from the HOD's position are going to other people within the department so everyone gets a little bit but they will have to take a bit of the responsibility as well.

Interviewer: Is that just the decision that you made among yourselves?

Frances: Yeah, [DP] and I. What happened was unfortunately, [DP] was the HoD and then she got the DP and we got, the guy came into be Assistant HoD, who was a very good assistant

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<sup>17</sup> Little, J. Teachers as colleagues. In A. Lieberman (Ed.). Schools as collaborative cultures. Creating the future now. Lewes, UK: Falmer, 1990, pp. 177-180.

HoD, he was just automatically put up to HoD and he wasn't ready for it. He feels he is the only one that can run a department. He has run the department in hierarchical fashion where we have all felt useless. We have been told that people without Maths degrees are useless [Frances was primary school trained with a BEd] [laughs] and very worried about the state of students coming through because they have been taught Maths by teachers without Maths degrees. All this makes women feel really good. [laughs] So the second year teacher, she feels she can't teach much pretty well and things like that. Rather than employ somebody, we might get another person that doesn't appreciate that there's other assets for teaching apart from content, we decided just to employ a first year Maths teacher and then all share and make everybody feel part of it and see how that goes just for a year. There's nobody at the moment ready to take on HoD Maths but in another year, there could be. One of the girls is pretty good but she just needs a little bit of encouragement and things like that. She's not ready to do it yet. She's only a year four teacher I think and she's not ready yet but maybe with a year of everybody sharing and helping or two years of that, she will be. That's a long term, and just the way that we prefer to do it. So it will be interesting to see how it works. We used to run it like that when [DP] was the HoD. We all shared it even though she was the HoD.

*Interviewer:* So this other person has moved on?

*Frances:* Will move on now, and going back. He has actually recognised that he's hasn't done a very good job. He's going back to just a normal teacher. Just an Assistant Teacher, so it's been a learning curve and [laughs] it is good that he has actually recognised that he, he's been through his appraisal and things like that, he's recognised that some things that he's done hasn't been quite, quite kosher - at times. [laughs] And he's sick of working with middle-aged women! He's a young man and he's got these middle-aged women! [laughs] We tried to be supportive but he doesn't see it like that and so the workload is manageable and that won't be a lot more for me. I'm Assistant HoD Maths now and so we will have more meetings and things because that's the way we like to run it and just once a month we will meet. I think we met once this term, and then get told this and this is the budget, nobody's got to say anything, this is it. That's not the way I work.

*Interviewer:* How does that compare with the Science Department area, is it done much more openly?

*Frances:* [laughs] It's these men ! [laughs] It is a little bit more open but again, we have no input into budget, no input into professional development choice and things like that, lack of communication. I just think in a way there's different leadership styles. See, this HoD Maths got pals with the HoD Science, that's really where he went downhill because he started to just say "Oh we don't need meetings" and "There's nothing to talk about" and "I've done that" and "I'll do it". Things get done but you don't actually own them and it's not your department anymore. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 4]

## SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL COLLEAGUES

In addition to the development of collective relationships, the four heads of department were required, either officially or less so, to work closely with one or more colleagues.

### *Formal Support and Informal Encouragement*

In William's case, the two instances he disclosed were both positioned towards the "official" end of the continuum and focused on issues of craft knowledge:

One teacher has been teaching part-time for a number of years but they have never ever had that first year teacher-mentor relationship. Consequently, they have had some problems with the way they teach, the way they deal with students, and I am working closely with that person on the way we write assessments. The roles of people inside an assessment, writing relationship, who does what, how long you think it should take. There are a number of other issues with that teacher. I seem to spend a significant amount of time with that person advising them. There is another teacher that also has been having a few problems with the changing

nature of the students that we are dealing with. Their reluctance to adapt, and their slowness to adapt means that they are having some areas just because the nature of the kids is changing. That teacher, the style that they are teaching now would have been fantastic fifteen years ago, but they don't see the need to change and that also and that's a very official action. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1]

Isadora's working situation was more complex in this regard, given that a number of the "sticky" issues she faced as HoD derived from the stagnant, or stuck,<sup>18</sup> workgroup culture she reportedly inherited from the previous incumbent. In addition to specific action with one or more individuals, which she was reluctant to discuss in substantive detail, Isadora attempted to address the workgroup culture in which she and her colleagues worked in three ways (see the extract below). First, she recognised that her colleagues' "cycles of coping" differed thus everyone in the department needed to be supported and encouraged according to their personal rhythms of "peak and ebb". Second, she encouraged her new colleagues to take risks and to develop individual and collective belief in their ability to innovate. Third, and related to the first two, she needed to ensure that their enthusiasm did not get the better of them early in the year. In short, just as individuals had cycles of coping, so too did the collective workgroup, thus "pacing's important and stamina's important too".

Within a week of being in the job, I had started to pick the potential situations and the potential dynamics too. Who's likely to have friction points and where. But you also need to know, I think with the staff, people have different cycles of coping. If you can figure when, when people peak and ebb, it's really helpful because you can see it happening and allow people space. No-one's at peak performance constantly. That's not possible, we are not automatons, so you have got to allow for, I don't know, 15-20% of your staff are ebbing a bit, others are picking up from an ebb and then the balance are basically holding firm at any one time. It's all a fluctuating and as long as you are prepared to let that be and realise that that is life, it's easier.

Interviewer: Do you see the particularly 'sticky' things as your responsibility or are there other people in the Department who get involved with those as well? Is it always you because you are paid the extra money?

Isadora: No, I don't think it's because I'm paid the extra money but, because of the way, I guess the Departments in New Zealand are traditionally structured. I have got an overall responsibility for professional development and also accountability for delivery of curriculum etc. So, I need to be prepared to take responsibility for monitoring those situations. I regard it as my job too, to professionally develop staff members so that they move on confidently in their ability to deliver, to take on board new stuff, to push their bounds of comfort too, which this lot are really happy to. They are volunteering to push their boundaries. In some ways you rein them in a bit because you don't want them to take on too much. We have actually got to last all year not just one term. We have got to be all still standing in December. So pacing is important and stamina's important. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 1]

Part of her strategy in encouraging enthusiasm and, thereby, shifting the workgroup culture, was to identify and "target" key colleagues whose contributions she might recognise in a tangible way and for whom she could provide structured career development opportunities:

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<sup>18</sup> Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M. and West, M. *School improvement in an era of change*. London: Cassell, 1994, chapter six.

I feel really pleased. This year I have managed to get [female teacher] made the Assistant HOD and the formal Assistant who really wasn't doing an assistant's role but something else, get her role created as a separate role for her thus fulfilling the needs of the department and the desires of the other person. Now we are looking to [new female drama teacher] and then there's two more people who are target people in the department. Who have targetted basically themselves by comments they made, things they have written and attitudes they have exhibited as being people that need to be given skills so that should they want to apply for something, they are equipped.

Interviewer: And how are you doing that? Is it through giving them opportunities to do things internally?

Isadora: Inviting them into things. You can make sure they go on the right courses but people need certain internal systems experiences and they need to have a little area of responsibility too that really is theirs including the management of other people with that. Because that's something that, you might have all the skills in the world and the best curriculum knowledge but if you can't manage people well you are stuffed actually John. I found too that there are one or two, this inevitably happens in management. You find there are one or two people who are dead keen to get on and do. They're incredibly knowledgeable, they are good but they are not good people [people]. The hard thing is that for some they are never going to get further because of that, because they will never really modify their style ... Sometimes people don't want to advance. There would be three people in my department who will, unless they are shifted with dynamite, will be here until they die. Those teachers need support too because once you are dug in until death the time or whatever, sometimes you stale or become over institutionalised or can't envisage any different or alternative way of doing anything other than a *la mode d'ici*. It can be tricky, tricky, tricky and they need just as much help and development as the others. It's no more difficult to support those people. I think the things that are the most challenging for me in support are finding ways to resolve some difficulties. If a staff member is failing to perform or really making big mistakes and won't modify, those are real challenges, John. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 2]

As the workgroup dynamics developed, then, during the course of the 1997 school year, Isadora was able to build, as Michael Fullan<sup>19</sup> would call it, a 'critical mass' of support for change with colleagues who had exhibited the "attitudes" and voiced the sorts of "comments" Isadora wished to promote within the department. Equally, Isadora identified three "stale" and "institutionalised" colleagues whose practice had, according to her, atrophied, and who would therefore also need individual support. Significantly, Isadora made a distinction between these sorts of challenges and those more problematic management difficulties posed by fellow teachers at particular career stages<sup>20</sup> who were "failing to perform". Consequently, the demands on her interpersonal and communication skills, and their ability to empathise with colleagues who, for whatever reason, were struggling, were considerable. As Isadora bluntly put it towards the end of the year, when a number of these long standing issues have been at least partially resolved:

You have to do it with all the care in the world and you also have to be seen as the Bitch From Hell sometimes. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 4]

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<sup>19</sup> Fullan, M. *Change forces. Probing the depths of educational reform*. London: Falmer, 1993, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup> Huberman, M. *The lives of teachers*. London: Cassell, 1993.

### *Supporting The Non-Specialist Teacher*

Tim, on the other hand, was faced with the need to support colleagues on a daily basis, largely because his department was staffed by a majority of teachers for whom English was not a subject major; this at a stage of compulsory schooling when the curriculum content becomes increasingly specialised, differentiated and stratified. At Rimu, Tim endeavoured to build up individual staff members' self-confidence in their ability to "deliver" the English curriculum by drawing on their existing craft knowledge strengths whenever possible whilst at the same time, attempting to bolster their subject knowledge<sup>21</sup> to the point where they could satisfactorily teach and assess student learning. Of course, given that Tim was simultaneously required to introduce a number of mandatory curriculum, credentialing and surveillance initiatives, this limited the time he had available to support his non-specialist colleagues:

I feel it's been too reactive, rather than setting agendas. What has happened if we take [teacher] for example, is that we have talked about and looked at and felt our way vaguely towards that idea of levelling, so that's happened. From that discussion I have had a feeling that she is on track, that she has a sense of levels and in a sense that she is not a bad assessor. She can see cos' she's just teaching third form level, she's close enough from a primary background to sort of being able to (inaudible) kids. I have also talked to her in terms of finding a focus with work, because there's been issues of the holistic grade where I like to more tease out what are we actually assessing, what we are looking for here. There has not been enough talking and monitoring of her process in that. On a personal level there is a usefulness in the fact that we are both very relaxed at just coming and saying, well here's an issue what can we do? So although it is reactive it's usefully reactive and we can just do that. That has happened a number of times, resourcing issues, what should I be using for these kids? She has been useful to me because she has a deeper knowledge and has used that knowledge well in terms of PA testing and so on, the first time this year that we have done that with the Third Form, the first time in many, many years. She oversaw the English part of that, and then taught very much to the outcomes so that her third form class, she realised what her instincts were telling, which is that there are real burning needs in the class, as a class, with just a very few exceptions. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 2]

### **REVIEWING EXISTING PRACTICE**

Workgroup and curriculum practice were reviewed in several distinctive ways, the least meaningful or relevant of was "an official review date" for policies:

We do need to review things, and we just have reviewed quite a major policy today. It was out of need rather than the time is right or set. We had to change the way, it has workload issues associated with it, change whether or not we are going to use the same tests for several years because one of the problems with the Unit Standards is, its philosophical stand-point is that, it is an opportunity for students to learn and they should be able to take the material home so they can study it. But if they take it home and it gets photocopied, [that] then compromises the security which means that we really should be rewriting every year. But rewriting them every year, when you consider how many courses there are, and how many tests there are, is a significant impact on the workload. People felt that it was important enough for the learning of

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<sup>21</sup> Shulman, L. Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1987, 57(1), 1-22.

the students that we should be doing that. So that's meant that today, that's why I'm toting round the laptop. I had to amend the minutes of the meeting we had on Thursday. I had to change the policy and write down some of the implications that we do this, then we will have to do these things as well. So we are reviewing, sometimes ongoing. We are reviewing the use of our computer resource with other computer resources in this school. It's more as problems or perceived problems arise, might not be a huge problem but we are starting to get a little bit about well what are we going to do about this? And as we are thinking about them, we are in a state of constant review. I think I prefer it that way rather than saying, "next year we will", because when it comes to the end of the year, those problems aren't looming quite as large. It's difficult for people to dot all the i's and cross all the t's whereas at the moment they know exactly what's wrong and if we are in a position where we can change then we should be doing it now so it's very much on-going. I guess it will be that that assessment policy will, must have some review date put on it, but it will probably be at the end of the year. I don't imagine that would be necessarily the time that it would be reviewed. I would imagine when the need for a change arises, we will change it as we see fit. You just have to put an official review date on all the documents. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1]

### *Reviewing When The Need Or Opportunity Arises*

The idea that activities, protocols and procedures are in a "constant state of review" seems to most accurately connote the ways in which these teachers reflected on and thought about their practice, that is, as or "when the need for a change arises". Very precise and context bound issues of curriculum implementation or development and workgroup organisation or dynamics unfolded in the course of their daily teaching and workgroup interaction. It was these emerging events and crises rather than the normative staging points of a rational, cyclical review process which prompted discussion and review.

Alternatively, the decision to review the status quo occasionally arose from an unplanned decision to try something different. In the Individualised Learning programme at Kauri there were a number of ritualised collective classroom events that were used to reinforce the programme's unusual learning philosophy and ethos. One of these was the cross-curriculum day which occurred once a term and was used to bring together in groups, students who routinely worked in less explicitly structured lessons. The fact that the day proved "so successful and the kids really enjoyed it" prompted Frances to review the weekly social skills lesson, [name], that had been organised in one style for several years and to subsequently model it on ideas borrowed from a community education group from outside the school:

... we did something different for the cross curriculum day. We involved the careers department. I organised the whole day for the kids and it was really successful. What they did was they had guest speakers, we had trips out, into Careers Services and we had guest speakers and we had police dogs in, we had [local radio personalities] in, things like that. It was a really successful day. Because of that, we are having cross-curriculum day on Week 4 this term and we modelled on that day. This one's on health, and we have smoking and drinking and other issues and exercise and going climbing the wall and doing and listening, visitors in, going out. We are modelling it on that because it was so successful and the kids enjoyed it and we have paid for the [community education group] to come in and run [weekly skills lesson]. That's the young group of, the people who do social skills. The kids just loved it and so from that we are modelling [weekly skills lesson] on that too now. We are doing different things in [weekly skills lesson]. We are still focusing on the social skills and the group work as our goal but the way we do it is not just me writing a lesson and giving it out. We have divided up the four teachers and

they have each made a lesson up and then the kids are rotating around them. So every four weeks you have to write one lesson, that you repeat four times. It's not increasing workloads too much. But it's much easier than every week getting a new lesson that I have written that they don't own to do. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 3]

### *Reviewing When Energy Allows*

In contrast to the renewal<sup>22</sup> of energy generated by such external stimuli, Tim found that in his small department, the onus for review and meeting set deadlines fell on him. Echoing Isadora's image of "peak", "ebb" and "fluctuating" energy levels, Tim talked in terms of "waves of energy" which at times were highly productive. Yet, from his small school experience, he argued that development and review both were driven largely by the HoD and that targets for colleagues had to be tangible, "very precise" and readily attainable:

... it's sort of waves of energy and so on to be honest. It very much ebbs and flows. Last term there was a lot of energy and I felt a lot of things were being advanced. This term it's been a case of there have been other things and it's fallen back, it has fallen back. For all the human skills and so on of the rest of the department, it really is, has to be driven by the HOD. The delegations have to be very precise, very time bound, very sort of success orientated. "Just do this and could you do it by", that sort of wording. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 2]

Taken together, these three extracts suggested strongly that much of what these teachers defined as 'review' took place as energy levels and other, more immediate demands allowed. As often as not, the need to review appeared to be conceptualised in terms of concrete problems (or, in the case of Frances, unanticipated opportunities) that required resolution in the short term, as opposed to pre-planned, paper objectives which had to be met in some distant future.

## **WORKING WITH OTHER HODS AND SENIOR STAFF**

Secondary schools are comparatively large and complex social groupings. Although teachers are employed by the school, they spend much of their working day and year with a considerably smaller group of people,<sup>23</sup> most usually, departmental or subject colleagues. Their primary affiliations, as we saw in chapter two, are typically to their own subject area and the immediate workgroup. It has been persuasively argued that (i) HoDs may struggle to see things from a whole school perspective,<sup>24</sup> and (ii) attempts to develop whole school, cross curricular initiatives are inherently problematic.<sup>25</sup> This suggests that HoDs' relationships with other

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<sup>22</sup> Huberman, op. cit., 1993; Louden, W. *Understanding teaching: continuity and change in teachers' knowledge*. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Siskin, L. Subject divisions. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 23-47.

<sup>24</sup> Earley, P. and Fletcher-Campbell, F. *The time to manage? Department and faculty heads at work*. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson, 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Paechter, op. cit., 1995.

structures and groupings within the school are filtered, conducted and evaluated in terms of the anticipated effect on their primary affiliations or, as William put it, the "whanau".

### *Affiliations To The Workgroup*

I think I identify with the department more than I identify with the senior management team. I'm one of the chalk writers rather than one of the paper pushers, although I do spend a significant amount of my time pushing the paper and I would always want it to be that way I think ... I think it is a good relationship that I have with them [senior management staff]. We don't always see eye-to-eye but we do so in a very friendly way I guess. But equally conversations with them, even though I'm bouncing ideas off, are always just a little bit guarded. They can't be as open and honest as they can with people within my department, when I can say exactly what I'm feeling without, I sometimes feel with [the principal] that I also need to be, not politically correct but politically aware of what the circumstances are before I open my mouth. I have on one occasion, when I said what I honestly felt, been told "That's not your decision to tell me how to do my job". Which always makes you guarded about how open you are. Whereas people in my department, I hope and they do, say, "Well, I would do it this way", and I don't ever turn around and say, "Well it's not your position to tell me how to do that". They're experienced people, that's what they genuinely feel. Whether I take that on-board, or some of it, or all it or adapt what I think because of it, is my choice. I am accountable for the decisions I make but I don't think I would ever say, "Well, that's not your decision and you shouldn't be telling me what you would do. Because you're not in that position to do it, so there". Although it is a good relationship, there is still that gap and I feel like, you feel like you are going back to your family, you know, your whanau and you are there and you can say whatever you like and whatever you find. I like that cos' that also means that people will disagree with me in the department, often quite strongly and I hope that I will always engender that that was OK to do that. That it was a departmental. I do what the department wants, not what I want. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

Throughout the study, very little discussion was devoted to whole school issues and relationships, except where this had, or was anticipated to have, an impact on internal workgroup or subject processes and agenda. Equally, the impression I gained in many interviews and observations was of a real "gap" between departments ("chalk writers") and senior staff ("pen pushers") where the relationships, although cordial, were, indeed, "guarded" and best negotiated by those who were "politically aware".

### *Whole School Forums*

In each of the four schools there existed a number of curriculum, pastoral and administrative forums to which HoDs belonged through their position in the management structure. However, these forums were consistently described as less meaningful and useful to the day to day work of HoDs than their subject workgroup. People "happen to get on as people", or professional "chemistry"<sup>26</sup> might engender productive, empathetic and supportive relationships but, beyond this, whole school forums were most likely to be seen as "an administrative convenience":

... our intentions are good, the cross curriculum and so on. The honest truth is that in reality, the opportunities have not been capitalised on. Social Studies is an obvious area and History,

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<sup>26</sup> Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 1.

Geography. The other demands, sorts of things we have been talking about have meant that in terms of cross curriculum things, no, very, very limited, not exclusive, not without exception but very limited. In terms of the collegiality, the shared discussions and so on, I think there is quite a good series of networks. There are some fortunate coincidences like similar ages of HoDs at the moment, people who happen to get on as people and so you talk about your subject and things like that. In that sense, I think we are fairly supportive group in that we all know the realities of what it is to be middle management, caught between the two pressures and so on. So it's good.

Interviewer: Do you see yourselves as a group? Do you actually meet as a forum?

Tim: Just informal. No, very good question. There are some real coalescing group concepts here but it is the Deans, the four House Deans, there's a real sense of a group there. HoD's no. It's an administrative convenience in a sense, so that when we met, HoD's, senior subject teachers, when we meet, there is not a sense of a theme or common obvious sense of purpose as there is with Deans. It's because, I suspect, this is a perception, Ivan [the principal] may have other, but I think there is that idea that Ivan or whoever, is meeting with senior staff rather than with HoD's who bring those particular skills. Also we happen to be [inaudible] school, it's called HoD-Senior Subject Teachers and it is maybe 2/3rds of the staff so it's the best definition of an exclusive club, make sure everyone belongs. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

Indeed, in Tim's experience, the attempt to promote greater inter-departmental communication and collaboration proved unsuccessful even where, on the surface, this might have been expected to produce benefits for all involved:

We have our HoD meetings, but again they are very much macro issues. [I] floated the idea of faculties, I like, I floated that idea of a formalised structure this year, I suggested that's where we could talk common issues. It hasn't been picked up on.

Interviewer: What would you see as the advantage of faculties as opposed to the current structure?

Tim: I thought of it in particularly in terms of Unit Standards, that the HoD Social Studies is much further down the track. I thought well if there is an issue, if there's a reason, we have got to have a reason for this thing to exist, that could be a starting point, it would then flow on to cross curriculum things maybe. I also had a bit of agenda in the mind to do with homework because I'm still concerned that there is only one department in the school that really has a homework policy and I thought maybe there's a chance to promote that idea within like minded subjects. So I could see a few things starting to make sense of the faculty idea. [Tim, term 2]

In New Zealand, the prescribed curriculum for schools comprises seven essential learning areas, which (Technology aside) more or less reflect the historical subject division of curriculum knowledge in secondary schools, together with taxonomies of essential skills and values. In theory applicable to the whole curriculum, schools are expected to incorporate these skills and values into schemes of work and assess them. Although, in this study, schemes of work and classroom practices were discussed in terms of the changing subject knowledge, pedagogies and assessment strategies brought about by the 'new curriculum', for the most part this took place in the context of the individual curriculum subject area, not as whole school, whole curriculum issues.<sup>27</sup> The strength of traditional, content driven and external examination

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<sup>27</sup>This is consistent with what we know about subject specific pedagogies and assessment, e.g. Nolan, J. and Francis, P. Changing perspectives in curriculum and instruction. In C. Glickman (Ed.). *Supervision in transition*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1992, 44-60.

oriented subject boundaries<sup>28</sup> and workgroup sub-cultures appeared immune to the normative political concept of the co-ordinated delivery and assessment of essential skills and values across the curriculum as a whole:

Interviewer: Do you get the impression that the other HOD's are as concerned with those essential skills as you?

Frances: No. I know that from when I have written a thinking course, the learning how to learn course when I had that year off. It's a forty hour course and they won't lend any time. I have got to get a little bit of time from each department to put everybody through this forty-hour course. They are not prepared to give up cos' their content time is more important to them than learning how to learn. I have tried to get that through last year and I will leave it this year and I will have another go. I think many of the HODs are now teaching third formers and they don't know how to learn. People like [Individualised Learning teacher/HoD Humanities] and that can actually see for themselves that maybe the course will be valuable whereas when I came back from the year off, they just thought, oh it's just an airy fairy, dreams. But they hadn't been teaching third formers for quite a few years. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 2]

### *Blurring Traditional Subject Boundaries*

One clear exception to these hard boundaries was the growing area of post-compulsory, school-based Transition education for non-academic students. Here, the combination of greater student retention rates in senior secondary schools, the disappearance of many trades apprenticeship schemes and their replacement with Unit Standards based vocational credentialling frameworks arguably created greater incentives for HoDs to abandon traditional academic subject territorial maps. For example, both Isadora and, below, Tim, were working in collaboration with HoD Transition in their respective schools to develop and deliver the Communication English Unit Standards:

... we had this debate with the HoD Transition about where the Communication English Unit Standard should fall, within what department, what would be the delivery mechanism, because we made the decision as a school to buy a eleven hundred dollar package from [name] Polytech which provides the Unit Standards assessments. Now the decision was made that it be delivered through Transition rather than through the English department, so that's an example of a change as a result of the increasing number of adults and older students who would otherwise have left, staying at school. English is shifting, who delivers what and I think it fits very naturally into that area. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 4]

## **MAINTAINING NETWORKS OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

During the course of the school year, all four heads of department told work-stories that revealed links with former colleagues, other HoDs, subject associations and local tertiary education providers. Just as the form and content of these networks varied from individual to individual, so to did the purpose and frequency of contact. For Isadora, unplanned encounters in the supermarket carpark were sufficient at one point in the year. Tim relied heavily on formal

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<sup>28</sup> Siskin, op. cit, 1994; 1995; Bernstein, B. On the classification and framing of educational knowledge.

contracts with the regional English Adviser, and Frances combined attendance at short courses on mathematical pedagogy at the local college of education with her annual involvement in the science and technology fairs in Rivertown in order to keep up to date in her subjects and maintain contact with the wider epistemic community of colleagues. Of the four, William's analysis of the need for networks was the most enthusiastic and, in part at least, was couched in terms of political activism, through the regional branch of the mathematics teachers' association:

I consciously and deliberately do [maintain subject association links] because I wasn't as involved when a lot of the changes required by the new curriculum were coming in. It was at the time then that I started to get involved because I felt very, you only had the number of brains in your Department who tended to think all along the same lines, and you weren't getting the experience of experiments tried at other schools. Does it work? How can we adapt what they have done? So I did it purposely. We were actually quite fortunate, when we went to a recent one and we had one, two, three, four, four of us, go to that evening. It was [a] voluntary evening, 7-9.30 whatever. That was equally as many as some schools and more than most. I think that's something I have a reasonable amount of pride in. We are actually involved. Similarly with the Unit Standards, we are involved with the cutting edge of the education. That doesn't necessarily mean that we are big-headed when we are saying, we know what we are talking about but it does make you feel excited that you are there with everybody else, if a protest needs to be made and if support needs to be made. At least you could talk about issues from [an] informed point of view. I guess it makes my job more meaningful and as a HoD I really do feel I need to be quite knowledgeable about what other people are doing. I have worked under HoDs who only know what's going on in their school and that's the end of it. So it is something that you purposely do. Not all members of the Department are as involved as I am. They are all sympathetic, I think, towards the need for it but just don't have the time. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1]

Unlike William, who enjoyed the professional companionship of ten experienced and well-qualified mathematics teachers in a provincial city that offered ready access to other schools, subject associations and tertiary providers, Tim worked in the only secondary school an "isolated", rural community, at least half an hour's drive away from the "outside world" of the nearest educational support networks and agencies. Consequently, the opportunity to participate in MoE funded professional development contracts, delivered by Teacher Support Services (based at the nearest teachers' college) was crucial to the informed development of English programmes at Rimu:

We have decided what our [English curriculum document] levels are, though I think that probably needs reviewing having been to the in-service course. [DP/English teacher], Form Five; me, Form Six; Helen, Form Seven. I think there may be merit, I haven't discussed this with [DP/English teacher] yet, [in] maybe me doing the Form Five because that's the base that we work outward from. That's a thought I have had as a result of that course. What we need to do with the key task, and might involve College of Education in this, couple of, one or two of their people, is some macro planning where we actually sit down and just look at the Unit Standards and the course for those three levels and just try and put a broad outline as to how we see the Units fitting in the various levels.

Interviewer: You seem quite keen to involve people from the College both in the contract and in this sort of thing. What are the advantages of having them involved?

Tim: I think the advantage is that we are geographically and numerically quite isolated and small respectively. That can be a fairly powerful emotion in a time of change so it's really good to have that link with the people who not only are perceived to be experts and have that background but also significantly who move around other schools and pick up best practices and so on. So they are really important to link up with to the outside world. It's difficult where we are too. The English teachers' association and so on, is Rivertown based and the reality of actually getting through to those meetings and so on can be [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

For William, *geographical* isolation was not a problem. He was, nevertheless, acutely aware of (i) his potential *professional* isolation as a result of the way in which the Tomorrow's Schools reforms had produced a national system of autonomous schools without any established forum for teachers to influence curriculum policy development; and (ii) the potential impact of this isolation on the power-knowledge<sup>29</sup> relationships he and his department had with external agencies of the state.<sup>30</sup> In this regard, the subject association provided an essential foil, both political and curriculum-related, for the work he and his colleagues were engaged with in the school:

I'm becoming more and more aware of the influence that [New Zealand Association of Teachers of Mathematics] has, probably through my involvement in the conference. I have been much more aware of how it can be a voice to make a change and how I should be involved in that change making process. I do think it is a powerful force. With NZQA, my awareness of NZQA being in more and more turmoil has increased over this year and last year with our involvement with Unit Standards. So whereas I probably saw them as having a greater role in setting things, I now realise that they haven't got a clue what they are doing either. So you have to turn to other organisations, if you like, who will push things in the right direction and add your voice to theirs so that the Ministry need to be take a note of what they are saying. At the end of the day, since you have got a Minister in Parliament who's going to make a political decision. But if you can help push them in a particular direction. It's long been held that the Minister is, especially from the National Government, is fundamentally at odds with educational principles because of the fact that they are heavily steered by people like the Business Roundtable. The conservative nature of those individuals are wanting a particular type of education for their students and perhaps teachers being more of a left wing group are looking for a different direction. So I'm probably becoming more politically aware of that aspect of it. [laughs] So, yes, I do think they have a role to play and I think it is an important role and it seems to be increasing. The fact that NZAMT are now writing courses. In the last five years they have created two innovative things which have significantly changed the options for students. The first of them was the Maths Applied courses which was an alternative to Fifth Form School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate and Seventh Form Bursary. It was a certified, structured course for less able students geared particularly towards practical maths. The Ministry didn't invent that, the Maths Teachers Association [did]. It's solely down to them. In fact the Ministry had nothing to do with it. [tape ends] Not catering for the range of abilities that we have, they are not catering for the bottom, they are not catering for the top end, and organisations like NZAMT are having to and are capable of, and are doing that. Teachers are buying into it. So I think the Ministry would be stupid not to listen to them.

Interviewer: This is a fairly recent increased profile for the Association?

William: It is. NZAMT has been in existence for about ten years now and I guess it was born out of the, there used to be subject specialists within the Department of Education, there used to be curriculum development boards within the Ministry and all that sort of disappeared. So teachers

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<sup>29</sup> Foucault, M. *Power/knowledge. Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Ed. C. Gordon. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980, chapter six.

<sup>30</sup> See also the analysis of the science department at Totara in the chapter nine.

were left without a voice under Tomorrow's Schools and things like that. NZAMT was created to give the Maths teachers a voice in a sense and they have been around, I think for, it's eight years, eight or nine years. They have been around and they are not just a whinging group, they are saying, well you are not doing this. You are not addressing the lower ability or the high ability but we can and we will and we have. So they are filling the gaps if you like. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 4]

## **WORKING ON SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT**

In previous chapters I demonstrated that the teachers in the study were all engaged in a variety of work-related priorities and argued that these would typically focus on one or more of the areas of curriculum, staff and students. In 1997, the four heads of department were similarly engaged in development priorities in their subject and workgroup areas. In the case of Tim, William and Isadora, these were largely overshadowed by the need to introduce schemes and associated assessment regimes for Unit Standards. Nevertheless, they were fully aware of the challenges that recently prescribed curricula had presented to existing pedagogies.

### *Balancing External And Internal Development Priorities*

To a greater or lesser extent, these Heads of Department were uncomfortable about the extent to which this opportunity to introduce welcome (for them), but more problematic and, in some cases, contentious pedagogical change had been subordinated to an external accountability-driven "directive" to rapidly put in place documented procedures:

We do have teachers who are adapting their pedagogical techniques more to the new demands of the National Curriculum than to the Unit Standard requirements. That's ongoing. Some teachers are obviously better at it or more quickly than others ... I'm reading a paper at the moment about the way we teach Maths and it says that the way we teach Maths is the way we understand Maths to be. That's probably heavily influenced by the way we were taught Maths. So it's cyclic, you can't just break, there is actually something that may take several generations to work out of the system. So we are asking some people who have learnt Mathematics in a very traditional, adapted way and probably taught it for a number of years in that way to shift. Now some of them are more open to those ideas because they see the positive effects on the students and others.

