Approaching equity through school language policy

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Abstract

Links between language and equity are well established in educational thinking, and the policy that a school adopts towards language may be important in either confirming or countering educational disadvantage. This thesis considers case studies of the ways in which six New Zealand schools sought to address equity issues through Language Policy Across the Curriculum (LPAC).

The thesis is based on a case study research project which looked more generally at school-based LPAC development (McPherson and Corson, 1989). The research aimed to describe the ways in which schools used Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) to respond to particular language contexts, and the processes of policy development that they followed.

Overall, policy development was marked by teachers' willingness to participate in debate, discussion and self-reflection. However, during the research, equity, its relationship with language, and the implications of this for practice, emerged as perhaps the most contentious and difficult areas of policy concern. Work on language policy highlighted the gap between the language expectations and practices of the school and the language experiences and practices of students. However, the policies themselves tended to give implicit support to the standard language practices of the school. It is suggested that this severely limited the potential of the policies to contribute to establishing a basis for more equitable schooling.

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Introduction

During 1988-1989, I participated as Research Officer in a case study research project looking at Language Policy Across the Curriculum (LPAC) in eight New Zealand schools (McPherson and Corson, 1989). The broad aims of the research were to gain a picture of the ways in which schools might use Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) to respond to particular language contexts, and at the same time to gather examples of school-based policy development. The research was thus essentially descriptive. This thesis draws on the LPAC Research Project, and uses one aspect of that research as the basis for further analysis and discussion.

During the research, work on LAC highlighted, in particular, the gap between the language experiences and practices of certain groups of students and the language expectations and practices of the school. This in turn indicated the role that school language might play in actually disadvantaging some students, and also the role that a coherent, sensitive and relevant school language policy might play in countering that disadvantage. A major concern that emerged during the research was with the ways in which the language policies might achieve a more equitable education for students from 'disadvantaged' groups. Although this was a common concern across schools, the approaches taken towards these issues and how they might best be addressed through LPAC varied greatly not only across, but also within schools. 'Equity' emerged as perhaps the most contentious and problematic area of policy development, and the final LPAC's themselves, with respect to equity issues, often reflected an uneasy compromise between those involved in policy development, rather than positive agreement which was satisfactory to all.

Thus, one of the main concerns that arose from the LPAC Research Project was with the potential of LPAC to address issues of equity. It is this concern that forms the basis of this thesis.

While equity was not a particular focus of the original research, there were reasons to expect that the participating schools might address equity issues during the project, if not in the policies themselves, then at least at some stage during the process of policy development. Some of these reasons stem from the nature of LAC itself. These are discussed in Chapter One, which considers the close relationship between language and equity issues in current educational thinking, and provides a background to LAC illustrating how these issues have been linked throughout its development.

In addition, there were a number of specific issues and events in New Zealand education that particularly emphasised the strength of this language-equity link at the time of the LPAC Research, and these are discussed in Chapter Two. In terms of policy provision and research within education, concern with equity issues in New Zealand has tended to focus on particular groups identified as likely to be disadvantaged. These groups include: Maori; other

Pacific Island groups; other ethnic minority groups; girls; rural children; children with disabilities; and children from low socio-economic status home backgrounds. Chapter Three provides a brief overview of the literature concerning educational issues, and in particular language issues, that is relevant to each of these groups.

In Chapter Four, the LPAC Research Project is described. An outline of the research aims and procedures is given, and the nature of the research is discussed briefly. During the research a number of common issues and themes associated with equity considerations emerged. Among these were the ways in which the policies might respond to the specific needs of those groups identified above, and six main areas of policy provision emerged: Te Reo Maori and Taha Maori; multicultural education (including ESL provision, bi- and multi-lingual education); gender issues in education; rural education; home background (class) issues in education; and, mainstreaming.

Chapter Five draws on six of the LPAC Project case studies, and includes further data gathered during the original research. Each school is described briefly, with information on the community and the process of policy development followed in each case. The case studies presented here highlight the ways in which schools responded to each of the areas of equity provision identified above.

Chapter Six summarises and discusses the information described in the case studies and provides an overview of the range of responses in each area. Problems encountered in policy development and the possible limitations of the policies themselves are discussed with respect to each of these areas. Specific concerns regarding policy provision for certain groups are raised.