I had a parent who was a Head of Maths in another school here, whose daughter I teach. In our Seventh Form Statistics Course, we decided to use computers a lot which has changed significantly our pedagogical style in that it's much more tutorial, students working different levels all over the place at their own level at their own speed, self-learning, investigative learning, finding out rather than me telling them. All the things the National Curriculum tells us to do, all the things that the new Seventh Form Maths and Stats prescription in the advice, all says, we do it. And we have those parents coming in and putting me over the rack in the boss's office about when are you going to do some real teaching? And that's from somebody who I would have thought would have been an informed person rather than just a naive parent [inaudible] very cautiously.

So, yeah it's difficult for some teachers. They could take that [as] evidence [that] going into this new directive is not the way which we go because this is what they want and we should be serving the public and therefore we should be doing that. I firmly believe that what we are doing in that course is the right thing. You can't help have your self-doubts at times ... We do hear from the kids that they view this very much as a security blanket, notes and lots of

examples to practice. This is the traditional way that people have learnt Mathematics and they feel that makes them good Mathematicians and I'm not sure that's true. But they can at least get questions right, and therefore feel they are moving forward. But the questions are, they write the questions out of the textbook and they are very artificial. It doesn't give the ability to sort out, the way to answer a real world problem. So we, the whole Department is trying to move as the National Curriculum moves in that direction but probably because we are spending so much time on Unit Standards we are not spending as much time on ensuring that those pedagogical changes are made.

A specific example would be that when we had our departmental review last year, it was commented that our schemes do not necessarily link to the seven essential learning areas set down by the National Curriculum Statement. Although I think we do cover those areas, it doesn't actually have written in our scheme, this is the point where we do, where it said that we should do that. I know that's Marian's [the principal] wish that that was done and I would agree with it. I think it is a good idea. It gives advice to our beginning teachers, and our teachers [who] have not taught that year course for a few years where you have the opportunity to address those particular, the communication, the problem-solving areas. But we were told, OK next time you re-write your scheme, put them in. We don't have time at the moment to do Unit Standards and to redo that. It wouldn't be [a] profitable use of time. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1]

In addition to being HoD English, Tim was one of the longest-serving members of the staff at Rimu and was personally involved in many whole school development initiatives. He manifested this dual loyalty in terms of the linkage between what he was attempting to achieve within the English department and the official goals, planning priorities and management processes that were advocated by the school. Unusually among these four heads of department, he frequently discussed his departmental objectives in the context of whole school priorities:

... this year for the first time, every department in the school was required to put in some objectives and some action plans. And they were to follow from the school-wide goal which was 'quality teacher learning'. So, our action plans we put in place, and the Principal liked them as actual plans and in fact I have just reported back to him on them this morning. The sorts of things we did were we talked about how we were going to reformat the fourth form area of the curriculum, put in some performance criteria. We were going to do it collectively rather than just the one person which tended to be the case with previous levels, which was mainly me with a bit of help from Helen. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

Nevertheless, within the English workgroup, his day-to-day concerns were consistently derived from the debilitating and time-consuming need to provide as much structured support as possible for the many non-specialist teachers who worked in his subject area. The outcome focused, documented scheme for each year level was one source of such structure. Another was the idea of working towards a common, shared resource bank of unit plans and suggested activities:

One thing I think we could be much better at is the whole thing of unit resource sheets, things like that. I know that when someone comes in, like [non-specialist English teacher] for example, we don't have databanks. We don't have a format, a style of unit sheet ... We have the units, we have the outcomes and all that. But for someone who comes from say a primary school into this culture first up, in that sense it then makes work. In the short term it can make work for people like me, because I have to say, "Look here's some things that I do, and here's what I mean when I". The ideal solution is that that is very formatted and very clear right from the beginning

and have those databanks. So, that's a good area for development somewhere in the future. I'm not putting a date on that there. There are teachers with different resources coming around and it's a case of saying, be a magpie, get what works for you. But I suspect and I don't know because I haven't sort of poked around in other HoDs' filing cabinet, I suspect that there will be schools that are much further advanced in terms of having a whole [databank] of units. Knowing at the end of the day where there is a novel, there's a teacher who has a task sheet on the novel if they want to grab but it may or may not work for them. Ideally it would be good to say what is a really good assignment that any teacher could pick up on this novel. I don't believe that we have reached that stage at all. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

The constant personal struggle to develop sufficient support resources for colleagues internally, competed directly with the need to bring on-stream external prescriptions. Tim's frustration was compounded by the realisation that Unit Standards offered considerable potential benefits, not least the motivation of gaining a credential, for disaffected non-examination students who were the majority in Rimu, a decile two school. In the third term Tim conceded, again, that the objective of reformatting the fourth form scheme had been further delayed. He explained that this was partly attributable to the need to dovetail existing schemes and Unit Standards, because "the whole thing has to make sense sequentially".<sup>31</sup>

Interviewer: Any particular reasons for going for Unit Standards with that [fifth form alternative] group?

Tim: Because, I suppose the short answer is we believe in them. For that certificate. Give them something. At the moment it's not that they get nothing, but they get something which is becoming pretty meaningless. There was the Rimu Alternative Certificate but that was yesterday's document. Unit Standards is far more than that. There's a lot of issues in with that which is just how we manage the process. Whether we give it just to the Fifth Form Alternative or the sixth form or both somehow. And we are going to buy? We are looking at buying a package from [name] Polytech who sell a nine hundred dollar or just over one thousand dollar package but theirs is Level Two. It's very much [a] Form Six type thing. So the question is how we do that, whether we say to the fifth form. "We will give you lots of skills of things but you won't get any certification" or do we say "We'll give some level two standards there and some different ones up there". Bearing in mind the communication standards are very much paint by numbers, some of them are incredibly simple, I gather, very simple stuff. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 3]

### *The Difficulties of Maintaining Internal Priorities*

The problem of developing schemes and units of work, and associated assessment tasks which met the actual needs of students, as opposed to normative expectations of which national curriculum level they should have been working at, was most evident at Rimu and Kauri. For Frances, many of the so-called 'behavioural problems' would have been obviated had teachers been more "realistic" in their expectations of students. The issue, of course, cuts to the heart of the question: what are appropriate curricula and pedagogies for the contemporary secondary school that exists in a publicly and politically accountable, competitive local marketplace? At department or programme level, which was at the end of the day the only real concern of

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<sup>31</sup> Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1.

Frances, in order to promote her view of appropriate curriculum (i.e. content, pedagogy, evaluation) development, she relied not on exhortation, but leading by example:

... quite often the behaviour problems stem from unable to do the work. I think I try to get people to focus on that too. To look at, are we being realistic in what we are asking to do?

Interviewer: Do you think there is a certain amount of inappropriate work being provided? Is it the wrong level?

Frances: I think some of the work needs to be adapted for some students. Particularly at fifth form level, there's about seven or eight students who are non School Cert students. Some of them are seventh form age-wise, and they are being still asked in some classes to do the traditional fifth form level work and they are not capable of doing it. But again it's time and teachers have to write units and have to be prepared to adapt the programme to meet the needs of the students. All you can do is lead by example all the time, that's the way I do it, is lead by example, encourage. I have had parents ring up this last week to complain that the work's too hard. So I have had another talk to some of them and tried to encourage them to write something, or given them some ideas of where they could go to just to photocopy if they haven't got time to write. I think a lot of their problems would be solved if the work was [at an] appropriate level and I think this is where Individualised Learning has moved away from where the original, six years ago everybody had to write everything. So whether you wrote a School Cert one or an alternative one, it didn't matter because you were writing all the time anyway. Now that most of it, it's in here [resource room] and just needs adapting and changing each year, teachers have got away from seeing themselves as resource writers. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 2]

That "teachers have got away from seeing themselves as resource writers" and may just want "something to photocopy" reveals as much about contemporary secondary school teacher workloads as it does about the changes in personnel and organisation that occurred in the years since the enthusiastic establishment of the Individualised Learning programme at Kauri by a small group of committed volunteers. Recent survey research conducted in New Zealand<sup>32</sup> and overseas<sup>33</sup> confirms that teacher workloads have intensified as a result of centrally imposed curriculum, assessment, credentialling, reporting, accountability and administrative reforms. Not surprisingly, it is the associated issues of workload and meeting time that dominated many of the discussions during the 1997 school year and to which we now turn.

### **KEEPING WORKLOAD MANAGEABLE**

Amidst the ebb and flow of the secondary school year there are a number of fixed feasts, milestones and deadlines to be met which tax teachers' enthusiasm, energy and tolerance to the full. Nevertheless, staff can with some degree of certainty, organise their personal and collective preparation, teaching, marking and review activities around these. Some of the events are planned (e.g. examinations, the writing and issuing of student reports, annual planning and budgeting rounds); others are predictable but unplanned (e.g. teacher illness, student crises,

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<sup>32</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers. A national survey*. Final report. Massey University, Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December.

<sup>33</sup> Campbell, J. and Neill, S. *Secondary teachers at work*. London: Routledge, 1994.

urgent requests for information from senior staff); and yet others fall beyond the previous experience of those directly involved.

### *Adjusting To The Four Term Year*

During the course of 1997, in addition to the various externally-driven curriculum and assessment initiatives that were underway, all four heads of department were acclimatising to the introduction of a four-term year. An apparently simple calendar adjustment in practice produced a marked professional disorientation among the teachers in the study, requiring them to completely rethink the structure of each shorter term and the milestones, rhythms and coping strategies they had subconsciously and automatically associated with the previous three term school year:

... it was pretty hectic, we had exams early on. There's always a mad panic getting things ready for exams. Once we have gone to the four term year, it's changed quite a lot of, both internal time scales as well as the scales which are imposed on us by the school. So you don't have it in your own mind where you have got to get up to by the exam because the exam's changed. The length of time has changed. It's all interrupted and we haven't fully adjusted to that. As an example, the exam that we are going to have at the end of this term, we are actually two weeks further on this year than we were the same time last year and that's quite a significant amount to make up. So it was pretty busy from there. It seems that we seem to be fighting an endless memo war, a paper war and I'm not sure that the powers that be seem to sit around all day giving us things to fill out, write out. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

Probably for me personally it came very quickly but I think the impression of other teachers is also that in the four term year things zip by very, very quickly. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 3]

[Term 3] was easier on my timetable. I had an extra two hours non contact due to the PE class during the other half of my class, so for me, it was a lot easier. I thought it was an easier term all through, from special needs was starting to roll on its own, Individualised Learning was settling down. It was a good working term and it was ten weeks without interruption of no holidays, there was nothing, so it was a good solid block to get work done with the kids. And I know, I think I had a really positive [term] and a lot easier workload. I finished writing the scheme. So I just feel as if I've just about got top of it, you never get on top. [laughs] I think that when there was three terms, the middle term was always a good solid working term, without a lot of interruptions and I think that third term is now the one. In the second term we did all our promotion and things like that. We didn't do any of that it was just into the learning. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator Individualised Learning, Term 3]

### *Unpredictable Roll Growth*

In 1997, New Zealand secondary schools were experiencing the first wave in a period of significant roll growth across the country as a whole and it was difficult to accurately predict the number of students who would enrol at the beginning of the year. Ministry of Education regulations make necessary roll-related adjustments to staffing entitlements only after the 1 March confirmation of student numbers. At Kauri, a small school with only a single third form Individualised Learning class, this difficulty was exacerbated because the additional influx of students could not be distributed across a number of parallel year group classes. Frances and her

colleagues had to decide for themselves how to cope with the larger than anticipated enrolment for the first half of the term. The tension became a choice between an increased personal teaching workload and the desire to maintain "for the long term", the programme's philosophy and integrity:

Lorna [the other long sewing Individualised Learning teacher] was teaching the two third form classes for English. She did it for a fortnight to help out and ended up doing it for ten weeks. I was taking the third formers for Home Ec. and I did that for a fortnight and ended up taking it for five weeks. Those sorts of things happened because we actually only timetabled for one Individualised Learning Third Form class and we ended up with far too many for one, 40 odd so we had to split into two.

Interviewer: Did you feel you had a job to keep people going or was it okay?

Frances: They probably had a job keeping me going. [laughs] I don't think I was an effective leader as I wanted to be. I certainly wasn't as an effective teacher as I wanted to be last [term] because I was torn in too many directions. But it puddled along, it got there, it did without sort of going disastrously wrong. Luckily I think because of the experienced staff that I had. Had I had new, I would not have liked to have been a new staff member in Individualised Learning last term. It would have been awful because we had to make a lot more concessions and make a lot more effort for them. So I was lucky that it was all experienced teachers ... This term it's been more manageable but I knew for Individualised Learning the best thing was to get two third form classes developed after a fortnight. I knew then, it might have been more difficult in the first term, but for the long term for Individualised learning we were better to have two classes than all those kids together. One would have been dynamite, absolutely dynamite. Plus we got the extra staffing. They actually split the Fourth Form this term as well, so we have got extra staffing in there as well because that was getting quite big as well. Although a lot more manageable because it's not so diverse. [Frances, Kauri, Co-ordinator, Individualised Learning, Term 1]

### *Coping With Staff Illness*

Isadora faced a similar, but less acute, problem of class sizes and staffing adjustments at the beginning of the year. In her case, workload and stress were increased by a colleague's unexpected long term illness. In the extract that follows it is instructive to note (i) the way in which the responsibility for lesson preparation fell on Isadora as the HoD and (ii) the manner in which the personalised and subjective nature of English teaching created particular difficulties of curriculum delivery that could not be solved simply by appointing relieving teachers:

By the third week, we were starting to field phone calls from parents. And I would be concerned, I would be really concerned for my child. It's not a very good situation in the schools where if, if the individual falls over, there is nobody else that can pick it up exactly the same in the English programme. Maybe if you were teaching Spanish for beginners out of a textbook and we were on chapter three it's not so dependent on the personnel. It's more dependent on the, you have got to have a deliverer. But in this, where basically two people might do Romeo and Juliet, as a play, they will do it in a very different manner. Although they will cover the points that have to be examined, they come at it from a different angle and do different activities. Then if someone falls down, you say, what the hell are they doing? I can't do that ...

Because you see, relieving teachers in New Zealand are not responsible for preparing or marking work. They are required to keep law and order and make sure that the work prepared by the person who is ill is transmitted to the kids with the least fuss. They do not have to be active, they just have to be passive to get their money. So it's raised issues for us to discuss with senior management about should we ever need long-term relievers, what responsibility the school would put on them to prepare and mark because it is not a reality to

expect HoDs to do that even medium term. Short term for me is 4 days, 5 days. Long term is anything beyond that. And this went well beyond that. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 1]

Part of the problem for Isadora was one she and others articulated on various occasions. The secondary school curriculum is dominated by specialist content, i.e. Bernstein's collection codes.<sup>34</sup> The timetable, as a consequence, is full. Equally, financial constraints mean that set texts and other shared resource materials needed to be passed on to the next class in line according to a strict schedule with very little allowance for delays in delivery. In order to manage these related problems, and to pre-empt occasional absences of staff, the subject HoDs in the study, Tim, Isadora and William, sought to distribute curriculum responsibilities widely among pairs or teams of workgroup colleagues and limit individual workloads:

What we tend to do is work in teams, small teams. We break our teams down to smaller functioning groups so that not everybody's always involved with everything because we couldn't actually cover what we have had to cover. [Isadora, Matai., HoD English, Term 1]

Even so, long term illnesses, or, in the case of Helen at Rimu, the permanent loss of a single key member of subject specialist staff, proved highly disruptive:

The timetable needs to be kept moving. We allow some flexibility. We have built in flexibility points but you couldn't sustain a staff member being away, a key staff member being away more than a fortnight. When our staff member [the newly appointed drama teacher] with the chronic illness was away in term one for five weeks, that really was interesting so having had it twice now, [name] our Principal assures me that this doesn't happen every year. He takes great delight in saying, we're just testing, just testing. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 2]

### **THE PROFITABLE USE OF LIMITED MEETING TIME**

Hargreaves<sup>35</sup> describes a particular form of professional interaction in schools as 'contrived collegiality'. In this, meetings take place to manage increased administrative, reporting, accountability and superficial curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) issues but contribute little to the direct enhancement of either teacher or student learning.

#### *Using Meetings For Specific Purposes*

In 1997, all four HoDs had experienced and were aware of the practical effects of such 'contrived collegiality'. They organised their meetings in various ways to attempt to ensure that meeting content was relevant and topical for colleagues, that the processes encouraged interdependence and that the scheduling of meetings did not impinge on colleagues' other professional and personal demands:

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<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., 1970.

<sup>35</sup> Op. cit., 1994, chapter nine.

We have a regular meeting every Thursday morning and that lasts for about half an hour. We always seemed to run out of time. Got busy people with young families which means that I'm reluctant to have meetings after school, cos' I understand the needs of those young families. We have two people who can't come to the Thursday morning meeting because of the fact that they have young families who have to get to school and just can't make it. I hope I'm sympathetic towards their needs. So consequently we have meeting minutes which informs them of a decision made or opinions even on the decisions, and opportunities for them to comment on those decisions. We have Monday afternoon meetings and we could sit there and probably chat away for a long time, but this year I am going to target specific meetings for specific things and one of them will be for the staff handbook. I will put it out before then and I will say, this meeting is specifically to discuss this, so that we don't tie up all those meetings with nuts and bolts which we could do easily. We are trying.

The one thing that I thought was done well in the school, is we have, and people joke about it, but we have a Maths Corner. The staff in our department has a corner. It's a little bit of a joke amongst the staff but we tend to sit there. We are not an exclusive group but other people need a passport to come and sit down and people do come and sit down, and they joke, "Oh we are going over to the Maths Department's Corner". But what it does mean is that people sit there and if you have an announcement to make, or you have something to say, chances are you are going to have the majority of the department there and it's easier. Material is stored there, the timetable for the common test for the juniors is on the coffee table and you can write yours on. The learning support booklet which says who's taking what learning support and who's coming is there. So it's a meeting place where we're essentially having a meeting every interval, before school, to try and make those nuts and bolts things go out with the Thursday meeting. Other Departments don't have that. I'm not sure whether they're mocking is part of a jealousy thing, don't have that system, I don't know... You can't make policy decisions and stuff like that cos' you don't necessarily have everybody there. But it does mean if you need to talk to so-and-so about this, or I need to talk to, to see if they have done that. Certainly that's where people will sit on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, when we have staff meeting in the morning. You have got five minutes before then, when you can go around and tell all the people individually, "Don't forget you have got the reassessment tomorrow". It's the one way that you can actually remind them of things or pass things on or, and that works quite well I think. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1]

The staffroom was an important conduit, source of information and quasi-social meeting place for all heads of department but it was most marked in the case of Totara's Mathematics department where the workgroup used a particular section of the staffroom as their personal, open-plan office space. In addition, William, used written minutes to keep absent colleagues up to date.

### *Meeting To Build Community*

Similarly, the other HoDs used memoranda, notes and newsletters for straightforward administrative and information issues in order better to keep precious meeting time free for specific curriculum and professional development issues, or even simply to build a sense of community and sustain each other socially and emotionally:

There had been a real difficulty here about meeting times that everybody made a point of coming and telling me about independently within about three weeks of me getting here. It was they felt there had been a lot of memo meetings. So we do our memoing on paper. Usually memos have got things like little, they might just have a plain agenda or they go with the cartoon, or they have got something on it. So that business happens that way so that when we

get into the meeting, the meeting can be professional development. I've just had to do that with bringing in all these new courses. We don't necessarily all meet as a department. We divide up into, this Tuesday night it's just the Drama department meeting. The following Tuesday's another group, it's different. Our meeting times are once a fortnight cos' we share them with [humanities]. We had our most important meeting of the term was on last Wednesday night when we all went out to dinner at the [restaurant]. Food's imp- nurturing and nourishment are important. Nurturing and nourishing women is important because traditionally they have been the ones that do it. So you need to feed and water them because often they don't get loved. We are mainly women and nurturing, divorcees, we have got a lot of wom-, our male and we have got three or four women who are single now. You don't lavishly do it or anything like that but little things matter to people and to single people. [Female Assistant HoD] [is] single. You can do it in little ways. These are notes from members of the department of thanks, for things that they have feel I have done which is lovely. Popping a note into someone's pigeon hole if they have done something well or been successful is a very nourishing thing and it doesn't take much effort. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 2]

### *Disseminating 'Expertness'*

With the emphasis on professional development in the available meeting time, these HoDs were increasingly looking to disseminate official curriculum knowledge and skills across the departmental workgroup as a whole. In this regard, there were several comments throughout the research that teachers' growing awareness of their own "cutting edge"<sup>36</sup> 'expertness' of accommodating, developing, delivering and evaluating novel curriculum and assessment prescriptions led them, in turn, to more critically evaluate the quality and relevance of professional development that was being offered to them by outsiders. Isadora, in the extract below, embodied this new found confidence in her own expertness and singled out the courses from the college of education for particular criticism. Increasingly, she looked within her own department and to those in neighbouring schools for examples of grounded, workable practice:

With this "profitable use of limited meeting time" in the Senior English next year, all our all fortnightly meetings are going to be professional development. Our first three of next term are going to be 'Close Reading'. Our second two are going to be 'Shakespeare' and then we are going to go into the visual strand in term two and develop through there. I'm going to try to arrange with other schools a swap of personnel. Totara School has got somebody who is just so good at the actual videoing. We have got an expert here on reading video, as reading film as text. That's [name], so we will use her for that. But [name] down there is just wonderful with the camera. She knows it all. So what I want to do is get her up for a session with our lot, and or maybe even we go down there cos' I want our lot to see her equipment. And then we offer one of ours, now [name] he's new here to us but he's been six years lecturing [overseas]. He's new to secondary teaching but he's vibrant and he did a wonderful series of winter school lectures for our seventh form kids on Shakespeare. What we wanted to do is give us a version that's a two session version that we are all going to have in the last two PD sessions of next term. And then I want to trade him off against [Totara teacher]. Neither of them know it yet! [laughs] But that's the way I can see us, we can save money on our professional development. Use our own expertise and tap into the other expertise, um.

Interviewer: Is that a really new development?

Isadora: I don't know, I haven't been part of it before. But other schools up and down the country may do it. I just, I can't be bothered not using what's existing. Without being disrespectful, we haven't found the College of Education professional development courses to meet our needs. That's the kindest way I can put it. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 3]

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<sup>36</sup> William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 1.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to describe and analyse the tapestried and seasonal labour of four heads of department working in different secondary schools. Nine areas of activity were elaborated in order to explore the thinking and reasoning that underpinned the ways in which these four curriculum leaders maintained a 'steady state' within their respective workgroups. The establishment of routines and processes in which workgroup members had confidence was seen to be necessary both for the workgroup to survive and grow and for teacher and curriculum development work to take place. The four heads of department worked constantly, both to establish and nurture a collective vision of what the curriculum-in-use should be, and to create the workgroup environment in which it might be developed. This required them to balance the demands they made of staff and monitor energy levels, to identify and support particular individuals when needed and to balance external demands and internal wishes. Although each of the four protagonists' primary loyalties and interests clearly lay within the immediate epistemological workgroup, they also husbanded a selective network of epistemic or subject discipline relationships and sources of support to aid them in this work.

The two years of the fieldwork for this study coincided with a period of intense curriculum and assessment innovation in the four schools and in three of the departments discussed in this chapter. In retrospect, it is no surprise, then, that in addition to the issues discussed above, the sixteen interviews conducted in the 1997 school year should contain a further set of themes which reflect the stress and focus of the period. In the next chapter, we consider the effect of curriculum reform on the HoDs' craft knowledge and expertness, their positioning within the arena of Unit Standards politics, and on their personal health, well being and career aspirations.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **STRESS, POLITICS AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION**

In this chapter, several issues that emerged from the interview data during the course of the 1997 school year are discussed. These focus specifically on the challenges of curriculum leadership in an environment of intense curriculum innovation. The topics considered are: stress, curriculum politics, the development of technical assessment skills, the need for consolidation time and small school issues.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, we examined the routines of curriculum leadership over the course of four terms during the 1997 school year. The themes were suggested by an analysis of the interview data gathered during 1996. In addition to those nine occupationally specific topics, a further set of themes emerged as these four heads of department began to talk in greater depth about their work and revealed the full extent of the challenges it posed for them. Intriguingly, for example, it was only in this second year of the fieldwork that three of the four HoDs elected to describe and talk about the effects of their stressful work on their personal health and well-being. Once disclosed, of course, it became clear that such stress was not limited to one individual, but was evident across this small group. Similarly, 1997 saw three of these practitioners become more acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of Unit Standards, and of the demands posed for them by the technicalities of assessment and its administration. This knowledge and emerging 'expertness' fuelled their willingness, confidence and determination to voice their concerns as a counter-discourse to those articulated by official agencies of the state.

The particular themes considered in this chapter are: stress and career issues for these HoDs; curriculum politics; the development of technical assessment skills, the need for consolidation time and small school issues. Below, each is discussed in turn.

#### **PERSONAL STRESS AND CAREER**

Tim, Frances, William and Isadora each had multiple curriculum-specific, workgroup and broader administrative duties additional to those that were expected of standard scale teachers. As HoDs, they viewed their additional responsibilities as both contractual and moral duties. While it is not surprising that this should create extra work and stress for the four individuals,

what is striking is the extent of the stress and the effects this produced.<sup>1</sup> During the year all four talked of various stress-related symptoms and, more significantly perhaps, three of the four were actively considering giving up the role: Frances by resigning in order to travel; Tim by returning to classroom teaching, and Isadora by moving into an administrative position or to a teaching post overseas. The "accumulated effect" of the pressures of the period were most poignantly expressed by Tim:

... in terms of your research, this year is the critical year, it is the watershed year. They say that we will get this out of the way, we, the government, or whoever, and then there is this change and the Unit Standards should be the end of it. But the accumulated effect of the last three years in particular have been such that it is my intention as soon as it's possible to resign as an HoD. I have signalled that. I have just had the Professional Development Conference with Ivan, and where there might an opportunity is if Helen moves on, which I think she will do, sooner or later, she's just so able and ready for other things. There will be an opportunity for another appointment and my suggestion to Ivan is that appointment be as a HoD. I will stay then as an Assistant Teacher and just get out of all the management things we have been talking about and see classes more. Just see them, but see them in a way where I have planned better and more directly involved with them and so on. So I hope that will happen.

Interviewer: And that has been the effect of the last three years?

Tim: Very much so. The last three years, in particular. The new curriculum, the way that it has been handled by the Education Agency [sic]. The way that in New Zealand we seem to have done the most extraordinary things to teachers in terms of saying, we have new initiatives, you will deliver them. And that's been the way [all] along. We have the new initiative, you will now take the burden with the most tokenistic financial and time provisions on teachers. It has been absolutely outrageous. One of the ironies I think when we look back on the early '90s is how did it come about? That the group of teachers with the strongest union in New Zealand, because PPTA is now the role model for all other unions, how was this ever allowed to happen? Even the most no-nonsense group of teachers in the past allowed it to happen and it's partly because I guess the ideas struck cords with teachers and they believed in them so they put this out.<sup>2</sup> It really has been an outrage the way it's been done.

Interviewer: You are talking about stopping becoming a HoD rather than stopping becoming a teacher. So is it just those additional burdens that you found oppressive?

Tim: Yeah, those in particular. There are some other career opportunities which ideally I would pursue now because I do feel fairly burnt out as a teacher but to be where I am and live where I am and feed the family the way I am, the realities are I will probably stay as a teacher and quite enjoy it. But certainly that whole middle management thing. The HoD specifically among the various middle management things has been absolutely crippling. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 1]

The costs of what has been called teachers' occupational 'over-conscientiousness'<sup>3</sup> were described by Isadora whose commitment to family and students meant that her weekends became devoted to classroom preparation and she was getting up at 4.30am once or twice a week on a regular basis. As a result, Isadora was "just absolutely knackered". As observers, we

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<sup>1</sup> See also, Harker, R., Gibbs, C. Ryan, H., Weir, K. and Adams, D. *Teacher 2000 Project; An international study of teacher satisfaction, motivation and health. The New Zealand Report*. Massey University College of Education, 1998, September.

<sup>2</sup> This point supports the argument I made in chapter three.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, J. and Neill, S. Managing teachers' time under systemic reform. In T. Bush and D. Middlewood (Eds.). *Managing people in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1997, p. 104.

begin to wonder why conscientious teachers and HoDs persist in subjecting themselves and their families to such "onerous" lifestyles.

... it's onerous, it's terribly onerous. This business here about 'manageable workload', that is a joke. At least once a week I'm up at 4.30. Sometimes more. I go home at 6 from here and with the family, when they are all to bed and done with at 10, sometimes I will do some work then. Usually if I'm going to do anything it's probably mechanical because that's all I am capable of then. It's probably do the departmental newsletter or something like that. It's just going to be something that doesn't have to have too much focus. It can have creativity cos' the departmental newsletters usually involve jokes and cartoons and things like that. But it just can't have intensity. If I want to really do marking cos' when I'm here [school], I can't do things for my own classes. Got to confine that to the weekends at home. So here, the Department stuff here and the administration and the people things. That's when 4.30 is a really useful time.

Interviewer: So how have you coped with that, that must have been a change from [Isadora: I'm just absolutely knackered.]deaning?

Isadora: Well no, because as a dean when you were at school, you couldn't get a straight bar at anything. Sometimes it's five but the body clock tends to trip you awake at between 4.30 and 4.45 so you might as well get up. But I only do it once and at really pressure times, twice a week. You get very tired. And then you think, how long can I sustain this? I'm in year seven or something of it. Can I keep this ticking? You hope like hell you can, you don't fall off the edge.

Interviewer: And are those personal workload pressures getting worse?

Isadora: They are constantly horrid.

Interviewer: Will it go away once you have written all the Unit Standards and those are in place, or will it be something else that you can see?

Isadora: I suspect something will replace [it]. I don't know. I think that part of the personal workload crisis for teachers is that the preparation and the assessment for your own classes never goes away. That in fact is your prime responsibility, so that whatever else you have or haven't done in the day, you have to deliver to the kids who will come into that room. You have to deliver the curriculum. Every now and again you can have a very quiet period that you design where you and they are left quietly to their own devices. But you have to be the monitor, the encourager, the set-upper for success. You can't relinquish that responsibility just cos' you are knackered. How tempting it would be. Well, I'm just off for a wee lie down and a gin darlings, just you keep going. Now that would be a thought, wouldn't it [laughs]. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 1]

The change to a four term year not only caused disorientation, it appeared to manifestly intensify the teaching experience and further increase workloads, resulting in high levels of stress. In this situation, William's holiday became not an opportunity to recuperate and recharge his batteries, but to catch up on work. In this regard he was not alone. All four HoDs used a proportion of each holiday to catch up on work that it had not been possible to complete during the intensified ten week term.

Interestingly, as William became more established as a member of the departmental workgroup, and mutual understanding developed, jokes were made at his expense. The "mickey taking" humour and his acceptance within the workgroup contributed as much to defusing workload pressures as did his formalised "stress handling stuff":

I think [term two] was a fairly high stress term. I don't think, as I said before, we have adjusted to the ten week term. It's pretty high stress. We seemed to be trying to do thirteen or fourteen weeks work in ten weeks. It means everybody's, I was really stressed out at the end of last term. And spent a lot of my holidays catching up on work. So when I came back, I was really,

really stressed and had some stress related health problems. But in the last two weeks have spent a lot of time just telling myself to calm down and not to worry about it, and life goes on, so. Developing some stress handling stuff.

Interviewer: And are those the ways in which you cope, individually and the others in the department as well? You just tell each other not to

William: Yeah, we are getting a little bit more, as the relationship within the department has improved and the amount of mickey taking on a friendly level has improved, that has acted as a stress relief mechanism.<sup>4</sup> So that helped. But it's within the department. That helps reduce tension because you [inaudible] a little more into the minds of the other people and they will tap it. That's actually working, I think quite well that mechanism. Which I'm really thankful for because it was something that I did miss at the beginning when I was here because it is what I find useful. My personal way of dealing with it might not be everybody's but I think things are seeming reasonably calm at the moment.

Interviewer: Is that a shift in the departmental culture? Or is it you just

William: I think it's me fitting in. It's something that has always been there but it gets to a point where you get more included in that, the jokes are at your expense and that. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

It would be possible, no doubt, to quantify the moral or professional sense of responsibility or duty felt by HoDs in this chapter by listing and counting the occasions on which they attended to others' personal and professional needs, provided relief cover, found ideas for lessons for colleagues, advocated on behalf of the department with senior staff and external agencies and so on. A more effective strategy, however, might be to analyse how the activities became a normalised feature of the manner in which these four HoDs made every effort to ensure that, as far as possible, things ran smoothly in their departments. Although the formal curriculum and resourcing responsibilities were distributed widely across the departmental workgroup and were done so deliberately to encourage collective responsibility for and ownership of the work of the department, the smaller, less significant and least obvious maintenance activities were frequently undertaken alone by Tim, Frances, William and Isadora:

The whole school is being de-asbestosised over the holidays. It's only under floor but in order for it to happen, they have to totally seal the building. They are only doing it only one corridor at a time and on Tuesday they are starting in the B corridor. When they do it you can't have access to that corridor for ten days. The contract says that they will have it finished by the beginning of the next year and we are the last corridor to be done. The pessimist in me is allowing for that fact that this might be all in a plastic bag at the beginning of February so between Christmas and New Year my family and I will come in. We will move everything that the department, we have put around a list, [Assistant HoD] and I, to ask people to nominate the resources they want to use in the first three weeks. We will move everything that people have nominated over. We have found a place in B corridor which will have been un-clingwrapped by that time and we will get that taken out. Because that's got all the administrative stuff, and any other bits and pieces we need of folders, and just rehouse it. It's just something I don't want at this time but also there's no point in getting angry about it. You have got to do it and anger is just going to take more energy than the doing of the damn thing. I think I had just better be philosophical and do it. I have got other energies to use anger or anything on. I'm not going to use it on this one. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 4]

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<sup>4</sup> On the importance of humour to workgroup relationships, see Bruckerhoff, C. *Between classes. Faculty life at Truman High*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1991, pp. 51-58.

## CURRICULUMPOLITICS

For the HoDs in this study, the concept of Unit Standards had attracted their professional curiosity and appeared to have the potential to resolve the difficulties historically presented by existing, hegemonic accreditation structures. Within the model as a whole there were several appealing strands, for example, the opportunity to credential students for whom School Certificate was inappropriate and unattainable; and, the freedom to develop internal criterion-referenced assessment regimes for programmes of study that themselves were built up from modules of different length, content and focus. Unlike the national curriculum prescriptions, at the time of the study participation in Unit Standards initiatives was voluntary. Moreover, departments could 'pick-and-mix' the combination of Unit Standards and other accreditation frameworks to suit their needs and thereby enjoyed some freedom in the kinds of 'creative response'<sup>5</sup> they developed to the initiative.

While providing flexibility at school department level, the piecemeal and voluntary nature of the initiative, together with uncertainty about the future direction of secondary school qualifications policy and NZQA at a national level allowed a fluid politics of curriculum to develop. HoDs had to learn to negotiate this as they went, and as their expertness and knowledge grew with experience of Unit Standards implementation. In particular, they had to decide whether the benefits of Unit Standards for some students outweighed the disadvantages in terms of workload and the realisation that much of the unpaid development work was being carried out by the individuated schools themselves. Should they continue or, alternatively, "shelve" developments until the uncertainty at national level had been resolved?

... the government are very big into consultation so they try and put you off consultation by sending you extremely lengthy documents that require very full and in-depth discussion and then you wonder whether anybody is listening. That goes on this term [three] still. The big one that has carried over to this term is the Green Paper by the government on the qualifications framework<sup>6</sup> and, this term especially, the PPTA's recommendations for our answers, if you like, to that Green Paper document. Last term we had quite a lot of frustration within the department for Unit Standards. The more we do them, the more it seems that they are not meeting our needs, that they are actually handicapping our students in some ways. There are certainly handicapping our teachers in terms of workload. The workload is, it's not twice as much, it's four times as much and we don't believe that our students are benefitting in any way from them. So at the moment some of our meetings are being set aside for discussing what we are going to do next year. There are lots of things in the melting pot there, what the government is going to do, what the PPTA's going to do.<sup>7</sup> At the moment one of the key proposals that seems to be in favour from the PPTA is that School Certificate will be here until the year 2000, Sixth Form Certificate until 2003. Decisions we have got to make are since we have tried Unit Standards, do we now shelve it, go with what we know until somebody makes up their mind, do we persist?

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<sup>5</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education. *A future qualifications policy for New Zealand: a plan for the national qualifications framework; Green Paper*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Qualifications Framework Inquiry. *Te Tiro Hou: report of the Qualifications Framework Inquiry*. Commissioned by the NZ Post Primary Teachers' Association. Wellington: PPTA, 1997.

Are we the ones who are the unpaid developers of this whole thing when really it should be people in Wellington who are paid. It used to be a curriculum review committee and an assessment review committee and those are now gone. There was a group, a curriculum review committee solely for Mathematics and an assessment review committee. They are now gone and it's left to basically very keen teachers within certain regional Maths organisations who decide that the curriculum is wrong. With the Qualifications Framework there is a moderator who is paid by the government. He has tried. When we have said, shouldn't the government be providing cluster groups for us to belong to so we can swap assessments, he said, "That's up to your local Maths association". So again the government is trying to shift responsibility to a group of volunteers and that will filter down to us as teachers in the classroom having to develop everything ourselves. There's an assessment, a booklet which is put out by an Auckland group. It's called SPOKES and it's "the part of the wheel that you won't have to reinvent". Sometimes you feel like that. Everybody's spending a lot of energy doing exactly the same thing where if it was centralised like it is in the UK a little bit, it would be a lot better. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

Isadora was inclined to persist with Unit Standards, despite the irrational dual assessment imperative. In term three she was convinced about the merits of the model as both a mode of assessment for students and a "form of curriculum knowledge for teachers" (although in term four she qualified this position and, like Tim and William, advocated for the introduction of a "merit" grade to differentiate levels of student attainment). Her anxieties arose in part from the reality that, in 1997, Unit Standards based assessment did not appear to enjoy the same status and community acceptance as Sixth Form Certificate. Thus she, like William (above) and Tim (below), was forced to position her programmes in both political and educational fields of struggle:

... at the moment we are offering Sixth Form Certificate and Unit Standards. We are offering the same piece of work as assessed for both things but we are assessing it on two different criteria. We have got this criteria and so you are marking everything twice and you just can't do that. That's not a rational way to proceed. However, this guy, [NZQA appointed local cluster facilitator], did signal the difficulties that the Unit Standards are undergoing at the moment with getting national recognition and the prejudices that are still [abroad]. We knew this anyway but he just was able to very gently indicate to us the prejudices that were still abroad in some of the community, which made us feel hesitant to totally withdraw the known and replace it with the unknown and the new for our clients. We feel comfortable with the Unit Standards. I would be happy to offer only those. But I don't want a child applying for something to not have an equal opportunity with a child applying from another school who has Sixth Form Certificate as well as the Unit Standard. So to protect our clients until the people who are decision making in New Zealand - Where are they? Who are they? Do you have a list of names? - get off their bums and actually make some commitment to this, and until we can see that it is actually a clear and shared vision for the future, we are just wanting to be protective to our clientele. But I don't want to get rid of them because they are a good form of assessment and they are excellent form of curriculum knowledge for teachers. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 3]

Unit Standards are still optional. And there are just too many, it's that Green paper which you are aware of. It would be foolish I think to buy into a scenario quite yet because it could go

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<sup>8</sup> Building on populist concerns about curriculum standards and credential **portability**, the Education Forum mounted a strong print media campaign throughout the 1990s against the curriculum and qualifications reforms and co-opted selected academics to bolster their case. E.g. Irwin, M. *Curriculum, assessment and qualifications. An evaluation of current reforms*. Wellington: Education Forum, 1994; Irwin, M., Elley, W. and Hall, C. *Unit standards on the national qualifications framework*. Auckland: Education Forum, 1995. See also chapter three in this study.

either way. Either go that exam [way], make your choice as a school, in which case you can imagine that exams will be the success-orientated, we are the good school and set exams. So there's all those issues that I'm not going to get into it. Trying to manage in a process when I don't know the political direction.

Interviewer: Do you discuss this as a department, as a school?

Tim: Yes. We discuss it at heads of department meetings especially and curriculum timetable committees. I think there's a caution but we are really diverse as a school. There are some departments that are totally Unit Standards now and teachers now feel very ho-hum about them and then there's people who just haven't delivered, quite a number of us who have yet to deliver Unit Standards. I guess that's in microcosm what's happening across a lot of schools. And then there's other schools, [over-subscribed local school with a 'traditional' reputation] for example who have not become accredited. Because they are making a stand. Real education is about exams and stuff so there's a lot of politics going on. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 3]

Unlike William and Adam at Totara, Isadora was satisfied with the level of face-to-face and on-line support that had been provided by NZQA to her department in 1997. In contrast, she expressed significant reservations about the way in which the local cluster of providers for the vocationally oriented Communications English Unit Standard was operating. Under a commodified Unit Standards model of provision, the blurring of the definitions of 'provider' and 'education' had, clearly created tensions for those in the "Ed biz.". As Isadora observed, there were substantive and problematic differences in the nominally identical Unit Standards offered by Matai and the "College of Modern Hairdressing". The situation was exacerbated by the political and pedagogical realities that in a self-moderating "pig's ear of an organisation" cluster of approximately twenty providers, the two schools were completely outnumbered by commercial and private training establishments:

... we find that phone line help that we have had from NZQA has been good. We have had a good deal out of them. The contacts that we have had through Communications English, that is the real pigs ear of an organisation. That's the one that we are offering with our Sixth Form Alternate English and we want to keep offering that. That's really important to us but the organisation of that seems far more loose and because it is the area where there are a lot of outside providers offer, it's very hard to get a professional teacher's perspective on things. The material they send you is often poorly worded to someone who's in the Ed biz. The requirement of the tasks is often, it seems either ambiguous or very repetitive and it just doesn't seem to have had enough professional teacher input in its development ... In our cluster, there's a hairdressing business, and there is an insurance type institution. And there are various other bodies. There's College of Modern Hairdressing, the Technical Progress people, someone from Proforma and someone from LDC. Now all these people are getting these little things, these little Unit Standards, and writing their own version of them because the Unit Standard description you get is the basic and you then write all the activities from it. But we might getting our kids to write, say they have to write three pieces of transactional writing in different styles. We might be asking them to do something like a review, an article, and Letter to the Editor and the hairdressing, College of Modern Hairdressing might be asking them to write to a angry cust-, and a letter requesting supplies from a firm, so there's a huge variety in it. The actual description of the tasks you are sent doesn't seem as well conceived as the ones we have received for our mainstream English. The outline of what you have to do in them often requires people to endlessly repeat points and they are just not as well constructed. So the team who are doing that, three women on our team who are doing this, are working persistently and well to try and effect some change. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 3]

In addition to these struggles in the fields of local cluster, school marketplace and national politics, William, on behalf of colleagues, had to negotiate unrealistic or "romantic" expectations placed upon the workgroup by senior staff.<sup>9</sup> In response, William was determined to retain control over the department's level of involvement in the initiative within the workgroup itself:

One of the problems is that within the school, some of the heads of the school are driving the curriculum framework. They are taking a very romantic view of what it should do but don't have a realistic chalk-face view of what it does do and how hard it is to do that. I very much didn't want to be seen as that person really hard driving it. I want to be and I am in the middle, and hopefully the department appreciates that. I think they do.

Interviewer: Is that entirely your decision or do you have to work within constraints from senior staff.

William: No, that's our decision to make. I'm not sure how the powers that be might react. They might decide that they are disappointed but I doubt that that would happen. As an example, Science went into it last year but at the end of the year decided they were going to shelve all the work they had done until it was all sorted out. And that's what they have done, more or less. If indeed Unit Standards and the National Qualification Framework becomes more integrated then they could take that off the shelf and revamp it. We are thinking maybe we should do the same thing because at the moment we are all expending a lot of energy and it is tiring out my teachers. But it is our decision to make and I think that I'm quite happy to justify to anybody cos' that's what I'm employed to do. I'm employed to run the department and make the decisions that the department want to make and that's what we have done. I don't think it would happen but should it be that we are told that we have to do them, well I can see that the department would rebel against that. But I don't think anybody would tell us that, I must say. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 2]

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SKILLS

William's determination to retain control over the assessment and credentialling frameworks that were to be used within the department derived from two related sources. First, the subject department workgroup was the repository of unique and idiosyncratic subject expertise. Consistently, in this research, practice was discussed specifically in terms of mathematics teaching and learning, or English teaching and learning, or Individualised Learning, not general theories of secondary school teaching and learning.<sup>10</sup> Second, the experience of developing Unit Standards based assessment had allowed the participants to develop a detailed, grounded knowledge or 'expertness' of what was feasible and desirable in terms of the assessment of student learning. Their developing expertness, and theories of assessment practice, generated the confidence and the willingness to challenge official Ministry sources and, even the 'expertise' of an international assessment consultant whose work had been disseminated widely in New Zealand, Ruth Sutton. By the end of their two years' work in Unit Standards, therefore,

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<sup>9</sup> See for example, Paechter, C. *Crossing subject boundaries. The micropolitics of curriculum reform*. London: HMSO, 1995.

William and his colleagues felt able to resist the imposition, by people who were "not practising teachers", of inappropriate practices.

This resistance and questioning was manifested also by Tim and Isadora and forces us to qualify Michael Apple's claim that mandated curriculum changes lead inexorably to the deprofessionalisation of teaching on the basis that teachers have no control over policy but only over the technical problems of implementation.<sup>11</sup> The evidence from these four curriculum leaders' work-stories, albeit in a voluntary trial period, would support Hargreaves' assertion that "the time and effort these teachers commit to their preparation and teaching comes not so much from grudging compliance with external demands as from dedication to doing a good job and providing effective care within a work context that is diffusely defined and has no clear criteria for successful completion".<sup>12</sup>

Their qualified resistance<sup>13</sup> or acceptance of Unit Standards was based on the highly specific, detailed knowledge and skills they had developed of assessment through trial and error.

... the more we did it the more holes started to appear in the philosophy. Indeed we discussed this with the man from the Ministry on the Tuesday. He said, 'Well, if you have a question in School Certificate and you have a Unit Standard, the learning objectives in both will be identical because they both come from the curriculum document. And therefore if a pass for this question is getting ten out of twenty marks then a pass for this Unit Standard is getting ten out of twenty marks'. We were able to argue, "Yes, but in the Unit Standard it's not the learning objectives that you assess against, it's over the page, a set of assessment objectives". One of the philosophical problems with that is that if somebody said this person was doing Unit Standard 5238, and you as an employer picked up 5238, read the learning objectives, you would believe that's what they could do. But that's not what they were assessed against and people won't turn over the page and read the assessment guides, which is not in such a quite a bold type. I said to him that it's not just getting ten out of twenty, it's getting the right ten marks. If you don't get the right ten, if you miss out on one of those, you might get nineteen out of twenty marks, but you miss that critical path. So that's a mixture of both a philosophical problem with the assessment and a practical problem. Many of our department got very frustrated with these nationally prescribed activities, or NPAs. In [Assistant HoD]'s class, in her sixth form, some of the students, they had to describe another sampling procedure. They used a simple procedure, they had to describe another one. The bright kids described something like a systematic approach or something else. In other words they went to quite - and then they had to point out what was the problem with the second system. That was quite hard for them because many of those other types of sampling systems are still quite valid. The less able kid wrote down, "I'd go outside the caf and ask some friends" and there was heaps for them to write. What it meant was that the bright kids didn't get the marks and the less able kids did. It was a design problem

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<sup>10</sup> Nolan, J. and Francis, P. Changing perspectives in curriculum and supervision. In C. Glickman (Ed.), *Supervision in transition*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1992, 44-60.

<sup>11</sup> Apple, M. *Teachers and texts. A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. London: Routledge, 1986, chapter two; Apple, M. and Tietelbaum, K. Are teachers losing control of their skills and curriculum? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1986, 18(2), 177-184.

<sup>12</sup> Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994, pp. 126-128.

<sup>13</sup> On resistant discourses, see Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Re-making teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, chapter six. On the limitations of some forms of intellectual critique, see Aronowitz, S. and Giroux, H. *Education still under siege*. Second edn. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1993, chapter two.

with the question. We said, "Well we don't think these questions have been trialed, because if any of you trialed this on a group of kids you'd see straight away that the dumb kids are going to get advantaged". So we thought that they're not practising teachers writing this. In fact some of them haven't necessarily been. And with the Unit Standards in the exam, [Assistant HoD]'s top kids didn't get it and her person who got twenty eight percent did. That starts ringing warning bells when that sort of thing starts happening. We also, in the fifth form, last year when Ruth Sutton came, who is an assessment person, we'd agreed that we would do a Unit Standard that was not just in one unit of work. There would be some evidence gathered from this unit's work, Graphs One, and some from Graphs Two. We wanted to see how practical that was. That's what we've done this year, and that's what we've done this term. It's proved to be a nightmare. Not even the teachers can remember what the kids have got to get, because one's at the beginning of the term and one's at the end of this term, the beginning of next. We wonder, well how the hell are kids going to know? The idea behind it is that the kids will know what they can and can't do. We don't believe that's going to happen. They can't remember two months ago [that] they've got the linear aspect of this, they didn't get the nonlinear. They're just going to throw their hands up and say, "Well did we pass?" So we can't see that what it's set up to do, what it's doing, both from a philosophical point of view.

Also because of the organisation of the Unit Standards or how they, NZQA advise you it should work, it just doesn't work that way. That reinforces to us that they're not practising teachers. They have a vision that they want, and I think the vision's probably quite good, that people do know what it is that they can do, but I don't think their working model is a practical one. It was interesting, when these people came up to talk about, one of these men from the Ministry or the man and the woman. The guy was a teacher and had been a teacher. At the end when the woman thanked us she said, "Since my background is not in education". And I thought how can you design the moderation system for teachers to use if you have no frame of reference to what it's like in the classroom? And the practicalities of it all? It's just indicative of NZQA's, I don't know, they're just employing the wrong people, in my book. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 3]

## **A NEED FOR CONSOLIDATION**

Towards the end of the 1997 school year, Tim was still endeavouring to complete the reformatting of the fourth form scheme and to develop a productive relationship with either the local College of Education, English Adviser, independent consultant or [name] Polytechnic to assist with the workload of Unit Standards development and implementation at Rimu. Not surprisingly, he relied, as it were, on hearsay and the vicarious experience of colleagues within his school and others, rather than direct personal experience and growing 'expertness' to guide his work.

In contrast, William and Isadora had managed to successfully develop, deliver and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Unit Standards, but this had been achieved at considerable cost. They observed both that colleagues were exhausted and needed a period of relative calm in order to recover; and that the need to conduct dual assessments, in particular, had meant that other departmental and workgroup priorities had not been met:

... next year, now we're not going to do Unit Standards, that's freed up a lot of time to look at, be more reflective than what we currently do. I've said in my own mind, next year is a consolidating year. Let's make sure all the things that we have put in place half-heartedly, like computers across the curriculum and things like that, next year let's eject the time we did in Unit Standards, let's put that in those. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 3]

Now they need time to consolidate, they need time to just, next year needs to be a consolidation year. They don't need to be pushed into the big beyonds yet. That would not be kind. [Isadora, Matai, HoD English, Term 3]

We also need a year off doing something which is more housekeeping than rather innovative. That's why I said that things like assessing and using problem-solving and that would be us learning something new. This isn't necessarily us learning anything new, it's just us tidying our own house and making the systems that we currently use work better, changing a few of them ... It's partially a conscious effort on my part to give the teachers a rest and a time to let's make sure we do what we currently do very well. We spent two years pushing ourselves to do something else and I don't think you can afford to do that year after year after year. Cos' people get ticked off. Understandably they get tired. We want to give ourselves a year to consolidate and we will still be working very hard I'm sure but it will be on things that are familiar to us. We can just go through the process of, some of our end of year fine-tuning of next year courses, that's gone more smoothly. I think that's partly because we are getting much more comfortable with the new curriculum which has been in for five years now. So we should be. But we have had a few School Certificate papers that slowly adapted so we still use that, as most teachers do, as a little bit of an indication [of] what we should be, the style of teaching, we should be encouraging at Fifth Form level. We would like to believe that it's just the National Curriculum Statement which tells us how to teach but in reality the School Certificate tail does still wag the pedagogy dog, no matter how much we would like to believe it doesn't. [William, Totara, HoD Mathematics, Term 4]

## SMALL SCHOOL ISSUES

My observation that Tim had yet to reach that stage where an informed decision could be made about the benefits of Unit Standards based assessment was purposive. It graphically reinforced the reality that curriculum innovation must take longer to achieve in smaller schools where numbers of specialist staff are fewer and the available staff are likely to teach in several subject areas. Moreover, to develop and implement new curricula, Tim was forced to seek out and rely on outside expertise rather than the shared language and common subject knowledge of workgroup colleagues:

we made a couple of really interesting decisions with the help of this guy, [name] from the College. Recognising that the Green Paper on the Framework, that what will happen is that, whatever else happens elsewhere, there will be Unit Standards for English and Year 12. In the sixth form level that will be the assessment model. What we did, that's Level Two on the Framework, so we just thought that, but he challenged us. He said "Look at your school, look at the profile of your school. Should you be talking Level Two or should there be Level One's and Level Two's?". Which was a really interesting breakthrough. From that we said, "What a good idea". We debated it. We talked about the dumbing down, we talked about the winner schools, loser schools. This is a Framework Form Six school that has these Form Five Unit Standards, that feel. But that debate swiftly, swiftly deteriorated into being rational and realistic and saying, "Well we have got to give them something rather than nothing". Also, the way this National Certificate's worked, you only have to have two hundred forty credits, whatever it is. Only forty have to be at Level Two so you can have dozens and dozens of Level One. So we then profiled our kids and said, they are not good reader/writers but they are visually strong. They know the box, and they know the film and they know the grammar of that, even though they don't have the terms. So we put together the macro plan for Form Six. What Unit Standards we would use and so on. We tended to do it that way at Level One-Two, so that was really good. We did that session and now in terms of the developmental plan, the next step is to peg in the assessment tasks. That is a lot of work. All the assessment data because you have to have reassessment

opportunities for all of those. So that's what Thursday this week will be about, we will be doing one of those.

Interviewer: And once you've got the model with the one then it's down to 'donkey work'?

Tim: Donkey work. And also it's into big school issues, which is to what extent will the school finance these things because they can be bought in. People are contracting now. There's a guy who has already made us an offer. He said, "I'll come up and see your school and I will deliver at 25 dollars an hour some standards". So there's all those possibilities too.

Interviewer: You are a small school and within English you rely on a limited number of people with expertise. You rely on outsiders with, for example, this [name] from the College to bring in some ideas that you might normally get within a larger English department and you have got this difficult decision of whether you buy things in off the shelf because you don't have the time to develop them but they may not be exactly what you want ...

Tim: Except that his offer is that it is customised, that's what he is saying. He's twenty five dollars an hour as he says, "I come and I want to look at the school, look at your resources, look at your classes" and then he says, "What I do is I write a standard and then we analyse it. And you put human faces on that standard, so it's a Rimu standard". So that's the deal and that's an interesting prospect.

Interviewer: What's the attraction of that for you? Is it purely saving time?

Tim: Saving time. Well I suppose there's two attractions. One is, one is quite cold bloodedly, you get work done for you. The other thing is that because it's in tandem, because you are part of the process, you are monitoring what he's doing. You are by the very nature upskilling all the time, doing that. And also, I suppose, thirdly you are getting potentially some valuable resources. That is an issue before about one or two people only doing resourcing. He will say, now I have got a resource that I think could work so I guess some other things are happening to change the resourcing. [...] But in reality, although he says it would be "customised", what does that mean? Is he saying that to everyone? Is it basically the same thing with a couple of semi-colons? There is all those issues. But at the end of the day if we like the semi-colons, we go. The problem too is do we want to spend twenty five dollars an hour for something that is in such a state of flux because that Green Paper is bewildering. How far down do we go in terms of human and financial resourcing for a system that's really. Except that Form Six, it's got to happen. That's the point I suppose where we are saying let's get something under way. It's got to happen at that level because there is no alternative. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 2]

Indeed, it was clear from observation and interviews in the four schools through both years of the study that Rimu and Kauri were significantly disadvantaged in this regard. Teaching staff in these two schools had multiple teaching, management and administrative responsibilities. Tim was dean, HoD and teacher in charge of the library, Frances was HoD Individualised Learning, Assistant HoD mathematics and also co-ordinated special needs provision and teacher aides within the school. Although they saw themselves as heads of department and leaders in their respective curriculum areas, unlike William and Isadora whose sole concern was their immediate subject specific workgroup, Tim and Frances' energies were both fragmented and widely distributed across an eclectic array of responsibilities and subject areas:

... we will have next year a person in our department who will be taking one English class who is attached to six departments. She has six classes in all different departments, so these are the real issues in a smaller school. [Tim, Rimu, HoD English, Term 4]

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate something of the pressures faced by four 'conscientious' curriculum leaders as they attempted to encourage 'creative responses' to curriculum innovation, engage in necessary political activity inside and outside the institution and, at the same time, maintain their workgroups.

The pre-requisites of workgroup solidarity, relationships and mutual trust, were not, however, built in abstract isolation. Through intense and collective engagement with external curriculum prescriptions and voluntary initiatives, most specifically, Unit Standards, these HoDs developed for themselves and among their workgroup colleagues common reservoirs of experience and a shared knowledge of assessment and the functional politics of curriculum reform. In this regard, the HoDs were both part of and outside the workgroup. They shared the work, but in addition, and this, perhaps, is what collectively distinguished them from their workgroup colleagues, they felt and exercised a responsibility to care for, develop, encourage, monitor, protect and provide direction for all the individuals within the group. This was achieved, often with enthusiasm, humour, sensitivity, professionalism and empathy, but always at great personal cost in terms of stress and health. Notwithstanding such costs, the work-stories of these four practitioners suggested that, at the end of the study, they remained energetic and self-confident teachers.

Over the course of the last two chapters, then, we have examined what it is that curriculum leaders attempt to do, when, how and why in order to encourage the development of workgroup colleagues, to maintain and nurture the workgroup, and promote worthwhile curriculum innovation. Through building relationships, supporting individuals, "nourishing" the members of the workgroup, and attending to the 'nuts and bolts' of departmental administration, these curriculum leaders attempted to encourage an environment in which innovation could take place without exhausting or exceeding the capacities and energies of workgroup members. The four protagonists in this chapter appeared to have a clear understanding of the forms of teacher 'expertness' they wanted to promote and encourage, and an empathetic awareness of the social conditions under which this could reasonably be attempted. By the end of the 1997 school year, it was clear that the four were not only mediating the demands of external prescriptions with and on behalf of workgroup colleagues, but were also, through their voluntary participation in Unit Standards trials, acutely aware of the politics of curriculum reform.

In the next chapter, I attempt to bring together the various strands of thought, action and interaction that these teachers' work-stories have illuminated, and then, to link these to the wider politics, history and culture of contemporary secondary school reform both in New Zealand and overseas.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING IN CONTEXT

This chapter draws together the disparate discussions and analyses of chapters five to twelve in order to provide an overview of teaching and curriculum leadership drawn from the data. The data on teachers' and curriculum leaders' expertness are then contextualised within both (a) the history, culture and politics of New Zealand secondary schooling since the 1940s; and (b) broader patterns of education policy development in the anglophone literature reviewed. This analysis is structured around the various sets of questions that were raised for discussion in chapters two to four.

#### INTRODUCTION

The previous eight chapters described and commented on discrete strands of these secondary school teachers' routines, priorities, and seasonal work. In this chapter I want first to draw the disparate strands together and then to locate these teachers' experiences in their broader occupational, cultural, historical and political contexts. It is important to make a distinction at the outset between 'generalisation' from and 'contextualisation' of these data. The purpose of this chapter is not to generate from the data a theoretical framework with which to analyse social practice in comparable educational settings. The case has already been argued at length that individual and workgroup contexts and their practices are idiosyncratic. What these teachers attempted and did was greatly contingent upon the constraints and opportunities provided by their unique circumstances. However, it is both possible and desirable to go beyond a social psychology of the work-storied accounts presented in the previous eight chapters and to seek evidence of discursive linkages between these teachers' texts and practices and those of both contemporary and more distant educational history. Through the identification of continuities and discontinuities of practice within the 'social regularities'<sup>1</sup> that currently shape and inform teachers' work, these teachers' accounts of their work are contextualised in the traditions or evolving cultures and politics of New Zealand secondary schooling policy since 1945.

Earlier in this study, a review of a large swathe of the anglophone literature on secondary school teaching, curriculum and management (chapter two) elicited a more informed set of questions with which to explore the New Zealand experience. An examination of the contemporary positionings of secondary teachers and the state, and the historical developments that underpin these (chapter three), gave a detailed understanding of the political, cultural and occupational texts<sup>2</sup> that infuse the discursive practices of secondary school teaching in this

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<sup>1</sup> Scheurich, J. *Research method in the postmodern*. London: Falmer, 1997, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, A. Text and discourse in education: an introduction to critical discourse analysis, *Review of Research in Education*, 1995, 21, p. 13.

country. Finally, the discussion of how to best uncover and portray the unique subjective and inter-subjective experiences of this small sample of social actors and their workgroups suggested a narrower area of inquiry for the empirical phase of the study (chapter four). Having carefully daubed an assemblage of pointillist dots (see Figure 4.2) in successive chapters (five to twelve), it is necessary now to step back and examine the painted canvas as a whole for the contours, forms and tonal patterns that might allow us, as viewers, to 'actively make sense of this selective representation of secondary school teachers at work.

This will be attempted, in effect, by using the data to work back through the various sets of focus questions that have been developed and refined during the course of researching and writing this account of the study. It is worth repeating, however, that the purpose of the exercise is not to find definitive answers to the questions raised – this is simply not that kind of study. Rather, it is to consider how the data, or specific elements within the data, enhance our ability to interpret<sup>3</sup> teachers' individual and collective work. Such an approach may identify the more meaningful and precise questions we might usefully ask of similar occupational practice, elsewhere, in the future. The questions raised in earlier chapters were:

1. To what extent and how do practising teachers define 'expertness' and work towards it?
2. To what extent and how does the curriculum leader contribute to the collective development of teacher 'expertness'?
3. What are the forms and origins of the various contemporary discourses of teaching curriculum and management that exist within the New Zealand secondary school system?
4. What effects have changes in central curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policy had on teachers' work?
5. What are the role expectations of the Head of Department in contemporary secondary schools in New Zealand?
6. What are the characteristics of contemporary secondary school teaching?
7. How do secondary school teachers learn to develop their practice?
8. What part do curriculum managers play in helping colleagues to develop their practice?

Each of these is addressed below. In the discussion in chapter four, I suggested that, in part, approaches to the analysis of education policy vary according to their principal focus. Some aspects of practice 'figure' more prominently against a larger contextual 'background': for example, interactionist ethnography emphasises teachers' individual and collective agency in classroom and school settings (figure) within particular education policy contexts ('background'). Similarly, in the discussion that follows, the emphasis or principal focus shifts

through the course of the eight questions. In the early sections of this chapter, the principal focus is the context of classroom and workgroup social practice which these teachers both produced and worked within. Here, the data drawn from the fieldwork are most relevant and prominent. As the chapter progresses, however, the principal focus shifts, first to the context of secondary schooling and education policy development in New Zealand from the 1940s to the 1990s (and to the questions raised in chapter three); and, second, to the broader context of 'management', 'curriculum' and 'teaching' (i.e. the themes discussed in chapter two). Here, the contexts of policy text production, influence and political strategy<sup>4</sup> become more germane to the analysis.

### **1. TO WHAT EXTENT AND HOW DO PRACTISING TEACHERS DEFINE 'EXPERTNESS' AND WORK TOWARDS IT?**

In chapter four, 'expertness' was defined as "skill derived from practice; readiness, dexterity" rather than "expert opinion or knowledge".<sup>5</sup> 'Expertness' is an "experience-near" concept that, in this case, a teacher might "himself [sic] naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others".<sup>6</sup>

Among the work-storied accounts<sup>7</sup> of the teachers in this study, three aspects of their routine classroom work were identified: responsiveness to students; scaffolding the curriculum; and the experienced teacher. These, rather than a single, coherent, abstract and unchanging articulation of 'good' or 'expert' teaching (to use Geertz' term, an "experience-distant concept"), seemed to depict best what they were trying to achieve.