Although policy focused on particular areas as discussed in Chapter Six, there were certain themes that cut across these areas. These themes are drawn out in the points raised in Chapter Seven. It is suggested that while there were very positive aspects evident in the way that schools addressed equity through LAC, there were also particular limitations to the potential of LAC as it was conceptualised within the LPAC Research project.

In Chapter Eight general conclusions are drawn, and suggestions are made regarding the implications that these have for language-centred curriculum initiatives seeking to address equity, and the research directions which might be appropriate to this endeavour.

Chapter one
Language Across the Curriculum: Language, learning and school success

1.1   Language Across the Curriculum: Initial development

Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) as an identifiable educational issue has its beginnings in the mid-sixties in the work and discussions of members of the London Association for the Teaching of English. The group coined the phrase to describe its own developing ideas about the place of language in learning and education. Although historically the group had tended to focus on the specific curricular concerns of teachers of English, members found increasingly that the issue involved other teachers as well:

> We felt sure that language was a matter of concern for everybody, that if children were to make sense of their school experience, and in the process were to become confident users of language, then we needed to engage in a much closer scrutiny of the ways in which they encountered and used language throughout the school day. For this we needed all the help we could get from other subject teachers (Rosen, 1969: 145).

In May, 1966, they started working towards the production of a Discussion Document entitled "Language Across the Curriculum". The general approach to education taken by the association complemented suggestions for innovation being made by other groups involved in advocating the need for changes in schooling. Of particular relevance to LAC at this time were moves to establish integrated curricula, and the use of alternative teaching approaches such as group work and the adoption of inquiry methods (Rosen, 1969).

The association's first focus was on talk. Specifically, they looked closely at the different kinds of talk used by children and young people in various situations, and the way in which talk developed in the school years. They then moved on to a broader examination of all the ways in which language was used in school. The group felt that there was a very real need for a 'manifesto', relevant to the needs of teachers in all subject areas, and this provided the ground for a common approach to the ways in which language was used in school learning. The task of producing this document became the focus of the association's Conference in May, 1968.

The purpose of the Discussion Document was to "stir up wider participation, inquiry and collaboration" (Rosen, 1969: 148) and not surprisingly it met mixed reactions when it was disseminated to schools. Rosen suggests that, at the time, teachers often had little background in exploring the relationship between language and thought and therefore had no context against which to view the document. A further, and more severe problem lay in the fact that "some schools are not in the habit of organising discussions about anything. They have neither the tradition nor the organisation for formulating policies agreed on by the staff"

(Rosen, 1969: 149). Despite these problems, the document provided a catalyst for change (Corson, 1990). Schools, Teachers' Centres and colleges used the document as a basis for discussion, and some schools, not only in Britain, but also in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand went further and began to develop language policies for themselves.

1.2 Language and learning

LAC itself was initiated and developed against a background of increasing interest in the place of language in education. This interest stemmed from two major sources. First, there were major developments in the study of language acquisition and early language development. Theoretical work in these areas was instrumental in transforming educational thinking about the role of language in learning. Second, sociologists drew attention to links between linguistic differences and differences in educational achievement. The ways in which this link should be interpreted and the implications these issues should have for educational policy and practice were the focus of considerable public and academic debate.

i) Studies in language development

The work of Chomsky was central in focussing attention on issues of language development. His rebuttal of Skinner's behaviourist account of language learning (Chomsky, 1959) not only had a profound influence on linguistics, but provoked debate about language in much wider arenas. His theory of transformational-generative grammar, and his positing of a Language Acquisition Device (Chomsky, 1957, 1965), were of interest to educationalists because of the implications that they had for understanding the ways in which speaker competence was acquired. Chomsky's work gave rise to numerous observational research studies of child language development. Technical innovations, particularly the development of portable tape recorders, also provided the possibility of carrying out detailed studies of language development in naturalistic settings, and these in turn raised further questions and provided new insights into the nature of language development.