#### *Responding To Students' Needs*

These mid-career teachers attempted to respond to students' needs, for example, by organizing the content, format and intellectual demands of lessons to suit the time of day, or week, or the age of students. Some identified, to the specific timetable period, the optimum learning occasions for different groups and ages of students within a highly structured week. Consistent

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<sup>3</sup> Habermas, J. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Trans. C. Lenhardt and S. Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.; MIT Press, 1990, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University press, 1994, pp. 26-27.

<sup>5</sup> Heinz Kohut, cited in Geertz, C. *Local knowledge. Further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: Fontana, 1983, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. *Teachers' work in a globalizing economy*. London; Falmer, 2000, pp. 111-112.

with a normative pedagogic role as 'adroit guide to the enquiry process',<sup>8</sup> they expressed a commitment to encouraging group learning and self-motivation on the part of students. This pedagogic disposition was regarded as relatively unproblematic with groups of academically successful students who were positively disposed to the official curriculum and who had the social skills and prior schooling experience to operate it.<sup>9</sup> With other students, as Ruth found at Kauri, the approach proved more difficult for the teacher to encourage. Where they deemed it necessary, or the school or curriculum context or student dispositions demanded it, the teachers also drew on a range of overt control<sup>10</sup> techniques including 'assertive discipline' programmes, the enforcement of homework policies, appeals to the future requirements of the 'real world of work', the positive reinforcement of effort (as opposed to attainment) on the part of students and, where available, alternative, vocationally relevant programmes of study and credentials to those of the 'competitive academic curriculum.'" Indeed, the school-based development and trial of Unit Standards based forms of assessment may be seen, in part, as an attempt to assess and accredit more appropriately the attainment of students who these teachers knew from experience were likely to be labelled as failures within existing School Certificate and Sixth Form Certificate frameworks. In this regard, their accounts demonstrated an 'ethic of care'<sup>12</sup> for students, not so much in terms of named individuals, but in the way that they endeavoured to ensure that activities, lessons, schemes of work, the classroom environment, reward-sanction structures, assessments and terminal credentials were both conducive to student learning and actively encouraged it.

### *Scaffolding The Curriculum*

These teachers took an active role in scaffolding the subject curriculum to make it intelligible and accessible to their students, but did so in different ways according to the needs and tolerances of the students, the cognitive and affective demands of the subject, external prescriptions, and their personal pedagogic preferences.<sup>13</sup> Some gave examples of the basic conceptual building blocks that students needed to acquire if they were to succeed in the subject and concentrated on these in structuring their sequences of lessons. Within this structure, there was no one right way of teaching. Rather, the subject content, or the stage reached in the

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<sup>8</sup> NZPPTA. *Education in change*. Report of the Curriculum Review Group. Auckland: Longman, 1969, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup> Thrupp, M. *Schools making a difference. Let's be realistic*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999, chapter seven.

<sup>10</sup> Connell, R. *Teachers' work*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985, p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Smyth et al, op. cit., 2000; Gilligan, C. *In a different voice*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Shulman L. Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1987, 57(1), 1-22; Brown, S. and McIntyre, D. *Making sense of teaching*. Buckingham, UK; Open

sequence of lessons, or what they saw as the needs of the students suggested a particular pedagogical approach or lesson style from among the teacher's repertoire.<sup>14</sup> These approaches included, for most teachers, didactic, behaviourist and peer group work sequences. Moreover, all of these might be used within the same lesson. Running across all descriptions of these pedagogical approaches were, first, the need to create a coherent structure of curriculum delivery that made sense to students and, second, the importance of teachers' relationships, or 'honesty', with students. The former suggested very much that it was teachers, rather than students, who determined the content, direction and styles of learning - partly because of the pressures to get through the prescribed curriculum.<sup>15</sup> The latter, that classroom 'expertness' was a personal collection of skills, intuitions and dispositions that one acquired through the experience of actually being a teacher.

### *The Experienced Teacher*

These teachers talked of the 'experienced' rather than the 'good' teacher. They did so through texts<sup>16</sup> that were recognisably vernacular, or specific to the occupation of teaching, yet the language they used was, for the most part, 'experience-near'<sup>17</sup> not abstract, technical or heavily theoretical. Becoming a teacher was, in effect, about learning how to construct and take up a classroom identity as 'the teacher' that conformed to student expectations. In part, this could be achieved only in interaction with one's students: learning to survive, to exercise tacit forms of classroom management, to acknowledge one's fallibility in front of students. Some of the women commented how their domestic experience of bringing up children or of other kinds of work outside their fragmented teaching career had positively informed the relational aspects of their teaching. On these occasions, personal biographical or life history accounts<sup>18</sup> such as Lillian's differed from those of men and other women teachers who talked about what they had learnt from teaching by working in other schools earlier in their careers.

The adoption of a personal classroom identity (or identities) was distinguishable from developing one's idiosyncratic pedagogic repertoire<sup>19</sup> or making curriculum content manageable for students.<sup>20</sup> Equally, it was more complex than a linear transition from novice to expert

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University Press, 1993; Grimmett, P. and Mackinnon, A. Craft knowledge and the education of teachers. *Review of Research in Education*, 1992, 18,385-456.

<sup>14</sup> Louden, W. *Understanding teaching*. London: Cassell, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, E. M. *Realities of curricula*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978.

<sup>16</sup> Luke, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Geertz, op. cit., 1983.

<sup>18</sup> Middleton, S. Developing a radical pedagogy: autobiography of a New Zealand sociologist of women's education. In I. Goodson (Ed.). *Studying teachers' lives*. London: Routledge, 1992, 18-50.

<sup>19</sup> Louden, op. cit., 1991.

<sup>20</sup> Shulman, op. cit., 1987.

teacher.<sup>21</sup> For the teachers in this study, one's self-identification as an experienced teacher, if not actually threatened, was at least disturbed by changes in prescribed curriculum content, pedagogies or assessment methods, by teaching in an unfamiliar subject area, by moving to another school, or being in a workgroup of unstable membership. Equally, in their work as curriculum leaders, they were able to identify situations where less established or less confident colleagues required highly structured schemes of work or textbooks or resources around which to organise classroom learning. William and Isadora were among those who were working also with experienced colleagues, formally and informally, in attempts to help them resolve difficulties of pedagogic competence or occupational commitment. Some had identified individuals within the immediate workgroup who would benefit from fresh challenges either to maintain their enthusiasm for classroom teaching or to further their career trajectory. Accordingly, teachers at any career stage might experience a crisis of identity.<sup>22</sup> Equally, teachers had finite resources of energy that ebbed and flowed with the seasonal demands of curriculum, assessment, reporting and whole-school organisation. They were, as a consequence, prone to crises of enthusiasm, both individual and collective, on a termly and annual basis that tested their coping strategies and 'conscientiousness'<sup>23</sup> to the full. In this sense, the notion of 'expertness' that these teachers were attempting to achieve was fluid, contingent and, often, reactive.

What individual teachers must do and when is not wholly within their individual control. Moreover, much of the work that constituted these individuals as 'teachers' took place outside the confines of their personal teaching space, often in meetings. Although demanding of their time, workgroup meetings (including the ritual sharing of lollies in the Individualised Learning meetings at Kauri or the 'show and tell' sessions in Science department meetings at Totara) were generally valuable to their members in as much as they aided rather than hindered classroom preparation, and allowed members to stay in touch with what was happening elsewhere in the workgroup. Indeed, Mike, at Kauri, specifically commented that among the shortcomings of the At Risk initiative were the lack of meetings and the absence of common procedures. Equally, meetings (and the joint work they spawned) provided a forum for several groups to work their way through the 'technical' conundrums<sup>24</sup> presented by novel forms of standards based assessment. In short, these teachers talked in ways that acknowledged that the

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<sup>21</sup> Berliner, 1992, in Galton, M. Teaching, learning and the co-ordinator. In J. O'Neill and N. Kitson (Eds.). *Effective curriculum management. Co-ordinating learning in the primary school*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Huberman, M. *The lives of teachers*. London: Cassell, 1993; Wragg, T., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Chamberlin, R. *Failing teachers?* London: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, J. and Neill, S. Managing teachers' time under systemic reform. In T. Bush and D.

Middlewood (Eds.). *Managing people in education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1997, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Apple, M. *Teachers and texts. A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. London: Routledge, 1986.

work was as much collective as it was individual. Thus their embedded workgroup, school and system contexts<sup>21</sup> arguably contributed as much to their working definitions of 'expertness' as did the idiosyncratic and personal processes of becoming a more experienced and self-confident teacher and, having done so, of maintaining one's openness to change.<sup>26</sup> In these respects, the curriculum leader and the workgroup were crucial reference groups for the teachers in this

In terms of their 'expertness', then, these teachers, did appear to have and were able to articulate clear, grounded conceptions both of what their work was about; of the pragmatic strategies and dispositions that would enable individuals to learn to develop (over time and career), an identity as a teacher; and of the ways in which collective routines and endeavour provided an essential foil for individual development and occupational learning.

## **2. TO WHAT EXTENT AND HOW DOES THE CURRICULUM LEADER CONTRIBUTE TO THE COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER 'EXPERTNESS'?**

At the level of the workgroup (most frequently the subject department), priorities were being addressed during the course of the study that focused principally on staff, student or curriculum problems and their pragmatic<sup>28</sup> resolution. Given that these priorities each called for a certain commonality of purpose and approach, i.e. a shared conception of 'collective expertness' across the workgroup, they worked against the norms of teacher autonomy, privacy and personal identity that characterise 'modal' classroom practice.<sup>29</sup> In this regard, the potential for conflict and tension was, arguably, greater as individual positions and values on a range of teaching, curriculum and management issues had to be reconciled with those of others within the workgroup, and, on occasion, that of the workgroup with those of other workgroups within the school. On the one hand, the incentives (survival-power-status-voice-harmony) to seek agreement within the workgroup on curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment issues were high.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, gaining such agreement could be problematic, in particular where

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<sup>25</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. (forthcoming). *Communities of practice and the work of high school teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

<sup>26</sup> Huberman, op. cit., 1993; Harker, R., Gibbs, C., Ryan, H., Weir, K. and Adams, D. *Teacher 2000 Project: an international study of teacher satisfaction, motivation and health. The New Zealand report*. Palmerston North: Massey University College of Education, 1998, September.

<sup>27</sup> Nias, J. *Primary teachers talking. A study of teaching as work*. London; Routledge, 1989.

<sup>28</sup> Hammersley, M. *The dilemmas of qualitative method. Herbert Blumer and the Chicago tradition*. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 45.

<sup>29</sup> Sarason, S. *The culture of the school and the problem of change*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971; Hargreaves, A. *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell, 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Ball, S. (1981). *Beachside comprehensive. A case study of secondary schooling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Ball, S. *The micro-politics of the school. Towards a theory of school*

teachers were being asked to 'get closer to the bone'<sup>31</sup> and change established personal (classroom), epistemic (subject) or epistemological (workgroup) norms of practice.<sup>32</sup> Thus, on the one hand, for example, Nina's attempt to promote student-centred, activity-based learning in the junior science scheme at Totara was seen as likely too radical a pedagogic departure for individual teachers most of whom were accustomed to and comfortable with following the text-book. On the other hand, the trial of unit standards in the same department was regarded largely as procedural, as a workloads issue that could be readily accommodated by an energetic workgroup, using the same collaborative processes they had developed to successfully implement the new Science curriculum document in earlier years. Similarly, while Tim and Helen could see pragmatic advantages in developing detailed schemes of work to support the non-specialist English teachers at Rimu, Eric, in the same small school, was one of several heads of department who argued that new teachers and senior management expected too much practical support and needed to do more to help both themselves and their already overloaded HoD.

#### *Practising Curriculum Leadership*

Just as individual teachers strove to establish idiosyncratic 'normal desirable states of activity'<sup>33</sup> in their classrooms and, outside these, to grasp the 'folkways' of their occupation,<sup>34</sup> so too did the curriculum leaders within their respective workgroups. In particular, they each had a personal professional agenda<sup>35</sup> to do with how the workgroup should function and what areas of collective activity should be addressed. They attempted to encourage positive dispositions towards necessary collaborative work not through normative-evaluative appeals, nor managerialism,<sup>36</sup> but in the process of successfully completing practical tasks in certain areas of workgroup activity (i.e. staff, curriculum, students) that had been identified as priorities for action. These priorities might relate to internal workgroup practices (e.g. the use of a shared resource bank, or common assessment tasks), whole school initiatives (e.g. homework policy, the management of student teacher placements) or external initiatives (e.g. subject association, NZQA, Curriculum Framework, or Ministry of Education projects). As the case studies presented in chapters eight, nine and ten showed all too well, the agenda pursued by these

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*organization*. London: Routledge, 1987. Goodson, I. and Marsh, C. *Studying school subjects. A guide*. London: Falmer, 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Little, J. The persistence of privacy: autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers' College Record*, 1990, 91(4), 491-518.

<sup>32</sup> Ball, S. and Lacey, C. Revisiting subject disciplines as the opportunity for group action: a measured critique of subject subcultures. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York; Teachers' College Press, 1995, pp. 95-122.

<sup>33</sup> Brown and McIntyre, *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 257.

<sup>34</sup> Olson, J. *Understanding teaching*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1992, p. 213.

<sup>35</sup> Stenhouse, L. Artistry and teaching: the teacher as focus of research and development. In D. Hopkins and M. Wideen (Eds.). *Alternative perspectives on school improvement*. Lewes: Falmer, 1984, p. 68.

curriculum leaders was a complex and demanding one for priorities were constantly shifting. Multiple priorities competed for the workgroup's time, attention and active patronage. Curriculum leaders strived constantly in all this to establish and nurture the collaborative, tapestried processes that might provide for their colleagues the successful experience or situated certainty<sup>37</sup> of managing multiple demands on their time and commitment. The processes of collaboration were not, therefore, something that could be taken for granted.

The importance of leadership and identity to the workgroup were, paradoxically, most apparent where they were absent. At Kauri, for example, Janette attempted to establish the At Risk programme using similar principles to those she had adopted some years earlier with the Individualised Learning. Yet, during the course of the study, the two initiatives followed markedly different trajectories some of which, at least, was attributable to differences in leadership and workgroup practice in each. At Rimu, several recently appointed members of staff lamented the lack of support available to them in their respective departments (and the staffroom) and Ruth alluded to the difficulties of leading a workgroup of social studies teachers whose primary affiliations<sup>38</sup> were to other subjects. At Totara, having been in the post for more than a year, William could identify substantive differences in workgroup culture and cohesion between his mathematics department and other groupings in the school. At Matai, Isadora, a new HoD, had inherited a number of unaddressed competence issues and an unconfident workgroup culture from the previous incumbent.

#### *Workgroup Cohesion And Confidence*

Equally, some of these workgroups appeared to become more cohesive and confident over time (even within the two years of the study) and their leaders, themselves more confident as a result, could encourage more ambitious and demanding change as the workgroup context allowed. For Lillian, it had taken seven years to reach the stage where she felt her small Accounting and Economics department was functioning in an appropriately collegial manner. William and Isadora claimed positive relational changes within their first twelve months in post as a result of them working hard at the 'people' side of their work in both formal and informal settings. Frances and Adam enjoyed more settled workgroup cultures and were concerned to keep these running smoothly. What was done to encourage workgroup development varied, then, according to the personalities, issues and workgroup histories involved but consistent across all of the identified priorities was a desire to further the inclusion of workgroup members and their commitment to joint work.<sup>39</sup> However, inclusion and commitment were not to be achieved

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<sup>36</sup> Codd, J. Managerialism: the problem with Today's Schools. *Delta*, 1990, 44, 17-25.

<sup>37</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>38</sup> Siskin, L. (1994). *Realms of knowledge. Academic subjects in secondary schools*. London: Falmer, chapter four.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter five.

through normative exhortation with some idealised 'bonded'<sup>40</sup> workgroup in mind, but in the pragmatic resolution of human problems.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, the routine leadership of these groups was more empathetic orchestration from within the group than it was 'heroic' action at its margins. In this, curriculum leaders were attuned to the seasonal ebb and flow of pressures, tasks to be completed and the energies and enthusiasms of their workgroup colleagues. Equally, the level of direct intervention from the workgroup leader varied with the personal expertise of colleagues. Thus Tim, for example, was required constantly to provide subject and craft knowledge<sup>42</sup> support for non-specialist English teachers at Rimu by way of suggested activities, assessments and resources within a highly structured scheme of work. In contrast, William and Adam at Totara were members of large, well-qualified and experienced workgroups of subject specialists, and could consequently share out the development work, while, at Matai, Frank, having other whole school responsibilities, was alert to indicators of possible problems in his loosely-knit Commerce department. In the same school but in a different workgroup context, Isadora identified particular gaps in the knowledge and confidence levels of colleagues that had to be 'massaged' by her alongside the workgroup's procedural attempts to introduce Unit Standards based assessment.

Although the teachers did not use such terms, for the purposes of interpretation the various epistemologies (theories of what knowledge is and how it may be communicated), ontologies (theories about the nature of reality, and the extent to which it is objectively or socially created) and axiologies (theories about what should be valued and how)<sup>43</sup> within these workgroups might be conceptualised as a complex of specific, interdependent teaching 'texts' in play.<sup>44</sup> These texts informed workgroup action, opening up some conceptions, ideas, dispositions and areas of activity, and closing off others. In attempting to influence the work and priorities of the group, a large part of the work of the curriculum leader was the identification of which texts were in circulation within the workgroup, how they influenced practice, and what needed to be done to increase the range of possibilities for action and 'creative response'.<sup>45</sup> Many of these texts or discursive practices were occupational in the sense that they related to the enduring micro-politics<sup>46</sup> of secondary teachers' work and the resolution of predictable tensions of social practice (i.e. the nexus of teaching, curriculum and management). These issues were addressed, for example, through the provision of support for individual colleagues and, where necessary,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>41</sup> Hammersley, *op. cit.*, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Shulman, *op. cit.*, 1987; Grimmett and Mackinnon, *op. cit.*, 1992.

<sup>43</sup> Clark, J. *Educational research: philosophy, politics, ethics*. Palmerston North: ERDC Press, 1997, pp. 3-4; Cohen, L. and Manion, L. *Research methods in education*. Third edn. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Luke, *op. cit.*, 1995.

<sup>45</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994, pp. 18-19.

<sup>46</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1987.

the monitoring of their work; working alongside senior staff and other curriculum leaders in whole school forums; maintaining networks with colleagues in other schools and subject association; and, ensuring that necessary review, planning and reporting cycles were met in the limited meeting time available, while, all the time, attempting to ensure that the 'good oil' of collaboration kept flowing. In this sense, the workgroup leaders felt a major personal responsibility to ensure that the workgroup ran smoothly.

The most intrusive interruptions to the routine occupational work of these groups came in the form of external, official policy texts to which they had to produce creative responses.<sup>47</sup> During the course of this study, the most prominent of these was the trial of Unit Standards in various senior secondary school subjects. But this was not the only one. All the teachers and curriculum leaders were in various stages of devising responses to the demands of new curriculum prescriptions. Here, the workgroup's size, history and collective 'expertness', together with its levels of inclusion and commitment, came into play. So too did the curriculum leader's ability to access knowledge in other schools, the subject association, the advisory service or, in Tim's case, a local polytechnic. Finally, in Janette's case there was, perhaps a sign of 'hard times' to come as schools were faced with decisions about the extent to which they should become involved in the entrepreneurial curriculum in order to be able to address their students' needs. The work of curriculum leaders, in this sense, engaged them in curriculum politics beyond the familiar context of the school itself. For Tim, in his small rural school, this meant participation in centrally funded professional development contracts for support and advice, and the choice between a consultant and a local tertiary provider from which to purchase the unit standards it was impossible to develop in-house; for Isadora, it was the local moderation group for 'Communications English', in which schools were outnumbered by private training establishments (PTEs); and, for William, participation in the unit standards trial provided the opportunity and the confidence born of experience to critique the policy texts that had come from the Ministry and the NZQA.

Having discussed the data from the study within the 'context of practice'<sup>48</sup>, we now turn to consider how the reported experiences, positions and values of these teachers fit within the history, culture and politics of New Zealand secondary schooling since the 1940s.

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<sup>47</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1994.

### **3. WHAT ARE THE FORMS AND ORIGINS OF THE VARIOUS CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES OF TEACHING, CURRICULUM AND MANAGEMENT THAT EXIST WITHIN THE NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM?**

In chapter four I quoted Luke's claim that "many educational analyses have difficulty showing how large-scale social discourses are systematically (or for that matter unsystematically) manifest in everyday talk and writing in local sites".<sup>49</sup> However unsystematic and tentative the attempt, if we are to achieve a 'wider and deeper understanding'<sup>50</sup>, it is necessary to try to link the 'experience-near' talk and work of this group of teachers to more systemic texts or discourses. The way these teachers thought and talked about their craft was undoubtedly informed by personal history and their own professional socialisation in specific workgroup and institutional settings. Yet, there are other occupational, educational and social texts in circulation that also seek to influence teachers' work, how they conceptualise it, their dispositions and how they exercise their individual and collective agency. Teachers' personal and collective theories of knowledge (epistemologies), the ways they view their occupational and social worlds (ontologies) and the values they espouse and use as the basis of decision-making (axiologies) are not ahistorical entities. Contemporary practices are embedded in longer standing cultures and politics of secondary schooling in New Zealand. In addressing this question and the next two, I want to attempt to identify which historical, cultural and political texts appear to be present in contemporary accounts of practice, and which not; which have been adopted, adapted and endured and which may have been discarded, marginalised, subverted or silenced.

#### *The Relational Aspects Of Teaching*

The relational aspects of teaching were evident in the focus, content and tone of many of these work-storied accounts, for example, in Julia's meticulous and time-consuming preparation of crosswords for her low-attaining students; in Isadora's empathetic coping with the violent outbursts of one girl in her sixth form class and in Ruth's awareness that the social skills (and consequent pedagogic needs) of her students at Rimu differed markedly from those of students at her former school. These teachers clearly saw their work as considerably more than the exercise of control and the imparting of knowledge. While not in any way unique to New Zealand, norms of care and empathy with the personal needs of all students were regularly, explicitly and persuasively articulated in policy and discussion documents in this country from

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<sup>48</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1994, pp. 26-27.

<sup>49</sup> Luke, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Grace, G. *School leadership. Beyond education management. An essay in policy scholarship.* London: Falmer Press, 1995, p. 3.

the 1940s until at least the late 1970s.<sup>51</sup> These normative aspects of the teacher's role appeared to have survived intact, as part of the principal sustaining educational myth<sup>52</sup> of the post-war decades. They were evident throughout the content and tone of these teachers' accounts. Teachers were expected to develop non-authoritarian relationships with their students and actively to fulfill a range of pastoral obligations both in and outside the classroom. Yet, whereas these teachers' humanist, craft conceptions of teaching<sup>53</sup> did infuse their talk and analyses, other philosophical, bureaucratic or technical conceptions did not. There was nothing in these teachers' talk that could easily and explicitly be traced to arguments in, for example, PPTA's landmark discussion of the teacher's pedagogic role, the interdisciplinary curriculum or its assessment;<sup>54</sup> or, more recently, the Education and Science Select Committee's generic taxonomies of teacher competence in their *Quality of Teaching* report; the *Tomorrow's Standards* report which sought to accord teachers a role as proficient assessors of student learning,<sup>55</sup> or the PPTA's critiques of managerialism and advocacy of shared decision-making approaches.<sup>56</sup> (Possibly, teachers' would need to be asked more directly about their knowledge and the influence of particular texts upon their thinking and work.)

#### *School Organisation*

School organisation seemed in many respects unchanged since the 1970s, when E.M. Campbell reported discrepancies between the ideal and the reality of secondary school teaching. Organisational practices continued to pose problems for some teachers and students.<sup>57</sup> Apart, perhaps, from the radical Individualised Learning initiative at Kauri, students and teachers organised their daily work according to a conservative timetable that had all the hallmarks of that prescribed in 1945<sup>58</sup> and reviewed in 1984.<sup>59</sup> There was little evidence from these accounts that independent study, student-directed learning or whanau house modes of school and

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<sup>51</sup> E.g. *The post-primary school curriculum*. Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of education in November 1942. (W. Thomas, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1959; NZPPTA. *Education in change*. Report of the Curriculum Review Group. Auckland; Longman Paul, 1969; Department of Education. *Guidance in secondary schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1971.

<sup>52</sup> Beeby, C. Introduction. In W. Renwick. *Moving targets. Six essays on educational policy*. Wellington: NZCER, 1986, p. xv.

<sup>53</sup> Grimmett and Mackinnon, op. cit., 1992

<sup>54</sup> PPTA, op. cit., 1969.

<sup>55</sup> Education and Science Select Committee. *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*. (N. Scott, chairman). Wellington: Government Printer, 1986; *Tomorrow's standards*. The report of the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning. (J. Stewart, Chairman). Wellington: Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 1990

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Capper, P. *Participation and partnership: exploring shared decision-making in twelve New Zealand secondary schools*. Wellington; NZPPTA, 1994.

<sup>57</sup> Campbell, E.M. *Realities of curricula*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978.

<sup>58</sup> *Education (post-primary instruction) regulations 1945*. Wellington; Government Printer, 1945.

<sup>59</sup> *A review of the core curriculum for schools*. (J. Ross, Chairman) Wellington: Department of Education, 1984, March.

curriculum organisation were routinely used in the four schools.<sup>60</sup> The programme for at Risk Students at Kauri was only attempted with extraordinary funding from a Ministry of Education targeted pool. Indeed, despite Janette's preparatory efforts to establish and support an explicit, alternative pedagogy, integrated learning areas and life skills in the programme, it rapidly took on a fairly conventional disciplinary framework of curriculum organisation and delivery when control of the already alienated students took priority. This extreme example aside, the accounts of these teachers revealed broad patterns and trends of organization similar to those recorded in the two surveys of secondary schools in 1975 and 1985.<sup>61</sup>

Despite regular efforts over the decades to break the dominant influence of external examinations on the school curriculum, traditional credentialing routes and the tensions they produced had not been overhauled by the mid 1990s. At Totara, Julia and Isadora expressed their frustrations at the way in which hegemonic School Certificate assessment criteria ignored the effort and diligence of their students, which could only be recorded as part of a lower status record of achievement. William was using a mathematics subject association credential as an alternative in the sixth form with his students. Adam noted at the end of the year's trial with Unit Standards in science that the novel mode of assessment was useful for recording the skills of some students whose attainment would otherwise go unrecognised but expressed doubts about its ability to stretch the more able students (as did others in the following year, 1997, when the issue had been publicised by PPTA following a survey of members).<sup>62</sup> To this extent, their comments echoed closely the tenor of arguments that had continuously been advanced since the 1940s for internal assessment and credential reform; yet theirs were the only concerns voiced in these interviews about national credentials. In other interviews and observations, it was seemingly the curriculum 'in use' (which they could directly influence) rather than the official frameworks (which they could not) about which these teachers were most concerned. They attempted change in idiosyncratic ways according to the demands of local context, needs and possibilities. An example of local discretion being exploited was Ruth's attempt to encourage student self-evaluation of learning in the social studies modules at Rimu, an initiative that could operate internally within the fourth form curriculum irrespective of the constraints of national assessment and credentialing protocols in the senior school. Likewise, Nina's accelerated learning initiative in junior science at Totara, the Individualised Learning at Kauri,

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<sup>60</sup> Department of Education. *Secondary schools for tomorrow. A new approach to design and construction*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1975; *Growing, sharing, learning*. Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education. (J.G. Johnson, Chairman). Second edn. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978.

<sup>61</sup> Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand. A baseline survey*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1981; Department of Education. *State secondary schools in New Zealand A 1985 follow-up of the 1975 baseline survey*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986.

<sup>62</sup> Qualifications Framework Inquiry. *Te Tiro Hou; report of the Qualifications Framework Inquiry*. Commissioned by the NZ Post Primary Teachers Association. Wellington: PPTA, 1997.

and even Frank toying with the idea of co-operative learning in his own classroom were possibilities that could be considered because they were in discretionary areas of educational practice that remained unaffected by official curriculum and assessment policy texts.

### *Conceptions Of Curriculum*

In their discussions of curriculum, a variety of content, pedagogy and assessment issues engaged their attention and enthusiasm. Consistently, they talked in subject specific terms about matching the curriculum to what they saw as the needs of their students. Significantly, other than in discussion of the particular technical requirements of new curriculum or assessment frameworks (e.g. Tim's description of 'levelling' assessment task outcomes within the third form English scheme at Rimu or the Science department's pastiche of 'sufficiency' at Totara), they did not gauge their efforts, nor give expression to them, via a lexicon of official benchmark standards or student outcomes. Yet, given the counter-discourses (of back-to-basics, accountability, achievement standards and assessment)<sup>63</sup> of the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, one might have expected such language to be more prominent in teachers' accounts of their work.

The curriculum was conceptualised quite traditionally by these teachers as discrete subjects with self-contained canons of knowledge and skills, not the integrated areas of general educational experience and learning that, for example, had been variously proposed by PPTA<sup>64</sup>, the *Curriculum Review* of the 1980s,<sup>65</sup> and through the articulation of cross-curricular essential skills and values in *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*.<sup>66</sup> Frances, in charge of the Individualised Learning initiative at Kauri, was the only one who described her curriculum area as explicitly cross-curricular (although at Totara and Matai the new Technology curriculum was planned to be introduced as a cross-curricular subject). Even so, she also described the difficulty of persuading other subject departments to each give up some of their time allocation to allow her to run a 'learning how to learn' course for third formers. The lack of integration of curriculum areas is not surprising, though, given the government's decision to stagger the publication of individual subject curriculum documents prior to and during the period of the study. (Equally, the order of their production, beginning with the high status subjects of mathematics (1992), science (1993) and English (1994), only confirmed the traditional hierarchy of secondary school knowledge.) Consequently, what these teachers appeared to draw

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<sup>63</sup> Department of Education. *Educational standards in state schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1978; Education and Science Select Committee, *op. cit.*, 1986; *Tomorrow's standards*, *op. cit.*, 1990.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1969.

<sup>65</sup> *The curriculum review, 1986*. A draft report prepared by the Committee to Review the Curriculum for Schools. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, July.

<sup>66</sup> Ministry of Education. *The New Zealand curriculum framework*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, April.

on in articulating and practising their curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) work was a complex and fragmented mix of conservative and liberal educational discursive texts.

### Joint *Work*

Norms of inclusion<sup>67</sup> and varying degrees of collaboration were evident in these teachers' work. Indeed, most curriculum leaders actively endeavoured to nurture productive joint work during the course of the study, albeit from different starting points. Several worked hard to ensure that workgroup meetings focused on mutual professional support and pragmatic curriculum development issues and to avoid 'contrived collaboration'.<sup>68</sup> There was little evidence that they encountered resistance from colleagues who sought privatism and who were committed to working in isolation from each other.<sup>69</sup> For this reason, the socialisation experiences of Judith and others at Rimu stood out as harsh exceptions. Equally, apart from their occasional, usually oblique references to working with individual colleagues in a formal discipline or competence sense, it was difficult to identify instances where these curriculum leaders were working in an obviously hierarchical, managerial role. Even where they self-identified as the 'head of department' or 'middle manager' they appeared to describe and position themselves, as William put it, as chalk-writers rather than pen pushers, primarily as teachers with additional administrative responsibilities, not administrators or managers per se. Why should this be so? One possible explanation lies in the consistent articulation of 'team' work as an occupational norm in New Zealand secondary school organization from the 1940s on.<sup>70</sup> Yet, this openness to joint work was purposive, regarded as an essential prerequisite for the development of integrated curricula and internal assessment (the cornerstones of the Thomas Report) in many subsequent reviews of secondary schooling. If this was the case then, we might well ask why (Social Studies aside) the secondary school curriculum in New Zealand remained essentially a collection code of knowledge with strong classification and framing<sup>71</sup> throughout its post-war history? Part of the answer must lie in the hegemonic influence on secondary schooling of the subjects of the official curriculum and their assessment, the issue to which we now turn.

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<sup>67</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>68</sup> Little, op. cit., 1990; Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>69</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, chapter eight.