A number of developmentalists also played an important part in influencing the ways in which the role of language in learning was conceptualised. Piaget's account of cognitive development suggested that general cognitive growth unfolded primarily as a consequence of direct and active interaction with the physical world. From a Piagetian perspective, language abilities and other means of using symbolic representation are dependent on, and follow from the development of more general, underlying cognitive structures. Language, therefore, while it may be viewed as being indicative of cognitive development, is not accorded developmental significance in its own right. The impact of Piaget's work on educational thinking was pervasive

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and was reflected in curriculum initiatives, educational policy, and teacher education. Edwards and Mercer (1987) suggest, on the basis of their own studies of classroom communication and understanding, that the practice of primary teachers, and the beliefs that they hold about children's learning, are significantly shaped by Piaget's ideas. Walkerdine (1984) points to the Nuffield Mathematics Project as an example of a curriculum intervention embodying a pedagogy based on Piagetian psychology. The cognitive importance attached to action rather than language, within this approach, is reflected in the opening words to the guide for teachers:

> I hear and I forget
>
> I see and I remember
>
> I do and I understand.

In Britain, the Plowden Report - Children in their Primary Schools (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967), in particular, reflects this emphasis. The report clearly, though not uncritically endorses 'discovery learning', stating, for example, that:

> verbal explanation, in advance of understanding based on experience, may be an obstacle to learning, and children's knowledge of the right words may conceal from teachers their lack of understanding (para.535, cited in Edwards and Mercer, 1987: 37)

> Other research indicated, however, that language might play a much more active role in cognitive growth than was supposed from a Piagetian perspective (Donaldson, 1978). Brown's (1973) comprehensive study of early language development indicated strong parallels between the kind of meanings that seemed central to young children's language use and their cognitive achievements, but suggested that while sensorimotor intelligence may form the basis for very early language development, that language itself soon becomes an important means of extending thought and forming ideas. Bloom (1975) supports this approach suggesting that: "There is an important developmental shift between learning to talk and talking to learn".

Vygotsky's work has been most influential in providing an alternative to the theoretical framework offered by Piaget, and in suggesting an approach which insists on the primary significance of language rather than action for mental development. Vygotsky placed development firmly in a broad social and cultural context, suggesting that cognitive development results from the internalisation of mental processes that are initially made available to the child at a social level, and are principally communicated through language. Vygotsky regarded language as an essential tool for development, suggesting that it provided not only the means whereby social thought could be communicated to the child, but, with the development of verbal functioning, it also became the child's chief means of organising and extending thought. According to Vygotsky:

> The specifically human capacity for language enables children to provide for auxiliary tools in the solution of difficult tasks, to overcome impulsive action, to plan a solution to a problem prior to its execution, and to master their own behaviour. Signs and words

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serve children first and foremost as a means of social contact with other people. The cognitive and communicative functions of language then become the basis of a new and superior form of activity in children, distinguishing them from animals (Vygotsky, 1978: 28-29).

Vygotsky's work has direct implications for education and there are two main points that are of particular relevance to those concerned with the role of language in learning. First, the importance of the role of intercommunication between adult and child is stressed:

> (Vygotsky) arrived at the fundamental conclusion that human mental development has its source in the verbal communication between child and adult, that 'a function which is earlier divided between two people becomes later the means of organization of the child's own behaviour' (Luria and Yudovich, 1971: 26).

Thus there a clear and active role for teachers within the framework proposed by Vygotsky. Interaction with adults is essential, and it is through conversation and careful discussion that teachers can lead children to new levels of conceptual understanding (Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Wertsch et al, 1980). Second, the importance of sign systems, in particular spoken and written language, in shaping children's thinking, and guiding and extending their learning is also emphasised. Luria and Yudovich summarise this point:

> the acquisition of a language system involves a reorganization of all the child's basic mental processes; the word thus becomes a tremendous factor which forms mental activity, perfecting the reflection of reality and creating new forms of attention, of memory and imagination, of thought and action (Luria and Yudovich,1971: 22)

In short, language is placed at the heart of education.

Vygotsky died in 1934, at the age of 37, and although his work was officially banned in the Soviet Union for two decades following his death, his views had been widely disseminated while he was still alive and had had a profound and continuing influence on those who had worked with him (Wertsch, 1985). However, it was not until the republication of his work in 1956, and the subsequent translation of *Thought and Language* into English in 1962, that his views received attention in the west. Widespread interest in his work, particularly in the United States, has been more recent. It is notable that in Britain a number of those associated with LAC were aware of Vygotsky's ideas, largely through the influence of Luria, and this theoretical perspective informed much of the work on LAC from very early on in its development (See for example Britton, 1970, 1971; Rosen and Rosen, 1973).