<sup>70</sup> *The post-primary school curriculum*, op. cit., 1959; Educational Development Conference. *Improving learning and teaching*. Report of the Working party on Improving Learning and Teaching. (P. Lawrence, Chairman) Education Development Conference. Wellington: Government Printer, 1974; Education and Science Select Committee, op. cit., 1986; PPTA, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>71</sup> Bernstein, B. On the classification and framing of educational knowledge. In M. Young (Ed.). *Knowledge and control*. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971, 47-69.

#### 4. WHAT EFFECTS HAVE CHANGES IN CENTRAL CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT POLICY HAD ON TEACHERS' WORK?

The period of this study was one of intensive curriculum and assessment change, instigated through a number of official policy text interventions at school site level. Teachers involved in the principal subject areas of the school curriculum in 1996 had already or were about to engage with drafts and gazetted versions of their new curriculum documents. Each document set out the knowledge, skills and values that in future were explicitly to be taught and assessed. In some cases, the content of the curriculum drafts proved contentious and was subject to vocal, protracted contestation by various lay and professional groups. As reported in chapter three, the introduction of the new curriculum and qualifications frameworks also took place amid a succession of industrial disputes between teachers' representatives and the state, disputes that for a period led to a union moratorium on implementation of the frameworks. In addition, those schools and workgroups that volunteered to participate in Unit Standard trials had first to demonstrate their compliance with detailed NZQA quality assurance procedures and then themselves to write and try out novel assessment tasks in the senior school according to a standard template, with limited support of variable quality from central agencies, while simultaneously maintaining existing assessment and credentialing systems. Although the official rhetoric of reform promised a smooth transition from old to new frameworks, in practice, during the period of the study the development and implementation processes were characterised by uncertainties and discontinuities that both increased these teachers' workloads and tested their commitment and co-operation to the full. What then, do these teachers' work-storied accounts tell us about their 'reading'<sup>72</sup> of and 'creative responses'<sup>73</sup> to these new policy texts and the extent to which they were prepared to 'tolerate a redefinition of their teaching'?<sup>74</sup>

##### *Reading Policy Texts*

The important point to make here is that although they were centrally developed by a National government in a way that excluded teachers' representatives from their customary role in the decision-making process, the new qualifications and curriculum frameworks contained important continuities with the liberal-progressive agendas of an earlier corporatist state and, as such, they were unlikely to be rejected out of hand by classroom practitioners and workgroups simply because of their ideological provenance. Although political and Ministry of Education discourses represented the curriculum and qualifications frameworks changes as if they were

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<sup>72</sup> Ball, S. and Bowe, R. Subject departments and the 'implementation' of National Curriculum policy: an overview of the issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1992, 24(2), 97-115

<sup>73</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>74</sup> Smyth, J. and Shacklock, G. *Re-making teaching, Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 29.

responsible economic “palimpsests”<sup>75</sup> (necessary to the improvement of national achievement standards, providing an explicit linkage between the worlds of school and work, and modernising schooling to meet the entrepreneurial and technological needs of the national and global economies),<sup>76</sup> these same frameworks were seen by teachers and their representatives to allow for the pragmatic advance of their quest for curricula and credentials to meet the general educational needs of 'every person'. To use Ball's term, there were 'intertextual compatibilities'<sup>77</sup> between these curriculum and assessment innovations and similar looking frameworks that had been promoted under a Labour government in the second half of the 1980s,<sup>78</sup> by subject advisers and syllabus revision committees appointed by the Department of Education in the 1970s, and also publicly by PPTA.<sup>79</sup> Equally, and crucially, these new curriculum and assessment frameworks were presented as precisely that - 'frameworks' – not closely prescribed syllabuses or assessment straitjackets. Moreover, each curriculum document was written to a common, minimalist format with the use of short paragraphs and bullet points. These specified learning outcomes within the various knowledge, skills and values areas, but not activities, pedagogy, or resources. As such, they created the appearance of considerable professional latitude in the revision of existing schemes of work, assessment tasks and accreditation of the learning of all students. Most significantly as far as classroom practitioners were concerned neither framework explicitly demanded radical pedagogical change. Unsurprisingly, then, the broad thrust of the curriculum and assessment reforms, if not the style of their introduction or the level of resources that accompanied them, enjoyed the active support of PPTA.

#### *Developing 'Creative Responses'*

The accounts provided by these teachers contain nothing that would appear to contradict such an analysis. The major issues that faced all the workgroups involved with curriculum and assessment change in the study were those of "commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations [and] cooperation"<sup>80</sup> not ideological conflict. Indeed, among the protagonists in the study, only William referred to some (unspecified) philosophical reservations about unit standards, per se, and Tim to some epistemic controversy among English

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>76</sup> Ministry of Education, op. cit., 1993; Ministry of Education. *The national curriculum of New Zealand. A discussion document*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1991; The Achievement Initiative. *Education Gazette*, 70(7), 1-2, 1991, April.

<sup>77</sup> Op. cit., 1994, pp. 18-19.

<sup>78</sup> e.g. *The curriculum review 1986*, op. cit., 1986; *Learning and achieving*. Second report of the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 5-7. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, June; Department of Education. *Draft national curriculum statement. A discussion document for primary and secondary schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1988.

<sup>79</sup> NZPPTA. *School certificate in a changing world*. A discussion document prepared by the New Zealand post Primary Teachers' Association. Wellington: NZPPTA, 1981.

teachers generally with the introduction of the visual strand in the curriculum document, while the three principals interviewed all talked positively of the curriculum and qualifications reforms and their teachers' responses to them.

The reality that, in effect, each school was left to "work out its own salvation"<sup>81</sup> in implementing the two frameworks posed problems for some workgroups and individual curriculum leaders, most notably Eric at Rimu who laboured unaware of how other curriculum areas were developing unit standards, had little time in school or term-time to engage in development work himself, and had few colleagues with whom to share the subject specific curriculum revisions. However, larger groups also struggled to complete all their chosen priorities when working to external timetables and accountabilities. Although Adam considered that the science unit standards had successfully been trialled and evaluated at Totara, the experimentation in the junior school scheme and the induction of Fay had suffered as a result of the emphasis on senior school (dual) assessment. Equally, at Rimu, Tim eventually had to purchase the necessary standards for Communications English in order to be able to complete the revisions to the junior school scheme with departmental colleagues. Even so, he viewed the new curriculum and assessment frameworks enthusiastically for the most part, as opportunities to enhance English teaching within the school by specifying more clearly the tasks, resources, assessment criteria and desired outcomes for students in each strand of the curriculum. What to others might appear as a shift towards a technocratic approach to the teaching of English was, for Tim, a pragmatic response to the lack of subject specialist colleagues in a small, low-decile school. Moreover, the curriculum had still to be revised in a manner that was consistent with his epistemic ideals as an English teacher, hence his choice in both 1996 and 1997 to take part in professional development contracts to support the workgroup's development activities.

Others took different approaches to professional development to support curriculum and qualifications change. Adam had brought back ideas to try out from a year long contract to inform changes in Science assessment, while William and Lillian in the same school looked to their local subject teachers associations. At Matai, Isadora began to use colleagues in her own department with specialist expertise and in other schools to further the sorts of developments she wished to see implemented. Her opinions about the quality of support from official sources was mixed. This was true of several workgroups but was most vividly recounted at Totara where the science department expressed their frustration at the bureaucratic procedures and alien technical language that accompanied the qualifications framework trials. A characteristic of this and other workgroups' approaches was that once they had made a commitment to and successfully negotiated their early attempts to come to terms with the demands of the reforms, they sought to mould these official demands to their preferred ways of working. In this sense,

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<sup>80</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1994, pp. 18-19.

the emphasis was on school-focused professional development, a practice that developed from the late 1970s and which had been reinforced by the Secretary of Education in the early 1990s when a centrally planned professional development programme to support the introduction of the national curriculum framework and subject documents began.<sup>82</sup>

### *The Limits Of Change*

Nevertheless, if they wanted to, it was quite possible for teachers to resist what they saw as undesirable change, hence, for example, Ivan's frustrated comments to the effect that some teachers at Rimu had not begun to modify their traditional pedagogies and modes of classroom organization in response to the new curriculum documents. Equally, among the few references to the initiative, there were sufficient indications to suggest that the workgroups, their leaders and their principals all viewed the Ministry of Education's version of performance management differently from the curriculum and assessment reforms - with scepticism. To varying degrees it was read as managerialist in provenance,<sup>83</sup> questioning of their professionalism, and an interruption to the work of teaching. As such it appeared to be kept at arm's length from the routine work of these groups.

The curriculum and assessment policy texts were viewed by most of these experienced mid-career teachers as writerly<sup>84</sup> documents that they could use in order to further their workgroup needs and priorities. Moreover, the documents did not explicitly require them to challenge anything that might cut too 'close to the bone' of existing personal classroom practice or threaten to limit further teachers' professional autonomy. Nonetheless, this apparent freedom was limited. As Adam noted, the shift in emphasis in science assessment, from knowledge to skills, was a major change from previous practice (indeed, the text of teacher as assessor<sup>85</sup> was a prominent one in discussions that focused specifically on curriculum and qualifications changes). Equally, workgroups were rewriting schemes, assessment tasks and records in common formats using specialised terminology for various national accountability purposes. In such areas, the teachers appeared to have little professional discretion. For some teachers in these and other workgroups the pedagogical changes implied in the new curriculum documents, the technical language that accompanied the assessment and moderation of unit standards, or the related prospect of annual, hierarchical performance appraisal were too incompatible with their

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<sup>81</sup> *The post-primary curriculum*, op. cit., 1959, pp. 3-4.

<sup>82</sup> Stewart, D. and Prebble, T. (1981). *Heading for effectiveness. A school development approach*. Delta Research Monograph No. 4. Palmerston North: Massey University Department of Education/NZEAS, 1981; School and teacher development in New Zealand today. *Education Gazette*, 1992, 71(16), 1-2.

<sup>83</sup> Codd, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>84</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1994; Ball and Bowe, op. cit., 1992; Smyth and Shacklock, op. cit., 1998, p. 88.

<sup>85</sup> *Tomorrow's standards*, op. cit., 1990; Peddie, R. (1992). *Beyond the norm? An introduction to standards-based assessment*. Wellington: NZQA, 1992; Ministry of Education. *Assessment. Policy to practice*. Wellington: Learning Media, 1994.

existing identities as teachers and consequently were resisted (either by subversive adaptation or refusal to comply).

### *Workload*

The curriculum and assessment changes added to teachers' and curriculum leaders' workloads and reduced the time they had available for other occupational and workgroup priorities. Moreover, while these teachers produced 'creative responses' to these policy texts, it was clear that the curriculum and qualifications frameworks and the speed and scale of the changes, limited the range of possible responses, and not just for those who struggled to keep up. In part, Nina's accelerated learning initiative failed to be more widely adopted because the energy and attention needed to support it was being devoted to the introduction of unit standards. Equally, when students in the At Risk initiative at Kauri failed to make progress at the rapid rate required of them, the focus of the programme was reshaped in term three to link the daily activities more explicitly to levels and outcome statements of the subjects in the national curriculum on the basis that the students were losing touch with their peers. In contrast to the dazzling variety of experimental curricular programmes reportedly attempted in secondary schools in the early 1970s,<sup>86</sup> it appeared in this study that the homogenising, disciplinary effects of the official curriculum and its assessment, related normative expectations of student achievement levels and increased workloads<sup>87</sup> all delimited what teachers were willing to attempt outside these, and the time they had available to do so. As Frances observed, in her experience teachers had stopped developing and writing their own resources in the Individualised Learning programme and relied increasingly on the photocopier.

## **5. WHAT ARE THE ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT IN CONTEMPORARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NEW ZEALAND?**

Several comments on the work of curriculum leaders have already been made with regard to the social aspects of teachers' work and its development, which serves to reinforce the point that these curriculum leaders were part of not apart from their workgroups. With the exception of Tim, Nick and Frank who had formal whole school management responsibilities and saw themselves as more than simply HoDs, the other curriculum leaders' accounts suggested that their principal loyalties and affiliations were to their workgroup – the whanau as William put it. Within the workgroups, there was no sharp division in 1996 as there apparently had been, say, in 1924 between the occasional superordinate HoD and the body of subordinate assistant

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<sup>86</sup> Shallcrass, J. (Ed.). *Secondary schools in change*. Wellington: Price Milburn for the NZPPTA, 1973.

<sup>87</sup> Bloor, D. and Harker, R. *The workloads of secondary school teachers. A national survey. Final report*. Palmerston North: Massey University Educational Research and Development Centre, 1995, December

teachers.<sup>88</sup> Even in the comparatively small English department at Rimu, Helen had a remunerated position of responsibility for curriculum areas and year groups that were quite distinct from Tim's as HoD.

### *Norms Of Collaboration*

In this study, a variety of leadership roles and responsibilities were held, both temporary and permanent, both for curriculum subjects and pastoral areas. These served to blur the practical distinction between 'teachers' and 'managers'. Moreover the norms of professional teamwork and non-hierarchical management that had been expressed routinely and consistently in official reports, discussion documents, policy statements, manuals of recommended practice and, most recently, PPTA counter discourses,<sup>89</sup> appeared to be firmly embedded in the way that the teachers in the study enacted their identities as curriculum leader or workgroup member. In this sense, the technocratic managerialism identified by Codd in the policy texts associated with the *Tomorrow's Schools* and *Today's Schools* administrative reforms,<sup>90</sup> had, in 1996 and 1997, not obviously permeated the day-to-day workgroup discursive practices of these teachers (although there were sufficient hints to indicate that new schemes of performance management might have more effect than did curriculum and assessment changes on the collegial relationship between curriculum leaders and their workgroup colleagues). The way these teachers described their joint professional work was, not surprisingly, more consistent with the collaborative ethos articulated in PPTA texts and corporatist<sup>91</sup> Department of Education publications prior to 1989 than it was the new managerialism advocated in those of the Ministry of Education and other central agencies.<sup>92</sup> Hence, in the development of creative responses to official curriculum and assessment policy texts, all teachers were included and expected to share the work.<sup>93</sup> Finally, in several of the groups there were calculated efforts to introduce a wider distribution of workload on the basis that (a) there was simply too much administrative work for the workgroup leader to

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<sup>88</sup> *Secondary school regulations*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1924.

<sup>89</sup> *Modernisation/Te Ara Hou. Work in Progress. A discussion document prepared by the NZ Post Primary Teachers' Association about moving beyond bulk funding*. June 1994. Mimeo; Capper, P. op.cit., 1994. However, as pointed out above, their arguments could not be traced directly to any specific document.

<sup>90</sup> Codd, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>91</sup> Jesson, J. Curriculum development: changing models with the changes in the State. In Capper, op. cit., 1991, p. 89; Capper, op. cit., 1994; *Modernisation/Te Ara Hou. Work in progress*, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. Principals' Implementation Taskforce. *A guide to the delivery of educational objectives: a discussion document*. Wellington: Learning media, 1990. In the same series: *A guide to financial management; A guide to personnel management; A guide to governance and management; A guide to property management*; Education Review Office. *Addressing barriers to learning*. National Evaluation Report number six. Wellington: ERO, 1996.

<sup>93</sup> Although it is possible to suggest that these flatter management structures were typical of global post-Fordist modes of organization and, therefore, just as exploitative as their hierarchical, Fordist predecessors, such an argument would fail to take into account the historical emphasis on collaborative team work in New Zealand secondary schools. On Fordism and post-Fordism in schooling, see Smyth et al, op. cit., 2000, pp. 9-13.

cope with alone; or (b) the quality of decisions and teachers' collective commitment to them would be improved; or (c) there were individuals whose personal careers would benefit from taking on additional administrative or curriculum leadership responsibilities even if these did not attract additional remuneration.

### *The 'Department'*

In comparison with the departments and schools in, for example, Siskin's study,<sup>94</sup> these schools and workgroups were smaller and the usage of descriptors such as 'department' and 'head of department' was, consequently, problematic in some cases. Some departments were single subject areas staffed exclusively by specialist teachers; others were looser administrative groupings of academic and vocational subjects (e.g. Commerce at Matai); and others were subject areas without a clearly defined department or epistemological community<sup>95</sup> (e.g. Caroline and Ruth at Rimu, below).

Despite the proliferation of remunerated responsibilities, the majority of these were allocated, just as they have been historically,<sup>96</sup> for curriculum subjects, not pastoral duties, as evidenced in Isadora's observations about her career progression options at Totara. The larger workgroups in the four schools were those of the core curriculum areas. These most closely resembled a normative conception of the cohesive 'department', particularly at Totara and Matai, the larger schools. They differed in key respects from their counterparts in the two smaller schools (one might contrast the working contexts of Tim and Eric at Rimu, with those of Adam, William and Isadora at Matai) and from 'departments' in other subject areas. Caroline, for example, was both in charge of art at Rimu, a teacher new to the school and country, and the only specialist art teacher. Ruth led the core curriculum area of social studies but her fellow teachers were also heads of department in other subject areas. Tim, Eric and others were heads of major subject departments but were also expected to be deans and to have other whole school management responsibilities. Elsewhere, Frank and Lillian both led composite workgroups while Nick, intriguingly, described his curriculum responsibility as HoD Physics and did not refer to himself as a member of the science department.

### *Development And Accountability*

The two principal subtexts of the HoD role detailed in the 1924 regulations,<sup>97</sup> development and accountability, were still evident in the years covered by this study although each strand had acquired further dimensions and complexities in the intervening decades as schools and their

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<sup>94</sup> Op. cit., 1994

<sup>95</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1981.

<sup>96</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1981; 1986.

<sup>97</sup> Op. cit., 1924.

curricula grew. These contemporary curriculum leaders saw it as their personal responsibility to ensure that curriculum and assessment reforms took place and, given their scale and complexity, this was only possible where others shared the workload. At Rimu, the difficulties of attempting curriculum and assessment change without a critical mass of colleagues were only too evident. In cases where the knowledge, skill or experience necessary to implement change was missing it was possible to draw on resources, expertise and training from outside the school. Tim at Rimu, Adam and William at Totara and Isadora at Matai all had contractual relationships with external educational agencies through which they could access the necessary technical and procedural knowledge to support their in-house curriculum subject developments. How they each subsequently approached development within the department varied with the size, subject expertise and past experiences of the group. However, each also worked assiduously at workgroup relationships to try to ensure that their colleagues' energy levels, enthusiasm, confidence and mutual commitment were sufficient to enable them to cope with the additional workload and stress of multiple innovations. This meant that they each had to judge carefully the times of the term or year when it was appropriate to take on extra joint work and when to consolidate, which aspects of the work to share out and which to lead themselves, which tasks to push to completion by deadline and which to let slide.

Over the years, the accountabilities of curriculum leaders have grown incrementally.<sup>98</sup> During the period of this study it was clear that they were also to be responsible for ensuring that the subject curriculum revisions and unit standards 'quality assurance' procedures were efficiently implemented within the workgroup (even if the individual tasks themselves were shared). This required them to engage in the politics of information-seeking, networking and negotiation outside the school which would help to explain the pattern of greater intensification in the workloads of heads of department and PR holders in recent surveys of the profession.<sup>99</sup> The various sections of the HoD manual<sup>100</sup> give an accurate summary of the variety and number of responsibilities involved in contemporary curriculum leadership but understandably cannot capture the degrees of conscientiousness exercised by real individuals in particular workgroup contexts.

### *'Conscientiousness'*

The various formal administrative responsibilities and the workload and meetings associated with them appeared to be taken for granted (as was also true of principals and teachers interviewed as much as curriculum leaders) but what appeared to add most to the workload was

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<sup>98</sup> *Report of the Secondary School Staffing Working Party*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1983; Bloor and Harker, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>99</sup> Bloor and Harker, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>100</sup> Gillespie, J. and Spencer, N. *The HOD manual. A guide to middle management*. Dunedin College of Education Secondary Schools Advisory Service, 1990 & 1992.

the commitment these curriculum leaders took on themselves to ensure that the workgroup operated smoothly both in terms of professional relationships, classroom delivery and routine workgroup procedures. Thus the organisation of resources and activity banks, the search for suitable relieving teachers, the support of individual teachers who were struggling, the minimising of meetings and paperwork and the rest all appeared to be done not so much because they were contractual elements of the curriculum leader's paper accountabilities but because each contributed tangibly to the purposive harmony of the workgroup. And it was this commitment to the nurturing of the workgroup as a whole, and the constant levels of stress associated with such conscientiousness, foresight and attention to detail that, for me, distinguished these individuals from their fellow workgroup teachers. The commitment was aptly exemplified at the end of 1997 when Isadora described how she was intending to bring her family in to school to help gather tables and chairs and essential resources for colleagues at the beginning of term before the family went on their summer holiday and the departmental classrooms were isolated for the removal of asbestos.

In addressing the remaining questions in this chapter, the principal focus shifts from the context of practice to the broader politics of education policy.

## **6. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING?**

By considering contemporary practice within its historical context we may identify discursive continuities and discontinuities in the areas of teaching, curriculum and management. This form of analysis does not allow for a simplistic differentiation between teaching 'before and after' the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms. Instead, one has to identify the teaching "texts"<sup>101</sup> that are in circulation at a given time, the social regularities (political, economic, cultural, educational) that allow these to be articulated and not others,<sup>102</sup> their origins, teachers' responses to them and their effects.<sup>103</sup> Why is it that particular configurations of teaching, curriculum and management existed in New Zealand in the mid-1990s? What characteristics did these share with those in other educational systems? In the positions they took up, did teachers exercise their individual and collective agency in similar ways to their counterparts elsewhere?

A useful framework for addressing these questions is provided by Skilbeck's<sup>104</sup> summary of trends in educational policy among OECD nations. Given constraints of space,

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<sup>101</sup> Luke, *op. cit.*, 1995.

<sup>102</sup> Scheurich, *op. cit.*, 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, 1994.

<sup>104</sup> Skilbeck, M. A changing social and educational context. In B. Moon, P. Murphy and J. Raynor (Eds.). *Policies for the curriculum*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989, pp. 24-27.

these trends will be collapsed together for this discussion into issues germane to the (i) the purposes and outcomes of secondary education; and (ii) teachers' role in advancing purposes and securing outcomes.

#### *The Purposes And Outcomes Of Secondary Education*

Not surprisingly, Skilbeck found ideological disagreements between bureaucrats and politicians, on the one hand, and professionals on the other hand, over the basic purposes of education and its consequent organisation and development. Pressures for change by those outside the profession were often manifested as power struggles rather than concerted drives. Skilbeck noted a historical progression towards wider access and opportunity in education, comprehensive schooling and less emphasis on selection by examination. Subsumed within this is the tension between specialised programmes and a common core curriculum for all, and between general and vocational forms of education. According to Skilbeck, there has been a trend away from general education towards education for employment, skills development and citizenship and, latterly, 'learning for life'.

#### **Access and opportunity**

In New Zealand since 1939, the policy context of secondary schooling has explicitly advocated the broad principles of access and opportunity for 'every person', but evidence from the context of practice suggests a consistent gap between this ideal and reality. As participation rates increased so too did problems of school, curriculum and workgroup administration. As retention rates in the senior school increased, issues of pastoral care, students' rights and school climate came to be more precisely articulated in educational discourses. Consistently, since 1942, the place of external examinations, and alternatives to these, has been at the heart of debates about the very nature and purpose of secondary schooling.

#### **From partnership to accountability**

From 1970 until 1990, many of the potential flashpoints between politicians and state agencies on one hand and teachers' and their representatives on the other hand were dampened down by the corporatist approach to policy development that accorded practitioners and their representatives "legitimated teacher professionalism",<sup>105</sup> i.e. a full role in the educational decision-making processes and relative autonomy in return for their tacit agreement not to take large-scale industrial action on the range of staffing and workload issues that surfaced regularly during these decades. As in Britain, where pressures for the reassertion of central control of

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<sup>105</sup> Grace, G. Teachers and the state in Britain: a changing relationship. In M. Lawn and G. Grace (Eds.). *Teachers: the culture and politics of work*. Lewes, UK: Falmer Press, 1987, p. 221.

teachers' work originated in the economic crises of the 1970s,<sup>106</sup> similar texts were evident in the standards and accountability debates of the 1980s and became considerably more vocal in New Zealand following the passing of the State Sector Act 1988, the Education Acts of 1989 and 1990, the Employment Contracts Act of 1991; and lobbying by a number of central agencies and neo-liberal pressure groups for the introduction of local bargaining, bulk funding of teachers' salaries and performance related pay.<sup>107</sup> From 1995 to 1997, the years covered by our review of print media reporting of educational issues, the effects of the unravelling of the accord were evident. No longer a full partner in the curriculum-making process, teachers' representatives in response constructed a 'modernisation' talisman. Although couched in a language of 'extended professionalism' on the part of teachers, it was at the same time a pragmatic industrial bargaining chip that offered co-operation in the implementation of the frameworks in return for improvements in salary and conditions.<sup>108</sup> Despite increasing antagonism in the rhetorical exchanges at national level between government and union, it is noteworthy that none of the practitioners in this study talked of either 'modernisation' or participation in the moratorium on curriculum and qualifications framework activity called by PPTA.

### **Curriculum and credential hegemony**

The Thomas Committee had attempted at the outset to create a common core curriculum suited to the needs of all students and, in the absence of a consensus to do otherwise,<sup>109</sup> the shape of the official curriculum of 1945 appears to have survived more or less intact today as do the practical modes of secondary school organisation in response to these. Surveys of large samples of secondary schools in 1975 and 1985 indicate a cautious approach to curricular and organisational change,<sup>110</sup> and it was really only in the 1990s, with the introduction of the qualifications framework and Unit Standards in the senior secondary school that the hegemony of existing credentials was seriously and tangibly challenged. Even so, Unit Standards were introduced on a trial basis in volunteer schools only and, as this study shows, their take up and implementation between 1995 and 1997 proved halting, as the PPTA executive struggled vainly to secure members' agreement on which stance to take as a union (this was particularly evident

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. Gordon, L. Educational reform in New Zealand: contesting the role of the teacher. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 1991, 2(1), 23-42; Education Forum. *Better teachers for better learning. Teacher employment conditions: current and prospective*. Auckland: Education Forum, 1992a; Education Forum. *Better teachers and employment contracts. A review of reactions to Better Teachers For better Learning and an interim assessment of the 1992 teacher employment contract negotiations*. Auckland: Education Forum, 1992b.

<sup>108</sup> NZPPTA, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>109</sup> McCulloch, G. Introduction. In G. McCulloch (Ed.). *The school curriculum in New Zealand. History, theory, policy and practice*. Palmerston North; Dunmore Press, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1981; 1986.

at Rimu where departments and subject areas reportedly had very different degrees of 'expertness' in Unit Standards development and use). Notably, the qualifications framework also sought to break historical provider hegemony by uniting school, post-compulsory and vocational qualifications that might be developed and offered interchangeably by educationists or industrialists in both private and public sectors. In this study, Tim and Isadora both experienced the redrawing of occupational boundaries between schools, industry and other providers of 'Communications English'.

The period between 1945 and 1995 is marked by a succession of debates about policy options on curriculum and assessment reform (Ball's<sup>111</sup> 'context of influence'), and some liberalisation in the practice of student grouping, modularisation of the curriculum and recording achievement (the 'context of practice'). In the context of 'policy text production' major innovations were introduced in the 1970s to some individual subject syllabuses and their assessment but not to the overarching frameworks as a whole." Although there is evidence of piecemeal experimentation at school level with modular curricula, multi-level study, alternative school and subject association credentials, and different student grouping arrangements,<sup>113</sup> little changed by way of official national policy and associated programmatic change. It might be argued, then, that the survival of the School Certificate credential is attributable in part to a reluctance to tinker with the national curriculum; one that, in its combination of a common core with over thirty academic and vocational options had, since its inception, the potential to meet the schooling needs of 'every person'. Equally, the supposed inclusiveness of the official curriculum might help to explain the non-appearance, until the 1990s, of integrated, alternative, nationally validated programmes and credentials as occurred, for example, in England and Wales in the 1980s with TVEI and records of achievement.<sup>114</sup>

### **The appearance of change**

In the immediate post-war period the post-primary school curriculum was constructed around a common core with academic and vocational options and was intended to offer an integrated (albeit gendered)<sup>115</sup> preparation for life. That it did not in practice achieve the aims of its

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<sup>111</sup> Op. cit., 1994.

<sup>112</sup> Ross, J. Development of the secondary school curriculum: an overview. In J. Codd and G. Hermansson (Eds.). *Directions in New Zealand secondary education*. Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, 83-94; Aitken, R. An adaptive approach to English. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976, 95-107; Elley, W. and Livingstone, I. *External examinations and internal assessments*. Wellington: NZCER, 1972; School Certificate Examination Board. *Internal assessment for school certificate*. Wellington: the Board, 1972.

<sup>113</sup> Shallcrass, op. cit., 1973; Peddie, R. *What shall they learn? Junior secondary school curriculum in New Zealand*. Auckland: Uniservices Ltd., 1994.

<sup>114</sup> Hargreaves, A. *Curriculum and assessment reform*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1989. Helsby, G. (1999). *Changing teachers' work*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

<sup>115</sup> O'Neill, A-M. *Readings in education feminism*. Delta Studies in Education No 2. Palmerston North: Massey University Faculty of Education, 1995, p. 21.

authors, was attributed initially to the inadequate preparation, supply and quality of teachers in the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>116</sup> As the secondary school student population grew in numbers and stayed longer at school, the notion of general education expanded in the liberal-progressive 1970s to include more explicit moral education, education outside the classroom, physical and spiritual education for students, and a guidance role for all teachers.<sup>117</sup> From the late 1970s, as youth unemployment rose sharply<sup>118</sup> and the national economic situation deteriorated,<sup>119</sup> this discourse was challenged by the politics of 'back to basics' and calls for the greater accountability of teachers for the educational outcomes of students. In the 1990s, the curriculum and qualifications frameworks explicitly linked the worlds of school and work, attempted to demolish once and for all the distinction between general education and vocational training, and emphasised the need to raise achievement standards among school students to serve national economic needs. In a very real sense, however, this changing pattern may be seen as one of ideological emphasis and interpretation, not substance.<sup>120</sup> The policy texts chronicled in chapter three reveal that in each of these post-war decades the tensions between general, vocational and life-long education, and the implications of these for the context of curriculum and assessment practice were regularly surfaced and debated as their respective advocates sought political ascendancy. In this regard, the struggle parallels that described by Kliebard, for the American curriculum.<sup>121</sup>

#### *Teachers' Role In Advancing Purposes And Securing Outcomes*

In this domain of education policy, Skilbeck identified the growth of 'accountability' and 'responsiveness' discourses, and a trend towards the dissemination of best practice, often through educational inspectorates. Equally, over time central government intervention through fiscal policy and regulation increased. In addition, there were tensions between an emphasis on empowering students in ways that recognised changes in their values and lifestyles and one that promoted students' role in contributing to social and national economic development. Finally,

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<sup>116</sup> Meikle, P. *School and nation. Post-primary education since the war*. Wellington: NZCER, 1961; NZPPTA. *The critical situation in post-primary schools*. NZPPTA, 1961, November; Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand. Wellington: Government Printer, 1962; McLaren, I. *Education in a small democracy. New Zealand*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

<sup>117</sup> Department of Education. *Guidance in secondary schools*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1971.

<sup>118</sup> Khan, G. *Transition from school to work*. Delta Research Monograph No. 8. Palmerston North: Massey University Department of Education, 1986.

<sup>119</sup> O'Brien, M. and Wilkes, C. The tragedy of the market. A social experiment in New Zealand. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1993, chapter three.

<sup>120</sup> Snook, I. Reforming the curriculum in New Zealand. In D. Carter and M. O'Neill (Eds.). *International perspectives on educational reform and policy implementation*. London: Falmer, 1995, p. 167.

<sup>121</sup> Kliebard, H. The effort to reconstruct the modern American curriculum, In L. Beyer and M. Apple (Eds.). *The curriculum. Problems, politics and possibilities*. Second edn. New York: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 32.

professional educational responses to criticisms or shortcomings in the system were not always widely publicised.