In the United States, Bruner has been clearly influenced by Vygotsky's work (see Bruner, 1986: especially Ch. 5). Like Vygotsky, Bruner asserts that language develops through social interaction, and sees instruction as playing a major part in the learning process. He introduced the concept of a Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) which matched the LAD, maintaining that for language development there needs to be a context of adult support and help for the child's innate predisposition for active social interaction and language

learning. In providing this help, the adult works with the child, carefully providing a structure of support, or scaffold, which enables the child to negotiate meanings and tasks which s/he could not otherwise have negotiated alone (Bruner, 1977). In this way, not only in language learning but learning contexts in general, the sensitive teacher "remains forever on the growing edge of the child's competence" (Bruner, 1986: 77). In his later work Bruner especially emphasises the communal nature of learning and the importance of sharing and negotiation in the teaching-learning process. In a manner similar to Vygotsky, he suggests that children need interactive contexts in which to develop both written and spoken language, and that it is within these contexts that language itself is given meaning and purpose. He calls for an education which goes beyond the alienating process of transmitting knowledge. According to Bruner education should involve active interaction, participation and speculation:

> to that extent education becomes a part of what I (earlier) called "culture making". The pupil, in effect, becomes party to a negotiatory process by which facts are created and interpreted. He becomes at once an agent of knowledge making as well as a recipient of knowledge transmission (Bruner, 1986:127).

Edwards and Mercer (1987) describe this emerging approach to understanding the processes of education as one which abandons "an individualistic perspective on knowledge development" and takes up instead "a psychological viewpoint which gives primacy to culture and communication" (Edwards and Mercer, 1987: 166). They look at learning as situated discourse and as such suggest that 'learning failures', rather than being attributable to individual children or teachers, might be due to "failures of context" in which the referential framework within which education takes place is inadequate in providing opportunities for creating shared understanding. When there is an absence of such a shared communicative framework, children's opportunities for learning will be limited, and classroom activity "may in cognitive terms, lead nowhere" (Edwards and Merce, 1987: 167).

In summary, these approaches emphasise the importance of social and cultural influences on language and learning, they question traditional transmission models of learning and teaching, and suggest that the mismatch between the socio-cultural context of the school and the learner may be the source of learning problems. As such there are important similarities with perspectives that have been developed from within sociological approaches to educational understanding.

ii) Language, home background and educational success

During the late 1950's and 1960's there was growing concern in both Britain and the United States about the levels and distribution of educational success. In Britain, post-war idealism had inspired hopes of a fair secondary education for all: the Education Act of 1944 had sought to achieve this equality by ensuring that grammar school entry was dependent on ability

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rather than wealth. By the fifties, however, it was apparent that academic success was not equally spread through all sections of the community. Suggestions that this was due to differences in measured intelligence that had a genetic basis were disputed, and in 1959, the Crowther Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1959) insisted that academic success or failure should be attributed to other factors associated with class origin and family background. Children who failed in school, particularly working-class children, came to be described as 'culturally deprived' (Riessman,1962).

In the United States concerns about educational underachievement were fuelled by worries that the nation's technological development would be held back unless all children were able to meet their potential. In order that all children be able to take advantage of education, it was widely believed that schools and pre-school programmes needed to compensate for the inadequate material, attitudinal and linguistic experiences that some children received at home. A number of federal intervention schemes were set up. Of these, the best known, and certainly best funded, was Headstart. Initiated in 1964 as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, Headstart aimed to provide intensive pre-school education for children from low income families to prepare them for formal schooling. The scheme focussed in particular on the verbal deficit which it was assumed these children suffered.

In Britain, the link between home background, language and school achievement received perhaps its crudest official expression in the early sixties in the Newsom Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1963). The Report considered the education of "average and less than average ability" pupils between the ages of twelve and sixteen and suggested that the potential of these "boys and girls ... is masked by inadequate powers of speech and the limitations of home background". Even more offensively the report states that:

> There is a gulf between those who have and the many who have not, sufficient command of words to be able to listen and discuss rationally; to express ideas and feelings clearly; and even have any ideas at all (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1963).

The concept of language deficit, and the assumption that socialisation experiences based on values different from those espoused in schools amounted to deprivation were at the heart of considerable, and often heated, debate between different groups associated with education. Research into the language and the language learning experiences of different social groups provided significant data, but, as discussed below, gave rise to contradictory interpretations. Similar contradictions were evident in the policy decisions made in response to the apparent gap between the language that certain groups of children used out of school, and the language which was used and valued in the classroom.