### **Responsiveness**

In New Zealand, education policy development was from the 1940s marked by widespread consultation and debate that, in a corporatist state, was often cumbersome and time-consuming but which tended to generate a broad and informed consensus.<sup>122</sup> In this context, 'responsiveness'<sup>7</sup> discourses were particularly prominent from 1969 until the late 1970s and were marked by an emphasis on the relational aspects of teaching,<sup>123</sup> the social and pastoral functions of schooling,<sup>124</sup> and partnership between school and community.<sup>125</sup> The extent of successive governments' and the Department of Education's commitment to sponsor the full development of a humanist teacher role was epitomised in 1975 with the publication of design plans for secondary schools of the future, incorporating extensive social spaces for students, whanau-house groupings for teaching and pastoral care, and areas for independent study.<sup>126</sup>

### **Accountability**

This normative discourse enjoyed a brief revival with Russell Marshall's *Curriculum Review* in the mid-1980s but from 1978 it was vigorously challenged by counter-discourses that emphasised accountability. These counter-discourses shaped debates about student outcomes,<sup>127</sup> curriculum,<sup>128</sup> teaching quality,<sup>129</sup> and school management.<sup>130</sup> In the contractualist state of the 1990s, although teachers could be argued to be doing much of the same kind of work as they had previously, the emphasis in official discourses had changed to the point where teachers' autonomy had been reduced and (as the experiences of the various subject departments at Matai, Kauri and Rimu in this study demonstrate) they were to be held responsible for "implementing curriculum reforms, introducing new forms of assessment and engaging in in-service training for up-dating of skills. More broadly, teachers were being expected to impart understanding of,

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<sup>122</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. *Review of national policies for education. New Zealand*. Paris: OECD, 1983.

<sup>123</sup> NZPPTA, op. cit., 1969; *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974.

<sup>124</sup> *Growing, sharing, learning*, op. cit., 1978; Department of Education, op. cit., 1971.

<sup>125</sup> Towards partnership. The report of the Committee on Secondary Education. (T. McCombs, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1976.

<sup>126</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1975.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. Department of Education, op. cit., 1978; *Tomorrow's standards*, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>128</sup> E.g. *A review of the core curriculum*, op. cit., 1984; *The New Zealand curriculum framework*, op. cit., 1993.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*, op. cit., 1986; *Tomorrow's standards*, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>130</sup> E.g. *Administering for excellence. Effective administration in education*. Report of the taskforce to Review Education Administration. (B. Picot, Chairman) Wellington: The Taskforce, 1988.

and positive attitudes towards, the world of work and other countries".<sup>131</sup> Indeed, in New Zealand these very points both preface and infuse texts from the Minister and Secretary of Education from 1990 onwards.<sup>132</sup>

Accountability and responsiveness discourses are not mutually exclusive, however. In terms of understanding why elements of each should appeal to practising teachers, it is important to acknowledge the tensile relationship between the two. This relationship is well exemplified in the *Assessment for Better Learning* and *Tomorrow's Standards* texts where the struggle for ascendancy between technocratic-reductionist and professional-contextualist conceptions of teaching<sup>133</sup> is clear. More generally, curriculum, credentialing, school accountability and performance management policy texts in the 1990s can be read as a concerted political attempt to quantify and assess the worth of teachers' individual and collective work. But, in doing so, the texts that accompany the effort appear to draw both on liberal and conservative strands in what may be analysed as an effort to build a neo-liberal populist educational consensus<sup>134</sup> to replace that of the pre-1989 approach to the administration of state policy. And, arguably, it is here, in the context of 'political strategy'<sup>135</sup> that the most marked differences between educational policy in the 'corporatist' and the 'contractualist' states may be found.

### **'Effectiveness' and 'Improvement'**

The New Zealand experience as regards school effectiveness and improvement and the dissemination of best practice is quite idiosyncratic. It falls into distinct corporatist (pre-1989) and contractualist (post-1990) phases. Numerous publications document the chronic difficulties of secondary school teacher supply and quality in the 1950s and the damaging effects of these both on curriculum implementation, the quality of teaching and curriculum leadership and, even, teenage morality.<sup>136</sup> In 1960, the Currie Commission recommended the establishment of a curriculum development unit within the Department of Education that would produce highly structured, practical resources for teachers and provide professional development through its staff. As Openshaw has noted, this centralising tendency led, in practice, to the concentration of power and influence over curriculum development in the hands of "a comparatively small group

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<sup>131</sup> Campbell, J. and Neill, S. *Secondary teachers at work*. London; Routledge, 1994, p. 137.

<sup>132</sup> Smith, Hon Dr L. *Education policy. Investing in people: our greatest asset*. Wellington: Government of New Zealand, 1991. *The achievement initiative*, op. cit., 1991; *The New Zealand curriculum framework*, op. cit., 1993, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Codd, J. Educational reform and the contradictory discourses of evaluation. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 1995, 17(2), p. 127.

<sup>134</sup> Quick, J. The 'New Right' and education. In Moon, Murphy and Raynor, op. cit., 1989, p. 86; Apple, M. Justifying the conservative restoration: morals, genes and educational policy. *Educational Policy*, 1997, 11(2), 167-182.

<sup>135</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1994, pp. 26-27.

of 'experts' within the inspectorate and Department, who had read widely, often possessed overseas experience in curriculum construction and already held influential positions with the education hierarchy".<sup>137</sup>

In the 1960s the PPTA established its own curriculum subject panels. In the 1970s the *Education Development Conference* spawned numerous reviews of the school curriculum that coincided with the revision of many individual subject syllabuses by representative groups established by the Department of Education.<sup>138</sup> In the late 1980s, the Secondary Board of Studies, also broadly representative of teacher and Department of Education interest groups, was set up to oversee future revisions to secondary school curricula and qualifications.<sup>139</sup> As chronicled in chapter three, this corporatist phase, in which professional educationists could lay claim to considerable influence on the pace and direction of curriculum reform, came to an abrupt end with the passing of the 1989 Education Act and the 1990 Education Amendment Act (a point noted by William at Totara). Since 1990, teachers and their union representatives have been positioned quite differently and accorded only the formal entitlement to consultation as one among many 'stakeholder groups', not a fully participative role in curriculum development. Equally, as we saw in the experiences of Tim, Adam, William and Isadora, teachers' access to professional development to support local curriculum and assessment innovation had become a contractual relationship concerned with the narrow mechanics of national policy implementation.<sup>140</sup> What, then, has been the role of classroom teachers during these decades?

### Developments in classroom teaching

Understandings derived from craft knowledge appear to resolve around the purposes of teaching, the context of work within which learning takes place, teachers' sentiments about their role as facilitators of learning, and their need to be heard during a tumultuous time of restructuring.<sup>141</sup>

This is an apt description of the dominant text that circulated in both 'official' and 'preferred' discourses<sup>142</sup> of teaching from 1969<sup>143</sup> until 1986<sup>144</sup> in New Zealand. The origins of teachers' collective identification with the conception of teaching as a humanist, student-centred craft

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<sup>136</sup> *Report of the National Commission on Education in New Zealand*, op. cit., 1962; Meikle, op. cit., 1961; PPTA, op. cit., 1961; McLaren, op. cit., 1974; Whitehead, op. cit., 1974.

<sup>137</sup> Openshaw, R. *Unresolved struggle. Consensus and conflict in state post-primary education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995, p. 105.

<sup>138</sup> *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974, chapter eleven; Aitken, op. cit., 1976; Ross, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>139</sup> *Learning and achieving*. Second report of the Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 5-7. Wellington: Department of Education, 1986, June.

<sup>140</sup> Apple, op. cit., 1986; Helsby, op. cit., 1999, p. 134.

<sup>141</sup> Grimmett and Mackinnon, op. cit., 1992, p. 393.

<sup>142</sup> Smyth and Shacklock, op. cit., 1998.

<sup>143</sup> NZPPTA, op. cit., 1969.

<sup>144</sup> *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*, op. cit., 1986.

may be traced to (i) the PPTA's first steps towards professionalisation<sup>145</sup> in the wake of the chronic teacher quality and supply industrial crises of the 1950s and 1960s; and (ii) the Department of Education's co-sponsorship of teacher professionalisation during the corporatist accord of the 1970s and 1980s when a means was sought to answer the challenge first posed in 1942 by the Thomas Committee, namely "to see classroom work conducted in a freer, democratic and more humane setting, with greater emphasis placed on flexibility, diversity and increased pupil participation".<sup>146</sup>

In 1986, the existing criteria for secondary teacher classification emphasised the teacher's participation in a wide range of craft-related activities (i.e. an image of 'extended professionalism'),<sup>147</sup>. However, the Education and Science Select Committee's report, *The Quality of Teaching*, however, argued that teacher professionalism was, in addition, synonymous with accountability for student outcomes, and the quality of teaching with the quality of student outcomes. Thus, "[t]he committee believes it is not enough just to look at teacher behaviour. The outcomes of teaching must also be examined".<sup>148</sup> In this sense, and others, the discourse in the report also reflects the broader legislative climate of the period as the right wing of the Labour government, the National party, the Treasury and the Business Roundtable, a libertarian lobby group, were all seeking 'labour market flexibility' via the Labour Relations Bill in 1985-1986.<sup>149</sup>

In the last throes of corporatism, a non-partisan effort was made to identify ways in which standards and outcomes of student, teacher, school and system performance might all meaningfully be measured.<sup>150</sup> Then, in the 1990s, under the auspices of Lockwood Smith's Achievement Initiative, schooling and the outcomes against which it would be assessed were explicitly linked with the political goal of national economic regeneration, and the teacher's role with helping to secure this through the delivery and assessment of a reinscribed curriculum.<sup>151</sup>

In the space of little over twenty years, then, we see evidence of the trend Skilbeck identified from student-centred to outcome-centred teaching within the policy options<sup>152</sup> that were identified to address supposed shortcomings in the education system. The trend was fuelled by an educational consensus that became looser during the 1980s. In the 1990s, the consensus finally fractured in two key respects. First, the National government, for a number of public sector policy purposes, became keenly interested like its counterparts overseas in

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<sup>145</sup> Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. Teachers' professional lives; aspirations and actualities. In I Goodson and A. Hargreaves (Eds.) *Teachers' professional lives*. London: Falmer, 1996, 1-27.

<sup>146</sup> Whitehead, op. cit., 1974, p. 57.

<sup>147</sup> Hoyle, E. and McCormick, R. *Innovation and the teacher*. E203 Units 29 and 30. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1976.

<sup>148</sup> *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*, op. cit., 1986, p. 46.

<sup>149</sup> Jesson, B. *Fragments of labour. The story behind the labour government*. Auckland: Penguin, 1989.

<sup>150</sup> Tomorrow's standards, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>151</sup> Smyth et al, op. cit., 2000.

<sup>152</sup> Scheurich, op. cit., 1997, p. 102.

"identifying, codifying and applying professional standards of practice to the teaching force";<sup>153</sup> and second the purpose of educational assessment metamorphosed from 'better learning', to 'standards' as educational policy texts consistently embraced "the language of efficiency, standards, competency, assessment [and] cost effectiveness".<sup>154</sup>

## **7. HOW DO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS LEARN TO DEVELOP THEIR PRACTICE?**

Hargreaves argues that governments face a fundamental choice in their approach to educational reform, between, on the one hand, "bureaucratic control" that emphasises the regulation and management of teachers to ensure that they implement centrally mandated change; and, on the other hand "professional empowerment" that emphasises the provision of support, encouragement and structured opportunities to teachers "to make improvements of their own".<sup>155</sup> As well as being fundamentally different conceptions of the management of teachers' work, and what that 'work' is, these competing views also reflect different assumptions about how teachers learn to develop and improve their practice.

At one level we may discern in New Zealand a stark transformation from "professional empowerment" (pre-1989) to "bureaucratic control" (post-1990). Indeed this is the substance of the argument advanced by Capper in his introduction to the proceedings of PPTA's first Curriculum Conference in 1991.<sup>156</sup> At another level, these 'before' and 'after' cameos are highly problematic – essentialising and crude.

### ***'Empowerment' And 'Control'***

As I argued in chapter three, contemporary educational policy texts demonstrate continuities as well as breaks with the past. In the case of teachers' work, its management and development, earlier decades are woven through with discursive threads of both professional empowerment and bureaucratic control, the emphasis of which changes in reaction to broader social and economic stimuli. In this study, there were examples of individuals and workgroups using curriculum and assessment prescriptions, guidelines, resources and other information; attending courses offered by private individuals and tertiary institutions; participating in a wide variety of centrally funded off-site and school-based professional development programmes; involvement with local subject associations, and accessing support from subject colleagues in other schools. All of these contributed to teachers' learning in one way or another. Overall, what appeared to

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<sup>153</sup> Hargreaves and Goodson, op. cit., 1996, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Beyer and Apple, op. cit., 1998, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> Hargreaves, op. cit., 1994, p. 248.

<sup>156</sup> Capper, P. Introduction. In P. Capper (Ed.). *Proceedings of the Post Primary Teachers' Association curriculum conference*. Christchurch, 1991, May, p. 5.

characterise these teachers' individual and collective agency was the manner in which they sought out and, where available, took what they needed from each of the sources of support, from basic information, to new subject knowledge, to skills and resources. Equally, there were bureaucratic constraints and controls in place, so that the teachers exercised their agency within imposed curriculum and assessment frameworks over which they had only minimal control. Nevertheless, as Helsby puts it, teachers' "empowerment or disempowerment is not a foregone conclusion" and on this basis we should look instead, perhaps, for evidence of changes, and the control-support structures put in place to support these, that "either strengthen or reduce constraints upon teacher autonomy and make it harder or easier for them to exert control over their work".<sup>157</sup> Equally, drawing on Scheurich's<sup>158</sup> approach, we might usefully question the "natural emergence" of contemporary control-support structures.

What experiences in New Zealand's previous educational history have produced the conditions in which these formulations of support-control become articulated as preferred policy options? Why did the teachers (as a group of New Zealand secondary school teachers) in this study engage with the processes of curriculum and assessment reform in the ways they did? To understand the forces at work here, we need to delve a little deeper into the 'discourses of teaching' discussed in chapter two.

#### Teacher-State Relations

There is an indistinguishable trend in teacher-state relationships which might be summarised as a move: from naive trust in the 1940s and 1950s, to benevolent centralism in the 1960s, to corporatist partnership in the 1970s, to professional accountability in the 1980s, and finally, to contractual accountability in the 1990s. These phases subsume distinct yet related conceptions of the teacher and his or her development, with each new one evolving from previous texts. Thus, in the 1990s, not only were there competing discourses of teaching<sup>159</sup> and its development, but, to a greater or lesser extent, each of these was a recapitulation of earlier educational texts and practices.

Using other theoretical lenses, the discourses of teaching and teacher development in the period from 1945 to 1995 as a whole may be seen (a) in Habermasian terms as a trend towards the increasing use of "centrally driven technologized solutions" in schooling to address a cycle of economic and social legitimation crises;<sup>160</sup> and/or (b) in Foucauldian terms as the

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<sup>157</sup> Helsby, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 64-65.

<sup>158</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1997.

<sup>159</sup> Smyth and Shacklock, *op. cit.*, 1998.

<sup>160</sup> Smyth, J. Preface. In J. Smyth (Ed.). *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. London; Falmer, 1989, pp. 2-3.

emergence over the same period of gradually more sophisticated disciplinary mechanisms that encourage self-regulation and surveillance by schools, workgroups and teachers.<sup>161</sup>

### **The move from naive trust to centralism**

As we saw in chapter two, in 1943, the Thomas Committee urged each secondary school to "re-examine its whole theory and practice, make up its mind about the real needs of its pupils and the means by which they can best be met, and then act courageously in accordance with its findings",<sup>162</sup> but without suggesting much by way of tangible support to be provided from the Department of Education. The innovations of pedagogy and classroom management, differentiation, and curriculum development that the Committee considered desirable, could only be achieved, they argued, by co-operation, collaboration and teamwork under the leadership of the principal. The phase between 1945 and 1960, then, was generally a *laissez-faire* one in which it was assumed that teachers could develop each other.

By 1960, a combination of (i) rapid growth in the student population (ii) a parallel increase in the size and number of schools (iii) severe teacher recruitment and retention problems and (iv) a shortage of good quality, well-qualified, experienced teachers to take up positions of responsibility, prepare schemes of work and support less experienced colleagues, had created what most contemporary commentators called a crisis of teacher quality,<sup>163</sup> but which for our purposes might equally well be labelled a crisis of legitimation in as much as the anticipated innovations in universal secondary schooling from 1945 had clearly failed to eventuate. This crisis provoked a particular kind of state response.

The Currie Commission recommended the centralised development of curriculum, resources, teacher handbooks and the provision of in-service training in content and method organised by Department of Education staff, together with explicit differentiation of the curriculum into three ability bands and the use of national standardised testing as checkpoints at various stages of primary and secondary schooling. As a result, and although not all the specific recommendations were fully implemented, in the 1960s subject syllabus revision for forms I-IV and the development of guidelines and teaching materials proceeded rapidly under the auspices of the Curriculum Development Unit (established in 1963) and the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. Thus, despite structural problems presented by the arbitrary distinctions between primary, intermediate and secondary schooling and curriculum, in 1974, McLaren could claim that:

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<sup>161</sup> Foucault, M. *Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison*. Trans. A. Sheridan. Second edn. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, p. 170.

<sup>162</sup> *The post-primary school curriculum*. Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in November 1942. (W. Thomas, Chairman). Wellington: Department of Education, 1959, pp. 3-4.

<sup>163</sup> *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, op. cit., 1962; Meikle, op. cit., 1961, PPTA, op. cit., 1961, McLaren, op. cit., 1974; Whitehead, op. cit., 1974.

The Curriculum Development Unit has, in its few years of existence, gone some distance towards developing a national curriculum as distinct from a set of syllabuses. Each subject area is being developed on the basis of a common pattern involving the statement of precise objectives in terms of intended changes in pupils' cognitive and affective behaviour, the drafting of learning materials designed to achieve these objectives, the trial and appraisal of these materials in schools and then revision in light of the trials prior to publication and dissemination.<sup>164</sup>

### **A professional partnership for teacher development**

These developments created, inter alia, pressures for more in-service training for teachers. From modest beginnings as summer vacation courses arranged for their members by the teacher unions in 1944, the years following the report of the Currie commission saw the establishment of a national advisory committee for in-service training in 1961, permanent residential in-service centres in 1961 and 1971,<sup>165</sup> and accredited distance learning courses for the Correspondence School's Diploma in Teaching, and by Massey University.<sup>166</sup> In the 1970s, the relational and "classroom manager"<sup>167</sup> aspects of the ideal teacher's role were consistently advanced by PPTA and the Department of Education as solutions to "the changes which are occurring so rapidly in society"<sup>168</sup> and an ageing secondary school student population that, in the "liberal milieu"<sup>169</sup> of the 1960s and 1970s was less accepting of authoritarian and conformist forms of control. Onto this was grafted the text of "teacher education [as] a process which must continue throughout the professional life of a teacher".<sup>170</sup> As a result, the unitary conception of the 'secondary teacher' was displaced by one that emphasised clearly differentiated, specialised career patterns, each with different 'continuing education' needs. Two of these patterns are particularly relevant to this study. For the 65 percent who were assistant teachers, "a wide variety of continuing education courses in the various subject areas, classroom management, modern teaching techniques and evaluation, need to be provided".<sup>171</sup> (In this study, Nina, Frances and Ruth were both involved in these types of courses.) After "five to ten years" teaching experience, "more able teachers will be appointed to positions of responsibility".<sup>172</sup> (All the curriculum leaders in this study were mid- to late- career professionals.) However, the

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<sup>164</sup> Op. cit., 1974, p. 112.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 116-117

<sup>166</sup> McLellan, J. *The effectiveness of correspondence education for teachers. A survey of teachers studying with the A.S.T.U. 1979.* Mimeo, 1980.

<sup>167</sup> *Improving learning and teaching.* op. cit., 1974, pp. 27-34.

<sup>168</sup> Advisory Council on Educational Planning (ACEP). *The continuing education of teachers.* Proposals prepared by the Standing Committee on Teacher Training. Mimeo, 1973, August, p.2.

<sup>169</sup> B. Jesson, op. cit., 1989, p. 32.

<sup>170</sup> ACEP, op. cit., 1973.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p.33

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

standing committee argued, "the qualities which make for good teaching do not necessarily imply managerial ability and it follows that formal preparation is needed for teachers to accept new administrative roles with confidence and perform them adequately".<sup>173</sup> The majority of these were anticipated to be curriculum subject-related responsibilities for which "courses in the administration of a subject department" were considered to be appropriate prior to or on appointment.<sup>174</sup> (Only William referred explicitly to attendance at a course for HoDs; and Adam to a year long course on assessment that accompanied the introduction of the Science curriculum document)

In order to cope with this expanded programme of continuing education for teachers, a national system of teachers centres was proposed to provide local training and resources; and the teachers colleges, previously concerned only with pre-service education, were to be permitted to offer in-service courses. It was also recommended that the responsibility for approving programmes should be exercised by the inspectorate and Curriculum Development Unit in collaboration with the PPTA and subject organisations.<sup>175</sup> Between 1977 and the early 1990s programmes of specialised courses for teachers developed and became institutionalised within the education system as a whole. The Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit was initially established as an independent body at the Wellington Teachers' College with funding from the Correspondence School. Subsequently, further units were created at each of the state teachers' colleges in the mid-1980s and by the 1990s comprehensive programmes were being offered internally and extramurally by these institutions.<sup>176</sup> From 1983, as an alternative to university qualifications, papers could be credited towards Higher and Advanced Diplomas of Teaching, recognised by the Department of Education. However, although a number of specialist qualifications and curriculum subject related courses were offered to attract secondary teachers in areas such as music, art, physical education, home economics, and commercial subjects,<sup>177</sup> one ASTU survey showed that only 100 secondary and tertiary teachers (out of 1054 respondents in total) were enrolled in ASTU courses in 1979, of whom forty percent withdrew. Reasons given for the low secondary enrolments included the perceived primary school bias of papers. Moreover, respondents as a whole expressed a preference for local and school-based in-service courses that gave as one put it "the opportunity for exchanging practical application of teaching ideas".<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 33

<sup>175</sup> *Organisation and administration of education*. Report of the Working party on Organisation and Administration. (A. Nordemeyer, Chairman) Educational Development Conference. Wellington, Government Printer, 1974, pp. 112-114; *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974, pp. 173-175.

<sup>176</sup> e.g. *ASTU calendar 1992*. Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit, Palmerston North College of Education, 1992.

<sup>177</sup> See also McLaren, op. cit., 1974, pp. 124-125.

<sup>178</sup> McLellan, op. cit., 1980, pp. 36, 38, 91 & 92.

### Reining in teacher autonomy

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the discourse of the 'preferred' teacher changed markedly as a result of a combination of pressures caused by economic crisis and burgeoning youth unemployment and labour market changes,<sup>179</sup> vocal lobby group dissatisfaction with the standards of schooling manifested as a 'back to basics' campaign,<sup>180</sup> and an interest in the results of school effectiveness studies from overseas.<sup>181</sup> In contrast with the liberal progressive consensus that appeared to exist between the Department and PPTA, popular dissatisfaction with schooling had been building during the 1970s, and was articulated through a number of influential groups, including the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, the New Zealand Employers' Federation, the Concerned Parents' Association and the Educational Standards Association. According to Nash, the Department of Education's position was first to "decline to recognise" the concerns and then to refute them.<sup>182</sup>

In 1978, however, the change in official position could not have been more abrupt or unambiguous:

The appointment of a new Minister of Education in 1978 marked a sharp change in the attitude taken by the Department. Early in 1979 the Department's inspectors addressed a series of regional meetings at which teachers were advised that the 1980s were to be a time of consolidation rather than experimentation and that their efforts would be best applied to maintaining and improving basic skills.<sup>183</sup>

From this time, also, discourses of teacher development and education were to become interwoven with, and, by the mid-1990s, subordinate to those of teacher quality and performance. In November 1979, in a graduation ceremony address, the Director-General of Education, W.L. Renwick, argued for a redefinition of teachers' professional status. In its argumentation and choice of terminology, the address sought to reconstruct the preferred image of the professional teacher in two key respects.<sup>184</sup> Teachers were described as public servants who provided a public service to their clients at public expense. While Renwick expressed no desire to circumscribe the right of the teacher to exercise his or her professional judgement, he argued that the traditional professional expectation of autonomy and self-regulation was not tenable in the case of teachers. Because of their working circumstances, teachers "for whom co-operation, teamwork and the sharing of expertise have always been of central importance" needed to be more accountable to their professional peers. Equally, given the growing

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<sup>179</sup> Khan, *op. cit.*, 1986.

<sup>180</sup> Openshaw, R. The politics of 'back to basics'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 1980, 15(2), 127-136; Nash, R. *Schools can't make jobs*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1983.

<sup>181</sup> Nash, *op. cit.*, 1983.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29

<sup>184</sup> Renwick, W. Teachers and professional status. *Education*, 1980, 29(5), 18-21. See also, Renwick, W. Accountability. A tangled skein. *Delta*, 1983, 32, 75-79

complexity of their work and its importance to the community, public as well as professional interests needed to be represented "in the control and regulation of the teaching profession".<sup>185</sup>

### **New professionalism**

The standards, accountability and school effectiveness texts that became more widespread in this period are clearly present in the arguments of the Education and Science Select Committee on the *Quality of Teaching* in 1986, and in the *Assessment for Better Learning* and *Tomorrow's Standards* reports of 1989 and 1990. Indeed, the Select Committee report contained, among others, specific sections on teacher professionalism, accountability and quality. Accountability measures were argued to fulfil a range of functions including the monitoring of teacher standards and assisting "teachers to perform better by providing a critical appraisal of how teachers are performing".<sup>186</sup> The committee also believed "that a balanced case has been put together for pupil achievement to be used as one measure of accountability".<sup>187</sup> The other two reports, by the Ministerial Working Party on Assessment for Better Learning, investigated a wide range of assessment purposes and methods, as the sub-headings of the final report show: 'monitoring national performance', 'assessing the effectiveness of schools', 'assessment of students in secondary schools', 'assessment and New Zealand's dual cultural heritage', 'the assessment of teachers and their professional development', 'pre-service and inservice training in assessment techniques'. By 1990, then, the primacy of assessment in promoting accountability and standards had been established in official policy texts, and teachers' preferred position as proficient assessors of students', their own and each others' learning made explicit.

### **Contractual accountability**

In the period between 1990 and 1997, a host of co-ordinated assessment and accountability policy text interventions were developed against which individual teachers, workgroups and schools would be held ever more precisely accountable for their students' outcomes. These developments marked the discursive shift in emphasis within official discourses of teaching from professional to contractual accountability. Moreover, students, teachers, curriculum leaders, principals, parents and trustees were *all* involved in various aspects of these linked planning, policy writing, assessment, record-keeping, review and quality assurance mechanisms. The policy texts to which they were obliged to develop creative responses included prescribed curriculum and qualifications frameworks, individual curriculum subject documents, school Charters, National Education Goals and National Administration Guidelines,

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<sup>185</sup> Renwick, *op. cit.*, 1980, p. 21.

<sup>186</sup> *Report on the Inquiry into the quality of teaching*, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 39.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Assurance Audits and Effectiveness Reviews conducted by the Education Review Office and Performance Management Systems for the appraisal of teachers and principals.

Notably, however, the emphasis in these texts is clearly that of 'steering at a distance' by the state with teachers, workgroups and schools monitoring and recording their own performance and professional development, in the knowledge that some form of either internal review or external inspection will be conducted at some stage in the future:

Steering at a distance is an alternative to coercive/prescriptive control. Constraints are replaced by incentives. Prescription is replaced by ex-post accountability based on quality or outcome assessments. Coercion is replaced by self-steering – the appearance of autonomy. Opposition or resistance are side-stepped or displaced.<sup>188</sup>

In this regard, the 1990s in New Zealand secondary schooling arguably mark the final abandonment of official policy texts in which teachers were considered to be "the central actors in this process of innovation"<sup>189</sup> and their replacement with texts that attempt to position teachers along with their students, workgroups, schools and local communities as simply one part within a panoptic<sup>190</sup> structure of contractual responsibilities.

## **8. WHAT PART DO CURRICULUM LEADERS PLAY IN HELPING COLLEAGUES TO DEVELOP THEIR PRACTICE?**

Discourses of the ideal curriculum leader in some respects directly mirror historical emphases in teaching texts since the 1940s. In addition, they reflect changes in the student composition, the curriculum, the size and complexity of secondary schools themselves, and their management. As the teacher's preferred role expanded to accommodate new forms of pedagogy, classroom management, resource use, in-service education and school-based curriculum development, so in turn did the accountabilities and relationships of the curriculum leader.

Three culturally embedded influences on these processes of professionalisation of curriculum leadership merit attention here; first, texts and practices to do with the epistemic community and subject tradition; second, epistemological issues and the social organisation of subject teaching within the school;<sup>191</sup> and, third, the tension between accountability and development requirements of the role, particularly in the changed political environment from a corporatist to a contractualist state. Together, these constitute the contexts of curriculum

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<sup>188</sup> Ball, S. Policy, power relations and teachers' work. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 1993, 41(2), p. 111.

<sup>189</sup> *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974, p. 34.

<sup>190</sup> Foucault, 1995, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>191</sup> Ball, S. and Lacey, C. Revisiting subject disciplines as the opportunity for group action: a measured critique of subject subcultures. In L. Siskin and J. Little (Eds.). *The subjects in question. Departmental organization and the high school*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1995, 95-122.

leadership in secondary schools; collectively they shape assumptions about how curriculum leaders can best help their colleagues to become better teachers.

### *Epistemic Aspects Of Curriculum Leadership*

This part of the chapter uses Ball and Lacey's distinction between 'epistemic' and 'epistemological' communities referred to earlier in chapter two. The former are subject discipline oriented (e.g. mathematics teachers and their subject association), the latter refers to the organisation of secondary school departments generally and within particular schools. Departments demand "strategic loyalty from their members", thus "differentiation of the epistemic community is quite typically suppressed in favour of organizational and status gains".<sup>192</sup>

In chapters five to twelve it was clear that coherent, hierarchically ordered<sup>193</sup> subject traditions existed within these schools and were re-enacted daily by teachers in their workgroups. Throughout the post-war period in New Zealand, attempts have been made to reshape collection codes<sup>194</sup> of subject areas and examination-oriented teaching and learning within integrated areas of study and flexible modes of inquiry.<sup>195</sup> These attempts have all failed to exert a significant impact on either the hegemonic subject-based structure of the official curriculum and its assessment, or the traditional pattern of curriculum delivery in school that results from this. Part of the reason is that even though the Department of Education and PPTA, and latterly the Ministry of Education, have, to varying degrees, articulated a preferred discourse of curriculum integration across these decades, these same protagonists have simultaneously engaged in curriculum development policies and practices that perpetuate and reinforce the hard boundaries between subject areas.

As we saw above, the Curriculum Development Unit established in 1963 to develop syllabuses, guidelines and resources to support teachers, did so subject by subject,<sup>196</sup> the PPTA established its own curriculum subject panels in the mid-1960s;<sup>197</sup> and secondary school syllabus revision in the 1970s also proceeded independently in each subject area.<sup>198</sup> In the 1970s and early 1980s, the major subject associations for English, mathematics and science became

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>193</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1987; Goodson, I. and Marsh, C. *Studying school subjects. A guide*. London: Falmer, 1996.

<sup>194</sup> Bernstein, op. cit., 1971.

<sup>195</sup> *The post-primary school curriculum*, op. cit., 1959; NZPPTA, 1969, op. cit.; *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974; Department of Education. *Draft national curriculum statement*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1988; *The New Zealand curriculum framework*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, 1993. NZQA. *Designing the framework. A discussion document about restructuring national qualifications*. Wellington: NZQA, 1991.

<sup>196</sup> McLaren, op. cit., 1974.

<sup>197</sup> Webster, B. (1981). The politics of the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association. In M. Clark (Ed.). *The politics of education in New Zealand*. Wellington: NZCER, 191-206.