The work of Bernstein in particular, influenced the debate and added to the polemics that surrounded these issues. In his early work, published between 1958 and 1960 (see Bernstein, 1971, Introduction and Chs. 1-3: 1-70) Bernstein sought to demonstrate the links

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between language, social relationships (particularly as represented through social class and family methods of communication and control) and 'educability', which Robinson (1981) defines as "the propensity to succeed at school" (Robinson, 1981: 37). In doing so, Bernstein proposed a formal structural relationship between social relationships, modes of language use and linguistic forms. He described two general forms of linguistic expression, public language and formal language, which he argued characterised certain ways of thinking and certain types of social interaction. These terms were discarded as ambiguous and replaced in a paper published in 1962 with the terms 'restricted code' and 'elaborated code'. Essentially, a speaker who has access to an elaborated code is able to select from a relatively extensive range of syntactic elements with which to organise meaning. Therefore, verbal planning is enhanced, the level of verbal explicitness is raised, and "the verbal transmission and elaboration of the individual's unique experience" (Bernstein, 1971: 128) is facilitated. In the case of the restricted code, on the other hand, the speaker has a severely limited range of syntactic and lexical elements available for use and is consequently more reliant on extra-verbal components of communication. Within a restricted code, meanings are likely to be "concrete, descriptive or narrative rather than analytical or abstract" (Bernstein, 1971: 128), and unique, individual meanings and intentions are likely to be taken for granted rather than made explicit. Learning these codes is dependent on the availability of speech models. While the restricted code is generally accessible universally, the elaborated code is likely to be available only to those who have middle or upper class family backgrounds. In drawing together the implications of the relationship between class, codes and educability, Bernstein suggests in an early paper that:

> Children socialized within middle-class and associated strata can be expected to possess *both* an elaborated and a restricted code, whilst children socialized within some sections of the working-class, can be expected to be *limited* to a restricted code. If a child is to succeed as he proceeds through school it becomes critical for him to possess, or at least to be oriented towards, an elaborated code.
>
> The relative backwardness of lower working-class children may well be a form of culturally induced backwardness transmitted to the child through the implications of the linguistic process (Bernstein, 1971: 136; first published 1965).

Such statements were taken by many from both the left and right of educational politics to imply that working class language was not only different to the language used by the middle classes, but also inferior (Rosen, 1972). Bernstein had, in fact, in a paper originally published in 1962 described the "normal linguistic environment of the working class as one of relative deprivation" (Bernstein, 1971: 66); and the terms 'restricted' and 'elaborated' themselves were construed as having value-associated connotations.

Bernstein was at some pains to distance code theory, and himself, from both deficit and difference theories, and the concept of 'compensatory education (Bernstein, 1971: chapter

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10). In clarifying his own position most recently, Bernstein stresses the importance of seeing codes as being clearly located within the wider context of power relations and class inequalities:

> What is at issue is the social distribution of privilege and privileging meanings, or, more explicitly, the social distribution of dominant and dominated principles for the exploration, construction, and exchange of legitimate meanings, their contextual management, and their relation to each other. With respect to the deficit position the code theory does not support the view that the sole origin of educational failure and success lies in the presence or absence of attributes of the student, family, community. Success or failure is a function of the school's dominant curriculum, which acts selectively upon those who can acquire it. The dominant code modality of the school regulates its communicative relations, demands, evaluations, and positioning of the family and of its students. The code theory asserts that there is a social class-regulated unequal distribution of privileging principles of communication, their generative interactional practices, and the material base with respect to primary agencies of socialization (e.g. the family) and that social class, indirectly, affects the classification and framing of the elaborated code transmitted by the school so as to facilitate and perpetuate its unequal acquisition. Thus the code theory accepts neither a deficit or a difference position but draws attention to the relations between macro power relations and micro practices of transmission, acquisition, and evaluation and the positioning and oppositioning to which these practices give rise (Bernstein, 1990: 118 -119).

Despite Bernstein's assertions that code theory was not a deficit theory, it was often bracketed by his critics with the crude deficit positions held by researchers such as Bereiter and Englemann, and was decried for its ostensive deprecation of working class speech (Rosen, 1972; Stubbs, 1983). Although Bernstein and others have argued that his work has been grossly misinterpreted (Bernstein, 1971, 1990; Atkinson, 1985; Sadovnik, 1991) his early work in particular was the subject of substantial criticism.