<sup>198</sup> *Improving learning and teaching*, op. cit., 1974.

firmly established as active epistemic communities on a national basis and comprised collaborative groups of teachers and Department inspectors and advisers who were interested in promoting the interests of their particular school subject and their members.<sup>199</sup> Equally, when the organisation of teachers' colleges was reviewed in anticipation of them offering continuing education for teachers, the proposals bolstered existing, conservative, curriculum subject divisions in both primary and secondary education divisions.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, although it was envisaged at the same time that newly restructured district inspectorates would emphasise a general school development and support function, not 'subject-matter specialisation' (this was to be a matter for the principal, HoD and individual teacher), it was conceded that "in such fields as science, mathematics and language teaching, there must be members of the inspectorial team who can command the respect of the teachers whom they advise".<sup>201</sup>

In the 1990s, although the curriculum framework introduced the concept of cross curricular essential skills and values, the individual subject curriculum documents were, and continue to be, developed and written through separate contracts let by the Ministry of Education's curriculum development division. For this reason alone, the NZQA's claim in 1994 that "the Qualification framework will change the underlying school structure with the shift in emphasis from course-based learning to student-centred learning"<sup>202</sup> is at best optimistic given the historically embedded influence of broader epistemic communities on the development and delivery of curriculum within schools and workgroups.

While its proponents deploy a seemingly novel technocratic lexicon to advance the case of unit standards and the promise of flexible learning it offers, the underlying aim of an integrated, student-centred curriculum is much the same as that proposed, but not achieved, by PPTA and the Department of Education during the years of the corporatist consensus. The NZQA's vision of the removal of long-standing subject boundaries in the secondary school sector remains a laudable aim, perhaps, but a 'distant pipe dream',<sup>203</sup> nonetheless:

The current subject-based structure is also likely to inhibit the development of the Framework because the approach based on unit standards is likely to have a much wider range of content and topic. The traditional subject/department structure may not be flexible enough to accommodate student-centred learning demands.

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<sup>199</sup> See, for example, Cathenwood, V. From small beginnings ... the early years of NZATE. *English in Aotearoa*, 1990, 12

<sup>200</sup> *Organisation and administration of education*, op. cit., 1974, Appendix B.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>202</sup> NZQA. *Tomorrow's learners*. Wellington: NZQA, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>203</sup> Fullan, M. The school as a learning organisation: distant dreams. *Theory into Practice*, 1995, 34(4), 230-235.

The 'whanau' or dean (as at the university) or syndicate structure may be more useful models of future structures in which a limited number of compartmentalised and restricted subjects is no longer appropriate as a curriculum model.<sup>204</sup>

In the first paragraph, the argument fails to recognise the influence of epistemic communities and secondary teachers' affiliation with them,<sup>205</sup> while the second is naïve about the micropolitics of secondary school epistemological organisation and existing stratifications within teaching, curriculum and management structures.

### *Epistemological Issues*

Despite an egalitarian rhetoric since 1939 of universal, comprehensive secondary schooling, the post-primary curriculum has always, in practice, differentiated subjects, students and teachers. The core, compulsory subject areas were allocated the lion's share of timetable space in 1945. The majority of positions of responsibility have historically been allocated to subject curriculum not pastoral or administrative areas, and within these to the largest workgroups first. In anticipation of the severe secondary school roll decline in the 1980s, it was assumed that smaller, non-core subjects and their curriculum leaders would combine or disappear first from the timetable.<sup>206</sup>

The organisation of the curriculum in secondary schools served to differentiate students by ability with the encouragement of the Currie commission<sup>207</sup> and in the 1970s still selected them into stratified courses (using such labels as: academic, professional or general; commercial, industrial, home life, agricultural).<sup>208</sup> With the demise of the last technical high schools in the 1970s,<sup>209</sup> the disparity between academic and non-academic subject areas within the comprehensive form 3-7 high school was only further reinforced. While the latter were, on paper, still areas of 'examinable knowledge'<sup>210</sup> within the wide range of options for School Certificate, the practice of hierarchical scaling of subject results entrenched the impression that they, their teachers and their workgroups did not enjoy equivalence of status.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> NZQA, op. cit., 1994, p. 49.

<sup>205</sup> Siskin, op. cit., 1994; Siskin and Little, op. cit., 1995; Goodson, I. With Dowbiggin, I. Curriculum history, professionalization and the social organization of knowledge. In I. Goodson. *Studying curriculum*. Buckingham, UK; Open University Press, 1989, 40-50.

<sup>206</sup> Roy, R. *A survey of the consequences of decline in secondary school enrolments*. Wellington: Department of Education, 1983, p. 17.

<sup>207</sup> *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, op. cit., 1962.

<sup>208</sup> McLaren, op. cit., 1974, p. 131.

<sup>209</sup> McKenzie, D., Lee, G. and Lee, H. *The transformation of the New Zealand technical high school*. Delta research monograph number ten. Palmerston North: Massey University Department of Education, 1990.

<sup>210</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996.

<sup>211</sup> Openshaw, op. cit., 1995; Snook, I. and St George, R. Failing school certificate. *Delta*, 1986, 37, p. 26; Little, J. Professional community in comprehensive high schools: the two worlds of academic and vocational teachers. In J. Little and M. McLaughlin (Eds.). *Teachers' work. Individuals, colleagues and contexts*. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1993, 137-163.

Nevertheless, subject status is not immutable. Lack of workgroup cohesion internally,<sup>212</sup> and changes in curriculum policy externally can lever changes over time in the fortunes of a particular subject, and within a school, a workgroup and its leader. Thus for example, the Technology curriculum, formerly the preserve of manual workshops, kitchens, sewing rooms and technical drawing classes, was reinscribed as the entrepreneurial jewel in Education Minister, Hon Dr Lockwood Smith's national curriculum framework in the 1990s.<sup>213</sup> Notwithstanding this caveat, structural attempts to modify the hegemonic status of the subject curriculum and its leadership in New Zealand secondary school organisation have met with limited success. Despite an increasing emphasis on the importance of pastoral education in policy texts throughout the 1970s, classroom teachers with administrative responsibilities in this area of the school curriculum, i.e. deans, were not assured of formal recognition through salary increments and career progression as they might expect for equivalent work and responsibilities in subject curriculum areas<sup>214</sup> (a point not lost on Isadora as fourth form dean at Totara in this study). There is, perhaps, one plausible explanation for this, which provides an insight on the historical development of the role of the subject curriculum leader.

A possible explanation is that the professionalisation of pastoral curriculum leadership took place more recently and in quite different fashion from that of subject curriculum leadership. In the former, all form teachers were accorded a role in guidance and pastoral work as an adjunct to their preferred humanist relationship with students.<sup>215</sup> In this sense, it was difficult to identify a unique domain of professional pastoral knowledge. Second, when a role requiring specialised knowledge did emerge, it, and the limited number of salary increments associated with it, was soon hived off into the separate quasi-medical, autonomous profession of guidance counselling, without specific loyalties to schooling, but with a unique set of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies.<sup>216</sup> In effect, this left year deans, still subject curriculum teachers, somewhere in the middle: with administrative responsibilities for students but without a clearly defined 'management role' involving a group of specialist qualified staff, curriculum knowledge that could be examined and credentialed, or a subject association that would argue the uniqueness of its case within the schooling sector (It seems clear from the comments of the three experienced heads of department interviewed at Rimu, for example, that deaning was seen as an additional administrative burden, not as a central part of their occupational identities).

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<sup>212</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1987; Ball and Lacey, op. cit., 1995; Talbert, J. Boundaries of teachers' professional communities. In Siskin and Little, op. cit., 1995, 68-94; Siskin, op. cit., 1994.

<sup>213</sup> O'Neill, A-M. and Jolley, S. Privatising curriculum: constructing consumer society. The technology curriculum: the politics of food – women's work? To high tech or oblivion. *Delta*, 1996/1997, 48(2), 49(1), 221-248.

<sup>214</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1981; 1986.

<sup>215</sup> Department of Education, op. cit., 1971.

<sup>216</sup> Small, J. Guidance: retrospect and prospect. In Codd and Hermansson, op. cit., 1976, 231-243.

In contrast, since the early part of the twentieth century, subject curriculum leaders, in particular heads of department, have enjoyed very clearly documented expectations about the nature of their role, and a body of examinable knowledge (albeit of variable status) together with, in the case of academic subjects at least, the support of a wider epistemic community. The 1924 secondary school regulations permitted the principal to appoint a limited number of "teachers with special knowledge and ability" as heads of department. In addition to providing demonstration lessons and inspection of the work of junior staff, they were expected to co-ordinate the work of classes, arrange for a scheme of work to be developed and to submit this periodically for inspection and to suggest the purchase of text books.<sup>217</sup> In terms of many of these administrative functions, little changed in the official role of the HoD through the 1980s and early 1990s. The individual duties had undoubtedly become more numerous, complex and onerous over time in terms of workload (hence the introduction of other PR positions by the 1970s) as the *Report of the Secondary School Staffing Working Party* noted,<sup>218</sup> but the substantive issues of accountability for the work undertaken by the workgroup and responsibility for the development of junior members of staff remained unchanged, as did the expectation that the HoD would provide professional leadership, being 'more able' a teacher than his or her peers.<sup>219</sup> Indeed, the importance of good HoDs to adequate scheme preparation and the supervision of less experienced teachers had been highlighted as early as 1961 in plaintive commentaries on the teaching crisis of the time.<sup>220</sup>

#### *Tensions Between Development And Accountability*

Subject curriculum leadership was an issue that had been overlooked by the Thomas Committee in 1943, when it argued that collaborative team work by teachers under the leadership of the principal would ensure that meaningful curriculum review and development took place. In the event, as was argued in chapter two, the size, complexity and character of secondary schools by the late 1960s was very different from the more intimate model of workgroup social relations envisaged by the Thomas Committee. As syllabus, guidelines and resource materials development, and their periodic revision, became routinised in the 1960s and 1970s, this added to the administrative workload of curriculum leaders. During the second half of the 1970s, the emphasis of curriculum development shifted from the Department to the schools themselves,

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<sup>217</sup> *Secondary school regulations*, op. cit., 1924.

<sup>218</sup> Department of Education. *Report of the secondary school staffing workingparty*. Wellington; Department of Education, 1983.

<sup>219</sup> ACEP, op. cit., 1973.

<sup>220</sup> *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, op. cit.; Meikle, op. cit., 1961; NZPPTA, op. cit., 1961.

with support for whole school development to be provided from the inspectorate.<sup>221</sup> This added to the complexity of the social relations functions<sup>222</sup> of their position as curriculum leaders where they were specifically required to co-ordinate meetings of workgroup staff and to take responsibility for ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge was up to date. These trends emphasised the growing managerial accountabilities of HoDs for curriculum delivery and teaching quality and on paper distanced them further from the 'cosy' norm of collegiality that had been envisaged in the Thomas Committee report. In a very real sense, the trends produced a role of ambiguous identity - "part teacher and part administrator".<sup>223</sup>

As was shown in chapter two, the discourse of the curriculum leader as 'middle manager' had emerged by the early 1980s, a discourse bolstered by the parallel development of professional development resources,<sup>224</sup> in-service programmes<sup>225</sup> and, in the establishment of the New Zealand Educational Administration Society, a professional organisation that collectively emphasised the importance of organisation theory and mainstream management practices to the effective conduct of these and other positions of responsibility within school hierarchies.

The Select Committee report in 1986 argued, unsuccessfully, that all positions of responsibility should be made temporary not permanent appointments as they then were.<sup>226</sup> The reforms of public sector administration, including education, between 1987 and 1990 vigorously promoted the adoption of private sector management practices including a chief executive model of principalship, site based-bargaining and performance related pay within an explicit, contractualised structure of outcomes-based accountabilities.<sup>227</sup> In this regard one might have expected, in this study, to see more discursive evidence (concepts, ideas, language, practices) of pressures filtering down from senior management to subject curriculum leaders: to make decisions with these external accountabilities in mind,<sup>228</sup> to adopt a more technocratic or

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<sup>221</sup> Ross, op. cit., 1976; Stewart, D. and Prebble, T. *Heading for effectiveness: a school development approach*. Delta research monograph number four. Palmerston North; Massey University Department of Education/NZEAS, 1981.

<sup>222</sup> Goodson and Marsh, op. cit., 1996, pp. 54-63.

<sup>223</sup> Johnson, S. The primacy and potential of high school departments. In M. McLaughlin, J. Talbert and N. Bascia (Eds.). *The contexts of teaching in secondary schools. Teachers' realities*. New York: teachers' College Press, 1990, p. 177.

<sup>224</sup> Gillespie and Spencer, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>225</sup> *Improving teaching and learning*, op. cit., 1974, chapter eight; ASTU, op. cit., 1992.

<sup>226</sup> *Report on the inquiry into the quality of teaching*, op. cit., 1986.

<sup>227</sup> Dale, R. and Jesson, J. Mainstreaming education: the role of the state Services Commission. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 1992, 2, 7-34.

<sup>228</sup> Paechter, C. *Crossing subject boundaries. The micropolitics of curriculum reform*. London: HMSO, 1995; Brown, M. and Rutherford, D. Leadership for school improvement: key issues for the head of department. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association annual conference, 1996.

managerial approach<sup>229</sup> to workgroup leadership and to see more examples of the emotional, social relations and pedagogical consequences of educational reform.<sup>230</sup>

In the main, however, these workgroup leaders continued to work within the comfortable collaboration<sup>231</sup> of established, occupationally, historically and culturally appropriate collegial norms. They drew on these, not overtly managerial texts and discourses to promote curriculum and workgroup development. That said, a number of other key issues were in their favour. In the face of strong resistance from PPTA, the government had failed by the beginning of the fieldwork to introduce the bulk-funding of teachers' salaries across all secondary schools, an essential component of its managerial agenda<sup>232</sup> while, in 1997 fully developed schemes for individual teacher appraisal and performance related pay schemes, that, in due course would have to be implemented by workgroup leaders, were still on the horizon.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted, first, to reassemble the shards of teaching and curriculum leadership that were presented and discussed separately in chapters five to twelve; second, to illuminate the practices and strategies of these teachers and curriculum leaders by locating their contemporary work in the history, culture and politics of secondary schooling in New Zealand; and, third, to link these to the broader trends in management, curriculum and teaching discussed in chapter two. Chapters five to twelve each focused on a discrete aspect of teaching and its routines, curriculum leadership and its variety of responsibilities, the particular development priorities faced by these curriculum leaders in 1996 and the demands of curriculum leadership and workgroup development in 1997. Fitting together the issues that arose in each of these chapters provided a different perspective again for it allowed us to link the various aspects of contemporary teaching and curriculum leadership to their cultural, political and historical contexts in New Zealand and to parallel developments overseas.

The chapter reconsidered the various questions that had been raised earlier in the study in chapters two to four. These covered issues to do with (i) teachers' 'expertness' and the aspects of their day-to-day practice that contributed to its development; (ii) how the curriculum leader and workgroup members pragmatically married together individual and joint work for common purposes; (iii) the degree to which identifiable historical texts of teaching, curriculum and management are evident in contemporary teachers' accounts of their discursive practice;

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<sup>229</sup> Codd, 1990, op. cit

<sup>230</sup> Gewirtz, S. Post-welfarism and the reconstruction of teachers' work. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1997, 12(4), p. 224.

<sup>231</sup> Hargreaves, 1994, op. cit. Little, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>232</sup> Pearce, D. *Two years of peace? The Schools Consultative Group and the state in New Zealand*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1996, chapter nine.

(iv) the real effects of major curriculum reform on individual and collective work; (v) the differences between official and actual workgroup expectations of the curriculum leader; (vi) the extent to which contemporary discourses of teaching in New Zealand reflect similar agendas and concerns to their overseas counterparts; (vii) the shifting official discourses of teacher empowerment, professionalism, development and accountability; and (viii) the positioning of curriculum leaders within these.

To attempt to draw simple conclusions from such rich, albeit partial, cartoons (see Figure 4.1) of teachers' practice would be a futile exercise. However, two important points do emerge from the analysis conducted in this chapter.

First, that contemporary schooling practice takes place within identifiable educational traditions. How these teachers and curriculum leaders talked about what they did in the two years of the study manifested both continuities with the past and conscious attempts to break with it. Analyses (political, scholarly or lay) that draw sharp distinctions between teaching 'before and after' the many changes ushered in by the *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988), *Today's Schools* (1990), *Tomorrow's Standards* (1990) and *Tomorrow's Learners* (1994) policy text interventions signally fail to grasp the extent of the recapitulation between past and present, the ways in which contemporary policy texts speak to teachers' inter-generational desire to find pragmatic solutions to occupational problems of curriculum assessment and credentialling, and the comparative impermeability to change of much of secondary teachers' epistemic and pedagogical practice.

Second, although their 'tapestried work' was conducted within established and highly predictable routines of practice at classroom and workgroup level, these teachers and curriculum leaders attempted to develop creative responses both to the priorities for development they had identified within their own workgroup, and the challenges presented by external demands for changes to various aspects of their official curriculum practice. In this regard, the 'expertness' they had developed in the course of their (epistemic and epistemological) careers was neither atrophied nor readily amenable to prescriptive calls for change. Where proposed curriculum innovations were consistent with their social ontologies and occupational agendas as teachers, they were prepared to work through them. Where changes were too demanding of or incompatible with their hard-established identities as teachers or curriculum leaders, they resisted, albeit mostly passively, or ignored them.

In the final chapter of this study, I want to revisit the criteria of inquiry elaborated in chapter four and consider the extent to which the approach taken to the study as a whole allows us to ask meaningful questions of secondary school teachers' practice.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### CONCLUSION

*We were not looking for answers that would solve pedagogical or political problems in our profession, just for better questions – which, as any teacher knows, are both ends and beginnings. For any story about teachers' professional development to be true, it ought to be continued.'*

The principal purpose of this study over time became that of gaining a deeper understanding of contemporary secondary school teachers' work and its development. As I listened to the work-stories of the teachers in the study and the scope of my reading and thinking broadened as a result, this larger purpose displaced my original fairly instrumental intention of finding definitive answers to the questions raised at the outset in order smoothly to complete an occupational rite of passage. In the main, then, the study was completed in order to be able to continue to ask meaningful and increasingly precise questions about the social practice of teaching, teachers' agency and their pragmatic resolution of occupational dilemmas. In short, I sought a mode of inquiry for examining secondary school teachers' work that was purposive.

In this concluding chapter, I want to revisit the criteria of inquiry that were elaborated in chapter four as the basis for the study as whole and then to attempt to articulate some "better questions" to ask of secondary school teaching and its development elsewhere. In the earlier chapter, five prospective criteria of inquiry for this study were described. Below, each of these is reiterated and discussed in retrospect.

#### CRITERIA OF INQUIRY

*First, my early contacts with secondary teachers and curriculum leaders whose experiences, beliefs, actions and understandings were occupationally similar but culturally different from mine encouraged me to seek a "wider and deeper understanding"<sup>2</sup> of their practice. To achieve this the study of contemporary teaching practice and its localised challenges in specific work sites needed to be contextualised in the history, politics and culture of teaching in this country.*

It was evident from the work-stories told by teachers in chapters five to twelve that in the mid-1990s they faced a number of novel challenges to established modes of curriculum practice. The

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<sup>1</sup> St. Maurice, H., Albrecht, B., Anderson, N. and Milz, C. True stories: the politics of truth and teacher development. In J. Smyth (Ed.). *Critical discourses on teacher development*. London: Cassell, 1995, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Grace, G. *School leadership. Beyond education management. An essay in policy scholarship*. London: Falmer Press, 1995, p. 3.

manner in which they addressed these issues varied according to the workgroup and institutional cultures, the numbers and expertise of available staff, the degree to which the issue demanded personal pedagogical change and the confidence of workgroup members. Established classroom, epistemic and workgroup routines and identities had built up over the course of their careers. Teachers' individual and collective 'expertness' was therefore immune to simple prescriptions for change. Among the embedded, inter-generational features of these teachers' practice were broadly humanist commitments to both teaching and professional collaboration. It was apparent, particularly in the senior secondary school, that teaching was heavily mediated by the demands of examination prescriptions and credential acquisition. Equally, norms of workgroup egalitarianism were tested by the pace, scope and intensity of contemporary curriculum policy reform to which workgroups and their members were expected to develop 'creative' responses.<sup>3</sup>

In the areas of classroom and workgroup social practice the tensions faced were endemic to the occupation of secondary school teaching. The pressures and dilemmas encountered by these teachers in the 1990s echoed comparable texts and discourses from each of the decades since the introduction of universal post-primary education in New Zealand in 1945. Discourses of teacher collaboration and student-centred teaching also date at least from the 1940s in New Zealand secondary schooling. Since the 1970s, shifts in political and popular conceptions of "social efficiency"<sup>m4</sup> have led to the emergence of counter-discourses of schooling that emphasise the teaching of 'basics', more clearly specified student learning outcomes and the measurement of both student and teacher performance against these.

Equally, since the early 1960s, there has been considerable debate about the most appropriate vehicles through which to provide curriculum support and continuing education for teachers and about the most judicious balance between centralised and school-based curriculum development. The practical consequences of these debates were evident in the levels and types of support to which teachers in the four schools had access in their attempts to come to grips with Unit Standards in 1996 and 1997. Significantly, across all these areas of collective practice, the workgroup or curriculum leader, most often the 'head of department', played, and was expected to play, a major role in the development of teaching and curriculum practice.

Official and grounded role expectations of these people were onerous. In chapter twelve, there was some evidence that these management and leadership expectations may have become excessive in terms of personal health and well-being. To a degree, this was attributable to the pace of curriculum specific policy reform in the 1990s, and in part to the inexorable increases in 'middle' management responsibilities that had paralleled the historical growth in

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<sup>3</sup> Ball, S. *Education reform. A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1994, pp. 18-19

<sup>4</sup> Hamilton, D. *Towards a theory of schooling*. Lewes, UK: Falmer Press, 1989, chapter one.

size, complexity and function of secondary schools themselves. In addition, though, it was clear that the curriculum leaders in this study felt a personal responsibility to build and 'nourish' their workgroup so as to enable its members, individually and collectively, to cope with the pressures and demands made of them. While this constituted a continuous and taken-for-granted burden it was also characterised by a very evident ethic of care towards workgroup members by their leader.

*Second, if the research was to be "humane" these teachers' voices and experiences needed to form an "integral part of the analysis"<sup>5</sup>. I was concerned to ensure also that their own accounts of practice, and of what was important in that practice, rather than my a priori theories, shaped the study.*

The valuing and resultant incorporation of these teachers' voices into the analysis required me to suspend the conventions of qualitative data presentation whereby practitioners' experiences, words, concepts, values, beliefs and emotions are abstracted, synthesised and used sparingly to illustrate the theorising of the writer. I was interested in this study in the thinking and strategising of these teachers as they sought to gain control of their occupational circumstances, rather than merely the outcomes of that thinking. In this regard, it was their analyses as social agents that were important.

Representing this thinking proved a laborious process but was also extremely enriching and rewarding. Drawing on their accumulated 'expertness', each of these teachers and curriculum leaders articulated a complex, insightful analysis of precisely why they acted in the ways they did. Moreover, they openly discussed the uncertainties of this work and the tentative nature of their responses. Not only would such a subtle representation of their occupational ontologies have been beyond me as an outsider looking in on their practice, but, as I found in my attempt to reconstruct Nina's lost text, the words, concepts and lived experiences I had at my disposal would have been sadly insufficient for the purpose.

In as much as the representation of these teachers' experiences used their words, emotions, concepts, positions and values, it was "humane". In addition, though, their work-stories focused on the pragmatic resolution of human problems<sup>6</sup> and the politics associated with this. These teachers in the 1990s were pursuing the same "myth"<sup>7</sup> of "schooling for every person"<sup>8</sup> that had sustained school teachers since the 1940s. Thus they engaged with Unit

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<sup>5</sup> Grace, G. Critical policy scholarship: reflections on the integrity of knowledge and research. In G. Shacklock and J. Smyth (Eds.). *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer Press, 1998, p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> Hammersley, M. *The dilemma of qualitative method. Herbert Blumer and the Chicago tradition*. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Beeby, C. Introduction. In W. Renwick. *Moving targets. Six essays on educational policy*. Wellington: NZCER, 1986, p. xv.

<sup>8</sup> Fraser, cited in Beeby, *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

Standards, new curriculum prescriptions and immediate workgroup priorities with all the cultural sensitivity and occupational curiosity of those who are constantly seeking new educational solutions to organisational and structural problems that had proved intractable to preceding generations.

These teachers' analyses of new initiatives were not dichotomous. New curriculum and credentialling policy interventions were neither good nor bad per se. Each new policy text merely offered greater or lesser possibilities of improving the lot of the large proportion of students and their teachers who had for decades been frustrated by the effects of hegemonic examination and credentialling structures; and for this alone, they were always worth exploring rather than rejecting out of hand. In this important respect, the pragmatic and conscientious humanity of the teachers in this study (at least as far as curriculum policy was concerned) acted as a gentle but necessary corrective to scholarly, political and populist commentaries that draw a sharp distinction between pre- and post- reform policies and practices, and the effects of these on teachers' work.

*Third, I wanted to document teachers' "creative social action" in response to central reforms and to assess the extent to which they "were prepared to tolerate a redefinition of their teaching".<sup>10</sup> In this regard, it was important to identify the various overlapping discourses of teaching, curriculum and management that were in circulation, the "clashes"<sup>11</sup> between them and teachers' reading of them.*

As I implied above, there appeared to be a difference in the way that these teachers responded to initiatives that derived from Qualifications and Curriculum Frameworks changes and to those that were foreshadowed by the introduction of new systems for the appraisal of teachers' performance. The latter was discussed only incidentally in a number of interviews in 1996 and 1997, and had yet to take full effect. Nevertheless, there were sufficient indicators to suggest that these teachers were less amenable to what they perceived as the managerialist reform of their work and the prospects of surveillance it conveyed than they were to the curriculum specific reforms of the period. Equally, there were indications that personal pedagogical change was considerably more difficult to promote and secure than were changes to curriculum content or formal assessment practice.

In 1996 and 1997 the principal curriculum policy texts in circulation were those to do with Unit Standards implementation. Despite the fact that these greatly increased teachers' workload and stress levels, they were given the chance to prove themselves useful. Teachers

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<sup>9</sup> Ball, op. cit., 1994..

<sup>10</sup> Smyth, G. and Shacklock, J. *Remaking teaching. Ideology, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

read them positively and, particularly given their voluntary status, believed that they retained considerable professional control over their development and use at school level. Teachers engaged with them creatively and energetically for the most part because they offered potential solutions to the problem of worthwhile accreditation for students who were unlikely to succeed in traditional, knowledge- and examination-oriented credential pathways. However, while these Unit Standards trials and the development of assessment tasks greatly increased workload, and some of the terminology was unacceptable to teachers, they did not necessarily constitute a radical redefinition of teaching in terms of classroom pedagogy. They were not threatening to the personal classroom routines and identities that had painfully been learned by these teachers as their rite of passage into the profession.

In contrast, other initiatives and programmes did demand pedagogical change (e.g. 'Accelerated Learning' at Totara, 'At Risk' at Kauri). In these circumstances, there appeared to be greater active or passive resistance to a redefinition of their teaching on the part of teachers. Here, structured support when needed for individual teachers, the consistent articulation of the value of alternative pedagogies and a coherent workgroup identity were necessary to support the development of teachers and their practice (contrast, for example, the workgroup and attendant leadership practices in the 'At Risk' and 'Individualised Learning' programmes at Kauri).

*Fourth, the study as a whole would need to examine the origins of selected contemporary educational policy texts, why these were deemed to be important, the discourses they variously interrupted and engendered and their effects over time, on practice.<sup>12</sup>*

It was clear in this study that contemporary curriculum policy texts spoke directly to issues that had engaged teachers' attention, energies and frustrations in previous decades. The policy texts themselves were written (whether by coincidence or design was unclear) so as to connect imposed New Right policy solutions of the 1990s to consensual agendas that had emerged and been advanced within the corporatist state from the late 1960s to the late 1980s.

Since the teaching 'crisis' of the 1950s and 1960s it had been evident to both government, Department of Education and PPTA that teachers could not simply be left to find their own solutions to curriculum and assessment problems. As schools grew in size and complexity, their size and functions multiplied, their student composition became more diverse, and the broader social and economic environment fragmented, a range of policy options were articulated by groups within the corporatist state, and pressure groups outside. At various times, these attempted to influence each of the component strands of the secondary school curriculum: content, pedagogy and assessment. In the 1960s and 1970s, official policy options were broadly supportive of teachers and, indeed, placed the teacher at the centre of curriculum development

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<sup>12</sup> Scheurich, J. *Research method in the postmodern*. London: Falmer Press, 1997, chapter five.

and innovation. From the late 1970s, counter discourses of teacher 'accountability' and educational 'standards' were increasingly to be found in policy texts, governmental reports and discussion documents in circulation. In the 1990s these became inter-linked within official policy texts through the discourse of 'assessment' and its attendant technologies. In principle, individual teachers could now be held accountable for the performance of their students using precisely measurable learning outcomes. In the context of practice, however, things developed rather differently. In this study, there was mixed evidence. Some workgroups used their experience of participation in Unit Standards trials and the detailed 'expertness' they had developed as a result, to challenge official discourses of assessment. Other, mostly smaller workgroups, were more dependent on the support and advice they could access from a variety of sources outside the workgroup.

Some of the work-stories told in this study suggested very strongly that the official curriculum and its terminal assessment requirements continued to dominate the organisation and delivery of the curriculum in the classroom. Beyond their broad commitment to the humanist tradition referred to earlier, these teachers (even when they wanted to) struggled to break the shackles of external credentialling requirements and the traditional subject divisions of the secondary school curriculum hierarchy. Moreover, the organisation of schooling, curriculum delivery and teachers' career progression pathways continued in the 1990s much as they had done in previous decades. Thus, the study revealed something of a paradox. While the overall 'tapestry' of practice at classroom, workgroup and institutional level appeared little changed from earlier decades, and while much of these teachers' work embodied predictable rhythms, routines, events and processes, their workload and the sheer number of curriculum reforms and accountability demands they were required to address appeared to be intensifying greatly. Thus, although these teachers encountered frequent discursive exhortations to modify many of their classroom and workgroup practices, their freedom to do so was limited by both structural and cultural constraints.

*Finally, through the articulation and examination of "language in use"<sup>13</sup> in local sites, it would be possible to explore with these teachers their individual and collective identities and positioning; and how these were "crafted in the dynamics of everyday life".<sup>14</sup> A related area of interest here was how teachers "managed to sustain their emotional survival"<sup>15</sup> in order to be able both to maintain existing practices and respond to (read,*

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<sup>13</sup> Luke, A. Text and discourse in education: an introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 1995, 21, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Hammersley, M. Introduction. In M. Hammersley (Ed.). *Researching school experience. Ethnographic studies of teaching and learning*. London: Falmer Press, 1999, p. 2.

*reinterpret, adapt) the demands of new curriculum (content, pedagogy, assessment) and management texts in circulation.*

The methodological decision, like Paul Klee with his painting, to "curb the intellectual direction" of this study and to "give free reign"<sup>16</sup> to the priorities identified by the participant teachers in 1996 proved crucial to the uncovering and documenting of issues they regarded as significant and worthy of discussion. Focusing on what was important to them in their work encouraged them to talk openly and in detail about the strategies they attempted to develop their 'expertness', their emotional engagement with their work and their individual and collective responses to official policy texts. This approach added depth, colour and tone to the portraits painted but, nonetheless, these portraits remained partial representations of teachers' work.

The language 'texts' analysed in this study were principally those contained in the work-stories told by the teachers concerned. In this narrow sense, the majority were not examples of 'real' language purposively deployed within 'real' social practices but 'reported' actions and strategies mediated and recounted in the comparatively removed and artificial context of personal reflective interview.

The distinction, nevertheless, is important and was brought home to me in the differential reactions to my analyses of their work in the draft chapters that were sent to the teachers for comment. The analyses of work stories told in individual and group focused interviews, the odd factual correction and addition aside, were generally unproblematic. These teachers had revealed to me (and in the case of group interviews, their colleagues) aspects of their work that they were happy to share and have put in the public domain as representations of their work. In contrast, the drafts of chapters nine, ten and eleven contained a representation of inter-subjective realities together with, in two cases, my account of the practices I observed. As I noted in chapter four, these representations were challenged by a number of teachers. They wished to correct, amend, edit or supplement the details I had included, to query the judgements of them made by other interviewees, or to question the emphasis I had given to particular segments of data or parts of the commentary. In so far as these were minor corrections or clarifications of events and strategies I only partly understood, I was both unconcerned and grateful. However, where their proposed changes challenged the validity of my subjective observations, I felt disturbed in much the same way that they clearly had on seeing my or others' normative-evaluative claims<sup>17</sup> about their practice. Not only did I re-read and re-write where necessary the data chapters, I was obliged to evaluate the extent to which work-stories

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<sup>16</sup> Geelhaar, C. *Paul Klee, life and work*. Trans. W. Jaffe. Woodbury, NY: Barron's, 1982, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> Carspecken, P. and MacGillivray, L. Raising consciousness about reflection, validity and meaning. In Shacklock, G. and Smyth, J. *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer, 1998, pp. 186-187.

provide a sufficiently rounded picture of secondary school teachers at work. Thus, although this study provided some unique insights on the social practice of secondary school teaching and its development in a period of intense educational reform, there were areas of practice about which meaningful questions might be asked in other studies using different but complementary approaches.

### **CONTINUING TO LOOK FOR BETTER QUESTIONS**

The somewhat eclectic approach taken in this study uncovered a variety of intriguing shards of practice regarding teacher and curriculum development in a period of intense educational reform. Future work could adopt a more structured approach to the examination of workgroup and institutional practice in order to explore the frequency and distribution of the tensions of practice identified here both within and across schools. The longitudinal study undertaken in America by researchers at Stanford University provides a comprehensive set of survey instruments and methods that could readily be adapted to the New Zealand context as part of a larger scale investigation or replication study.<sup>18</sup>

In this study, teachers appeared to respond differently to official policy interventions according to their perceived purpose. Since 1997, teacher appraisal and performance management systems have become more formalised and widespread, and linked to salary progression. Teachers' 'creative responses' to this particular policy text intervention would provide an interesting contrast with those that appear to them to offer solutions to long-standing curriculum, assessment and credentialling problems.

In this study, some of the workgroups and their members had developed a sophisticated understanding of assessment issues in the senior secondary school and to have incorporated this within their grounded teaching 'expertness'. With the passage of several years, it would be appropriate to examine the extent to which the discourse of the 'teacher as proficient assessor' has become embedded in classroom, workgroup and institutional contexts. Has increased knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of standards-based assessment affected teachers' own 'pedagogical forms'?<sup>19</sup>

In this study also, there was a considerable difference in the resources (human, financial, material, epistemic) that workgroups in the smaller schools could deploy in order to support curriculum and teacher development. Equally, the stresses and tensions associated with curriculum leadership were exacerbated in these occupational contexts. It is necessary to examine further the extent to which and how small secondary school workgroups and their

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<sup>18</sup> McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. *Communities of practice and the work of high school teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming.

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, op. cit., 1989.

leaders (and indeed, those in isolated area schools)<sup>20</sup> cope with the demands of constant curriculum, assessment and credential development work in New Zealand.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, this work is urgent given the rapid projected roll declines in rural secondary schools from 2008.<sup>22</sup>

Lastly I want to mention two particular areas of practice that merit further study (even though I personally feel incapable of researching them by virtue of my sex and ethnicity). Although it is important to avoid analyses that essentialise the differences between social groups, in a number of the work-stories, commentaries and anecdotes of the teachers in this study, there were indications that workgroups staffed predominantly by women may in some cases operate differently in terms of collaboration and leadership practices, to those staffed largely by men (recall, for example, Frances' and Isadora's work-stories in chapter twelve). It would be useful to undertake research that compared workgroup social practice in the same curriculum subject areas across a number of schools, differentiated according to the gender composition of the workgroup.

Finally, the voices of Maori and Pacific Island teachers and curriculum leaders were absent from this study. Future work could begin by documenting and seeking to understand these teachers' conceptions of 'expertness' and how they position themselves in order to better exercise their individual and collective agency as secondary school teachers. Such studies could take place both in schools where teachers from the tangata whenua (Maori) and other Pacific groups are in the minority, and in Auckland and Wellington where the proportion of Maori and Pacific Island students is and will continue to be greatest.<sup>23</sup>

So, if I fail in what I've set out to do, you must pardon what I canna help, and fill up the glats in my speech with the brushwood of your own imagining.

From *Precious Bane*, Mary Webb, 1924<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Small schools in rural areas that contain, primary, intermediate and secondary departments and cater for students of all ages.

<sup>21</sup> In July 1998, the year after the fieldwork ended, 25% of New Zealand secondary schools had a roll of less than 402 students. The average secondary school roll was 702. *New Zealand Schools 98*. Wellington: Minister of Education, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Coppen, M. Two big influences over the next twenty years. Future Trends seminar. Palmerston North, 2000, 24 August.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Ministry of Education national projections suggest that by 2020 Maori will constitute 24% (2000=21%) of the secondary school student population, Pacific Islanders, 12% (2000=8%).

<sup>24</sup> Webb, M. *Precious bane*. London; Virago, 1978/1924, p. 262.



**APPENDIX ONE**  
**APPLICATION TO MASSEY UNIVERSITY HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**NAME OF APPLICANT**

John O'Neill

**DEPARTMENT**

Policy Studies in Education

**PROJECT STATUS**

PhD project

**FUNDING SOURCES**

MURF funding approved subject to approval of application to Human Ethics Committee

**NAMES OF SUPERVISORS**

Associate Professor John Codd [Chief]

Associate Professor Wayne Edwards

**TITLE OF PROJECT**

Developing Teacher Expertise. The Role of the Curriculum Manager [provisional title]

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

[a] This project straddles two research agenda within education; teaching and teacher development, and teacher supervision [sic]. Both are well established traditions although the latter is a phenomenon which has recently gained a significantly higher profile. This is attributable in great part to the 'self-management' education reforms of the 1980s in countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia, USA and Great Britain.

A key common feature of these reforms is the determination of central government to secure greater public accountability of the teaching profession via the introduction of exhaustive, compulsory national or state curricula together with associated inspection and summative testing arrangements linked to national benchmark standards of attainment.

Paradoxically, greater curriculum complexity, the availability of more sophisticated formative assessment techniques, ethical issues such as entitlement and equity, and a developing professional understanding of the notions of curriculum continuity and progression have highlighted the need for management or supervision strategies which:

- i] encourage teachers to plan and evaluate practice collaboratively; and
- ii] allow teachers to develop a more precise and shared understanding of their own practice **and** how supervision or management might contribute to that process.

Much of the existing literature within educational administration focuses, in a predominantly normative way, on the first of these. Within the context of educational administration, particularly post-Tomorrow's Schools, there is an absence of empirical data which relate to the development of understanding of teaching and learning practice via the supervision or curriculum management process.

[b] This project is intended to add to the existing knowledge base by

[i] exploring teachers' and curriculum managers' experiences and understanding of 'expertise' [sic];

[ii] analysing their perceptions of the role of the curriculum manager in helping them to develop expertise; and

[iii] analysing any changes in such understandings and perceptions over a period of time.

[c] It is intended to recruit approximately twenty five participants from three secondary schools from within the southern part of the North island. Given the sensitive nature of the

phenomena under study [see Ethical Concerns below] potential schools will be selected on the basis of recommendations from colleagues within the department. Principals of these schools will be approached via letter [attached]<sup>1</sup> and invited to express an interest in participating. All teachers in schools which have expressed an interest will be given an information sheet [attached] and invited to attend an on-site meeting to discuss the proposed research. On the basis of these discussions a sample group will be identified and consent obtained.

[d] Procedures will be discussed with participants prior to their use. At this stage of the proposed study it is envisaged that two principal instruments and associated procedures will be used.

[i] Q-methodology. This instrument allows for the statistical analysis of qualitative data. Four discrete stages of data-gathering and analysis are involved.

[a] respondents generate a range of statements about a given phenomenon, in this instance, supervision and expertise;

[b] respondents sort the statements according to a 'condition of instruction';

[c] a statistical package is used to carry out a factor analysis of the sorted statements.

The analysis provides a basis for potential follow up interviews in which

[d] the interviewer explores differences and commonalities of perception with respondents.

[ii] Phenomenography. This is a qualitative research approach which focuses on the meaning of phenomena for the participants themselves. The principal data gathering tool is the semi-structured interview. [Here it is intended that Q-sort provide the initial focus for the phenomenographic interview]

[i] the interviewer selects a focus for the interview; here, respondents' understanding of supervision and expertise.

[ii] respondents are asked to describe their experiences of these phenomena with the interviewer using probing techniques to explore respondents' understanding or awareness of their experiences.

[iii] the data are analysed. The purpose of the analysis is to generate 'super-individual' categories of description. In turn these suggest a limited number of qualitatively different conceptions of the phenomena which may be generalisable across other related contexts.

The sequencing of procedures throughout the course of the fieldwork is yet to be finalised. It may be appropriate to employ each procedure twice within the course of the fieldwork [a school year]. Repetition would allow participants the opportunity to reflect on differences in their own perceptions of the phenomena under investigation during the course of the proposed study.

It is anticipated that in certain instances participants may agree to take part in group focused interviews in addition to individual semi-structured interviews. Group interviews offer the opportunity to explore in depth issues of shared meaning and understanding which are central to the phenomena under study, particularly in relation to the first two of the objectives outlined above. However, the phenomena are highly sensitive issues [see Ethical Concerns, below] within the school or sub-unit [i.e. syndicate, department] context. Thus, the researcher will seek to conduct such procedures where, in the first instance [objective [i]], existing supervisory/management relationships are felt by the school principal and participants to be sound and, subsequently [objective [ii]], where Q-sort analysis has revealed a high level of commonality of perception in relation to the two phenomena under investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> All attachments referred to in the ethics application (HEC95/144) appear in this thesis in appendix three in the amended form required by Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Dewe, P. Personal communication, 1995, 31 October).

[e] Procedures will be discussed and agreed with participants prior to their use. An alphanumeric [e.g. A1, A2] coding system will be used to identify all information and materials produced during the course of the research. The identification key, together with sorting schedules, completed responses, tapes, transcripts and field notes will be kept in 'under lock and key' conditions for the duration of the research study at which point participants will be asked to decide whether data should be returned to them, destroyed by the researcher or retained by the researcher for potential use in related studies. Individuals [other than the researcher] involved with data-processing, i.e. transcribers, and, where necessary, supervisors will be unable to identify individual respondents. Tapes which are sent 'out of house' for transcription will be accompanied by an instruction which requires transcribers to treat all data as completely confidential.

#### ETHICAL CONCERNS

[a] Participation will be voluntary and contingent upon the informed consent of principal and interested staff within each school. It is neither necessary nor desirable for all staff within a school or sub-unit to take part in the research. Potential schools will be identified and approached by letter [see attached] to the principal of each school. With the agreement of the principal, interested staff will be invited to attend an initial meeting to explain the purpose and time frame of the research, proposed protocols, the level of commitment needed from them and the potential benefits and drawbacks of engaging in such research [see attached information sheet].

[b] On the basis of [a] participants will be asked to sign a consent form. There will be a time lapse of approximately one week between initial meeting and the date for return of completed consent forms so that participants may fully consider the implications of their involvement in the research. In addition, for each procedure, participants will be informed of the purpose of the procedure, the protocols to be adopted, and the caveats attached to their initial consent. Given that the fieldwork is expected to take place over a twelve month period, it is anticipated that a number of participants may decide to withdraw from the research. The sample size is constructed with this factor in mind.

[c] Every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. On securing agreement to participate in the study, the researcher will ascribe a non-attributable identification code to each participant, and a pseudonym to each school. In both Q-sort and phenomenographic research, details of context and sampling are of limited significance. The use of information attributable to individual schools and respondents is less of an issue here than it might be with the use other qualitative research methods. Nevertheless it may prove desirable to use some contextual detail, i.e. drawn from school or individual development plans, to illustrate the official working priorities of participants during the course of the fieldwork.

[d] One of the delicious ironies of the proposed study is that the ethical issues considered for the purposes of this paper directly mirror those which need to be considered by teachers and administrators who are attempting to analyse, evaluate and influence classroom practice. Teaching performance, definitions of expertise and the supervisory or management process remain contentious and sensitive issues even in institutions and sub-units where staff have developed highly collaborative cultures. The researcher acknowledges that investigation of the phenomena under study within individual schools may, inter alia, open up for discussion issues which have been avoided in the past. These difficulties are partly overcome by:

[a] using, in effect, a self-selecting sample of participants;

[b] gaining specific participant agreement for the use of group in addition to individual interviews;

[c] using a sample of participants drawn from more than one school; and

[d] guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of data.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that research of this type has the potential to challenge the status quo and participants will be made aware of this in the initial meetings which precede the giving of informed consent.

[e] Participants will be made aware, at each stage of the research, of their right to decline to answer or to withdraw from the procedure or the study as a whole.

[f] All participants will have access to a copy of the conclusions and recommendations from the completed study. In addition, all interview raw data will be transcribed and returned to participants for verification and amendment. Participants will also receive, and be offered the specific opportunity to discuss, individual data sets [those produced by the Q-sort procedures] which relate to objective [iii] described above, i.e. to any changes in perception and understanding which may have taken place during the course of the research study.

[g] All data gathered will be non-attributable and confidential. The verified data sets will be analysed using Q-sort and phenomenographic procedures. Selected data will be used in the researcher's doctoral study and associated publications. Within the study, Q-sort data will suggest a focus for subsequent individual phenomenographic interviews.

[h] Studies which involve the discussion, interview, and analysis of sensitive issues are invariably problematic in terms of conflict of interest. This is particularly so in relation to teaching which takes place in tightly coupled social and professional groupings.

These issues have been addressed in the protocols which form part of the proposed research design. Nevertheless, the researcher acknowledges that his ability to leave the 'pond' undisturbed after the research is contingent upon the judicious exercise of professional judgement and skills.

[i] The principal ethical concern not dealt with elsewhere is the responsibility of the researcher to the rest of the research community and the teaching profession at large, i.e. the responsibility to address the issues of validity and generalisability in the research design. By relying on a self-selecting sample of respondents the data thus gathered may reflect a distorted life-world picture of expertise and supervision, i.e. one oriented predominantly towards unproblematic or healthy school and sub-unit contexts. Research reports need to acknowledge the partiality of the picture being sketched out in this research. However, the intention of this researcher is to adopt a grounded approach in the proposed study and to thereby to generate a tentative general theory of the expertise and supervision relationship rather than to test any predetermined hypotheses. It is anticipated that any theory, or hypotheses, generated in the proposed doctoral study might be developed and tested in other educational contexts using different sampling techniques.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

[a] Participants and their institutions will be advised via the information sheet [attached] that the research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral study. Copyright for any publications arising from the research remains with the researcher as author.

[b] Participants will be informed via the information sheet that the researcher will retain ownership of the research data until the project is complete. The Consent Form indicates three options for the disposal or potential subsequent use of data gathered during the course of the research. At the conclusion of the project individual participants will be invited to select one of the three options for the disposal or retention of their data.

**THIS PROJECT IS NOT TO BE SUBMITTED TO ANY OTHER ETHICAL COMMITTEES.**

**THERE ARE NO SPECIFIC MATTERS I WISH TO DISCUSS WITH THE HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE.**

## APPENDIX TWO SCHOOL DATA

School	Totara	Matai	Rimu	Kauri
Decade opened	1900	1950	1920	1900
Student roll 1995 (to nearest 25)	1050	1025	350	575
Student roll 1998	1150	1175	375	600
% change '91-'95	-1	66	-15	-29
% change '94-'98	2	32	8	-13
FTE staff 1995	61	60	26	46
FTE staff 1998	67	78	29	40
SES decile 1995	9	6	2	5
% Maori roll 1995	9	13	32	34
% Maori roll 1998	8	12	30	31
% Pacific Islands roll 1995	2	1	0	2
% Pacific Islands roll 1998	2	2	1	3
% Asian roll 1995	6	4	2	6
% Asian roll 1998	8	2	5	22
Y3 School Certificate candidates 1998 (N)	256	220	74	49
Papers taken School Certificate 1998 (N)	1270	1009	278	171
% Y3 gaining A or B, 1998	46	30	9	9
% Y3 gaining A, B, C (pass) 1998	76	64	40	40
Students gaining A or B Bursary 1998 (N)	82	47	4	6
% A or B Bursary 1998	53	30	15	18
% gaining Form 7 qualification	65	47	23	14
% with no qualifications	4	35	13	30

(Source: Ministry of Education statistical database, 1995; 1998)

### NOTES

1. Kauri's increased roll and proportion of Asian students in 1998 may be attributed to its success in attracting adult students to the school. Matai's proportionately larger staffing establishment included staffing for attached units for students with special needs.
2. A school's decile rating is an assessment of the socio-economic composition of the school community made by the Ministry of Education using national census data. The rating is used as the basis for distributing supplementary funds to schools.' The most disadvantaged schools are decile 1. Kauri's was the only decile rating to change in 1998, from 5 to 4.
3. Y3 refers to candidates who first take School Certificate in the fifth form, i.e. after three years.
4. The figures for Y3 A, B, C passes at School Certificate level, and for A or B passes at Bursary is expressed as a percentage of all papers sat by candidates.
5. Bursary is the highest level school qualification, normally taken in the seventh form.

6. The figures for leaving qualifications are expressed as proportions of full time Year 9-15 students who left secondary schooling in 1998.

## THE SCHOOLS

Potential schools were selected on the basis of convenience and the recommendation of colleagues, the only caveat being that they should be state secondary schools, not private or integrated schools. The four schools in the study were the only ones approached that expressed an interest in participating.

The names of the schools (Totara, Matai, Rimu, Kauri) are species of New Zealand native trees and are pseudonyms. New Zealand is a small society and provincial schools in particular are easily identifiable. Consequently, the descriptive details provided below are minimal in order to protect the anonymity of the schools and participants. Equally, in this study the school and its community, while they constitute important contexts within which the teachers, workgroups and students conducted their work, are not central to the focus or analysis in the way that they are in some ethnographic studies.<sup>2</sup>

*Totara* was a well-regarded, oversubscribed school with an outstanding reputation for academic and sporting success. It was located at the fringe of the city's most pleasant suburb on a busy main thoroughfare. It had a mix of single and two storey blocks and prefabricated classroom blocks which were packed together on the school site. Like the other three schools, it was maintained in good decorative order and the site also enjoyed a range of sports facilities and playing fields. The main entrance to the school displayed photographs and other memorabilia that reflected its tradition, standing and special character. The principal had been in post less than a year when the fieldwork commenced.

*Matai* was located in a more heterogeneous suburb (of private and state housing) in the same provincial city. The site was more spacious than at *Totara* and the playing fields more extensive. Like *Totara* and *Kauri*, the buildings were a mixture of different designs from various periods of expansion. Unique among the schools in the study, the entrance foyer displayed no historical photographs or memorabilia other than a single portrait of the national figure after whom the school had been named. Like the other schools however, there was a trophy cabinet that contained a mixture of sporting, academic and cultural items. In the early 1990s the school's roll had threatened its viability. With the appointment of a new principal and the establishment of specialist facilities at the school it had regained its local popularity and expanded rapidly since then, as the table above indicates.

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<sup>1</sup> Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement (TFEA). *Education Gazette*, 1994, 73(20), 1-2.

*Rimu* was located in a smaller, rural town approximately half an hour's drive from 'Rivertown' where the other three schools were. It was the smallest and poorest of the four school communities. The site comprised several clusters of single storey buildings, both permanent and prefabricated. The school site was pleasant and backed onto its swimming pool and playing fields. The entrance foyer was compact; the walls contained monochrome photographs of previous school principals and some historical portraits of the school, students and sporting teams. Like Kauri, the entrance foyer also contained the school's honour roll. The principal had been in post for three years at the time of the fieldwork.

*Kauri's* main entrance was in a commercial area of the city and located on one of its busiest streets. At the time of the study, it was the least popular school in the city, and had been since the renaissance of Matai, and its viability was seriously threatened in 1996. Its buildings, site layout, range of facilities and décor were similar to both Totara and Matai. The low numbers of students meant that some parts of the school were little used. The (student) entrance foyer gave on to the assembly hall, and contained photographs of previous principals and other scenes from the school's history. The principal had been in post since 1990 and had worked assiduously both to improve the school's image and to provide for the large numbers of challenging students who came to Kauri from other schools in and around Rivertown.

### MAIN PARTICIPANTS' PSEUDONYMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In each school, participants were self selecting. All the principal participants in the study were experienced, mid-career teachers. Several of the women had returned to teaching after career-breaks. The greater variety in the sample was in terms of their administrative, management and leadership responsibilities (from co-dean and temporary PR/MU unit holder, to school principal.). The list below includes only those participants who took part in at least one group and one individual interview. It comprises the main participants only, not those who were interviewed as part of the case studies reported in chapters eight to ten.

#### *Totara*

Adam	HoD Science
William	HoD Mathematics
Nina	Temporary MU, Accelerated Learning initiative
Isadora	Dean (to term two, 1996)
Julia	Co-Dean

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<sup>2</sup> Carspecken, P. *Critical ethnography in educational research*. London: Routledge, 1996, chapter three.

Lillian HoD, Accounting and Economics

**Matai**

Frank HoD Commerce

Nick HoD Physics

Isadora HoD English (from term three, 1996)

***Rimu***

Ivan Principal

Tim HoD English

Alice Assistant Principal

Ruth HoD Social Studies

***Kauri***

Janette Principal

Frances Co-ordinator, Individualised Learning

**APPENDIX THREE**  
**INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

January 1996

Dear [principal]

**Developing Teacher Expertise. The Role of the Curriculum Manager**

I am a lecturer in education and am currently engaged in a doctoral study, funded by Massey University Research Fund. My supervisors are Associate Professors John Codd and Wayne Edwards [06 356 9099]. In my research I hope to explore secondary school teachers' understanding of teaching expertise and how the supervision or curriculum management process contributes to the development of expertise.

I intend to undertake my fieldwork at various points during the 1996 school year and, with your approval, would very much like to invite members of staff from your school to volunteer to take part in the study. I am aware also that, prior to making any decision to participate, that you would wish to discuss the proposed research with your Board of Trustees.

I enclose an information sheet which gives details of the study, the procedures and the levels of involvement which are required from participants. I would like to emphasise that participating schools and individual members of staff will be guaranteed complete anonymity and confidentiality with regard to the data which are gathered.

I should be happy to make arrangements to discuss this project further with you and/or your colleagues. I may be contacted as indicated in the letterhead above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely,

**John O'Neill**

## **Developing Teacher Expertise. The Role of the Curriculum Manager**

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

Dear colleague,

I am a lecturer in education at Massey University and am currently engaged in doctoral study funded by Massey University. My supervisors are Associate Professors John Codd and Wayne Edwards [06 356 9099].

Below I describe the project, together with the level of involvement I would hope for from you if you agree to participate. You may contact me at any time to discuss any aspect of your involvement in the project both prior to the commencement of the data-gathering and at any subsequent stage. [Contact details are given in the letterhead above.]

#### **Purpose of this study**

The study is an exploration of secondary teachers' understanding of classroom expertise and how the supervision or management process is perceived to contribute to the development of that expertise.

The research objectives are threefold:

- [i] to explore teachers' and curriculum managers' experiences and understanding of classroom' expertise';
- [ii] to analyse perceptions of the role of the curriculum manager in helping to develop expertise; and
- [iii] the analysis of any changes in such understandings and perceptions over a period of time.

The fieldwork is planned to take place at various stages throughout the 1996 school year. If you agree to take part, you will be involved in two principal procedures. With your consent, I intend to tape record all interviews in the course of the research.

<p><b>In each procedure I am only interested in gathering data related to your understanding and experience. There are no right or wrong answers and I intend to make no judgements about the quality of teaching or supervision in my analysis.</b></p>
--

Each procedure is explained on the attached sheet [Appendix A].

**Your time commitment**

If you agree to take part in the study, I anticipate a maximum commitment of five hours per person, spread throughout 1996.

**What can you expect from me?**

In addition to offering you the opportunity to reflect in depth on your understanding of teaching expertise and supervision, I am prepared to make the following undertakings.

- 1] All data will be gathered on an anonymous and confidential basis.
- 2] I shall endeavour to faithfully represent your experiences and perceptions in any publications which arise from the research study.
- 3] I shall explain the purpose of each procedure and secure your agreement to proceed on each occasion that we meet.
- 4] I shall return interview transcripts promptly for your verification.
- 5] I shall provide you with a copy of the conclusions and recommendations from the completed study.
- 6] I shall offer to lead a meeting at each participating institution at which I will discuss the completed research study and major findings.
- 7] At all times I shall deal with participants in an open, courteous and honest manner.
- 8] On completion of my study I shall destroy all data gathered during the course of the study.

**Your participation**

If you take part in this study, you have the right to:

- refuse to answer any particular questions, and to withdraw from the study at any time
- ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation
- provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. All information is collected anonymously, and it will not be possible to identify you or your institution in any reports that are prepared from the study
- be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. Please contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of this study.

Best wishes,

**John O'Neill**

## Appendix A

### PROCEDURES

Each procedure is explained below in terms of the individual stages.

[i] **Q-sorting.** In this procedure, four discrete stages of data-gathering and analysis are involved.

[a] a range of statements about a given phenomenon is generated, in this instance, understandings of the meaning of supervision and expertise;

[b] you will sort the statements i.e 'agree most', 'disagree most' or 'most like my current experience', 'least like my current experience';

[c] I shall use a computer software package to analyse the sorted statements.

The analysis provides a basis for follow up interviews in which

[d] I explore with you your reasons for having sorted the statements in the way you did.

All recording schedules will be coded to ensure that your responses remain anonymous and confidential.

I may ask for your agreement to conduct a group follow-up interview as an alternative to [d]. In these instances participants will be approached individually and asked to give their consent. The group interview will only take place with the full consent of all participants.

I intend to carry out this procedure twice with each participant, at the beginning and end of the year. I estimate that a maximum commitment of three hours in total per participant is required for this procedure.

[ii] Phenomenography. This is a research approach which, in this instance, focuses on your understanding and experiences of teaching expertise and supervision.

[i] I select a focus for the interview; here, your understanding of supervision and expertise.

[ii] you will be asked to describe your experiences and understanding of these two phenomena. I anticipate using probing techniques to explore your understanding or awareness of your experiences.

[iii] the data are analysed.

These interviews will take place on an individual basis. I anticipate a maximum commitment of two hours per person for this procedure.

For interviews, I intend to use a tape recorder. Tapes will be transcribed and returned to you for verification. All tapes will be coded alphanumerically to ensure anonymity. Any typist involved in the transcription of tapes will be required to sign a confidentiality form.

The sequencing of procedures throughout the course of the fieldwork is yet to be finalised. Repetition of each procedure would allow you the opportunity to reflect on changes in your own perceptions of the phenomena under investigation during the course of the study.

**Developing Teacher Expertise. The Role of the Curriculum Manager**

**CONSENT FORM**

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and to decline to answer any particular questions in the study.

I agree to provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential and anonymous.

I agree/do not agree [DELETE ONE] to the interview[s] being taped. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the tape to be turned off at any time during the interview[s].

I understand that on completion of the study I will be asked to choose from three options for the disposal of data gathered from me during the course of the research:

- 1] Data are returned to me
- 2] Data are destroyed by the researcher
- 3] Data are kept under lock and key conditions by the researcher for future use in related research.

I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out on the Information Sheet.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....



## APPENDIX FOUR DATA GATHERING

School	Initial approach	Focus group	Priorities	Fieldwork
Totara	Principal and full staff meeting	Adam Lillian Nina	Unit Standards, induction of Fay, Junior Science	Interview principal and departmental staff, observe departmental meeting, interview Fay, follow-up interview with Adam
			Shared resources, CAL	No further data gathering
			Accelerated learning (Junior Science)	Group focus interviews of two third form classes with Science staff, interview 'mentor', observe science 'club', follow-up interview with Nina
		Isadora Julia William	Form tutors	Observe form tutor meeting
			Deaning-teaching	Classroom observation, follow-up interview
			Departmental decision-making	Focus interview of departmental staff, end of year questionnaire, interview principal, follow-up interview with William
Matai	Principal and PR holders meeting	Frank	Support for new staff and pre-service students	Interview two groups of pre-service students
		Nick	Support for Physics colleague and Technology Curriculum	No further data gathering
Rimu	Principal and interested staff	(Alice)	Induction and support for new staff	Group interviews with recently appointed staff and established HoDs, individual interviews with recently appointed staff
		Ivan	Classroom organisation and pedagogy	Prepare questionnaire for all staff (not distributed)
		Ruth	Student evaluation of learning	No further data gathering
		Tim	Third form scheme, PD contract	Attend school-based and regional in-service sessions, interview other English teacher, follow-up interview with Tim, documents
Kauri	Principal and interested staff	(Frances)	Leadership and effectiveness of 'Individualised Learning'	Observation of lessons by staff in programme, group focus interviews of students, group and individual interviews of staff, observation of departmental meetings, follow-up interview with Frances, documents
		(Janette)	Management of 'At Risk' programme	Observation of programme terms two and three and social events, interviews with staff and teacher aide, interviews with individual students, documents

29 July 1999

Dear [name/pseudonym]

*Developing Teacher Expertise - The Role of the Curriculum Leader*

Some time ago I promised to feed back draft copies of my research data for comment. If you remember, the fieldwork began in 1996 when I gathered data on (i) your description of your classroom teaching routines; and (ii) your curriculum leadership priorities for the year. Some of these priorities were then examined in greater detail during the course of 1996. In each of the four terms in 1997 I interviewed one HoD in the four secondary schools in the study.

I have now completed the qualitative data collation. The four data chapters in the study describe (i) the nature of secondary school teachers' work; (ii) their curriculum leadership priorities (iii) a case study of three of those priorities and (iv) a year in the life of the four HoDs.

Enclosed are the first, fairly crude, drafts which relate to your participation in the study. The chapters contain extracts from interviews with you, organised by theme, together with my stylised commentary. Except for the shorter case studies (iii) I have highlighted those passages where your name appears.

I would be most grateful if you could find the time to read the chapters and provide feedback on

1. The extent to which they give an accurate and complete picture of your day to day work and leadership priorities in 1996 (and 1997 if applicable).
2. The extent to which the commentary is a plausible reading of your work.

I appreciate that you are already overloaded with paper and demands on your time. However, as I said at the outset of the study, the approach provides an opportunity for your voices and experiences as practitioners to be heard - something that happens all too rarely in the educational research literature I'm committed to providing an accurate and sympathetic account of your work during the period and need your feedback - both positive and negative - for this to happen.

If you'd like me to meet with you and talk about the chapters and why the data are presented in the way they are I would be pleased to do so. Also, if you would like a disk with the edited transcripts of your taped interviews, or copies of the chapters which haven't been sent to you, I can arrange for those to be posted.

Please scribble comments or changes you would like to see made on your copy. It would be helpful if you could return them to me within one month of receipt.

Feel free to get in touch with me over any aspect of the research. I look forward to hearing from you in due course. Thank you very much for continuing to participate in the study.

Best wishes,

29 July 1999

Dear [name/pseudonym]

*Developing Teacher Expertise - The Role of the Curriculum Leader*

Some time ago I interviewed you as part of a case study of some of the work of the [name of priority].

I promised to feed back draft copies of my research data for comment. The fieldwork for the study began in 1996 when I gathered data on (i) teachers' descriptions of their classroom teaching routines; and (ii) their curriculum leadership priorities for the year. Some of these priorities, including the science department, were then examined in greater detail as case studies during the course of 1996. In each of the four terms in 1997 I interviewed one HoD in the four secondary schools in the study.

I have now completed the qualitative data collation. Enclosed is the first, fairly crude, draft which relates to your participation in the study.

I would be most grateful if you could find the time to read the case study and provide feedback on extent to which the commentary is an accurate report and plausible reading of your experiences.

I appreciate that you are already overloaded with paper and demands on your time. However, as I said at the outset of the study, the approach provides an opportunity for your voices and experiences as practitioners to be heard - something that happens all too rarely in the educational research literature. I'm committed to providing an accurate and sympathetic account of your work during the period and need your feedback - both positive and negative - for this to happen.

If you'd like me to meet with you and talk about the chapter and why the data are presented in the way they are I would be pleased to do so. Also, if you would like a disk with the edited transcript of your taped interview, I can arrange for this to be posted.

Please scribble comments or changes you would like to see made on your copy. It would be helpful if you could return it to me within one month of receipt.

Feel free to get in touch with me over any aspect of your involvement in the research. I look forward to hearing from you in due course. Thank you very much for continuing to participate in the study.

Best wishes,



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