One of the most outspoken critics of linguistic deprivation was Labov, whose study of the language used by black lower-class children in New York is often cited as exploding the "myth of verbal deprivation" (Labov, 1973, 22). Labov's work is taken as 'proof' that speakers of non-standard varieties of language are as capable as, if not more capable than, speakers of standard English, of expressing themselves in a way that is articulate, fluent, logical and subtle. According to Labov one of the dangers of the notion of verbal deprivation theory is that it "diverts attention from the real defects of our educational system to imaginary defects of the child" (Labov, 1973, 22). He argued that schools disadvantaged black working class students by alienating and excluding them; by stigmatising their language and creating self-fulfilling prophecies of failure; and by tracing that failure to the inadequacies of the child. Instead, he claimed, it was necessary to look at the social and cultural obstacles to learning. It was schools

that needed to change: they needed to become more responsive to social situations; and teachers needed have a much more thorough understanding and appreciation of the language of the child.

The interest in the socialisation into language, and the link between home experiences and school learning stimulated a number of studies. Research tended to indicate that there was a significant relationship between the ways in which language was used in the home, particularly in mother-child interaction, and a variety of measures of cognitive and linguistic development. Hess and Shipman (1965), for example, considered the ways in which mothers went about teaching their children simple tasks in an experimental situation. They reached the conclusion that the attitude of mothers towards their children and the way they talked to them could confer considerable advantage or disadvantage in education on their children. Studies by Tough (1973, 1977) indicated that children from 'educating' homes developed a more extensive range of language uses than 'disadvantaged' groups of children.

Wells (1986), however, in a review of research into variations in child language cautions against uncritical acceptance of these conclusions. Apart from methodological problems associated with the collection of representative data, and attempting to quantify it in any useful way, studies involving class background tend to dichotomise what is more appropriately regarded as a continuum, and may also obscure other variables in home background which are significant. In a study looking at the same variables as Tough, but using a group representing the full range of family background based on occupation and education, Wells found no evidence of significant class differences in the range of language used, or in the contexts in which speech occurred. However, with respect to language development Wells' findings were more complex. He found that "extremely fast developers had a strong tendency to be found in families with high scores on the scale of family background; conversely, extremely slow developers had a strong tendency to be found in families with low scores on the scale of family background" and that the contributions of these two small groups were in fact sufficient to produce a significant correlation overall (Wells, 1986: 130 - 131). Wells also stresses the need to look beyond class membership and consider other group affiliations (such as those organised around sport, religion or politics). Overall, he suggests that by the time they reach school age, all but a tiny minority of children have a broad range of linguistic resources which are adequate for a wide variety of purposes. If these resources do not match those of the classroom, they will become a handicap only when they are "rejected as inappropriate, and the children themselves treated as inadequate" (Wells, 1989: 252).

A number of ethnographic studies have been particularly important in highlighting specific ways in which culturally different patterns of communication influence the experience of children in classrooms. Heath (1983), for example, worked in rural communities in Appalachia, and was able to observe the patterns of communication used in homes and in school in considerable detail, and was then also able to work collaboratively with teachers in

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designing changes to classroom processes so that these could be more inclusive. She found, for example, that when teachers changed their style of asking questions, to a style and format that was more familiar to the children (less specific, more open), children became much more active participants in lesson. In helping children broaden the range of language they used, the teachers in Heath's study found that it was helpful to let children hear their peers using the new kinds of talk (using audiotapes proved particularly useful). The teachers also found it important to give children opportunities to practise in private, before being expected to use new forms in actual lessons. In Hawaii, the Kamehameha Early Education Programme looked at a number of aspects of education that might be relevant to improving educational outcomes for children of Polynesian descent. In this project teachers found that by relaxing the turn-taking control they usually exercised, discussions took on an overlapping-turn structure which was much more familiar to Polynesian children (Cazden, 1988). Experienced teachers were able to adopt a "bicultural hybrid of indigenous conversational style and teacher-guided content" (Cazden, 1988: 72) which enabled children to participate and at the same time maintained the academic focus of the lesson.

These and other studies have also looked more specifically at the relationship between home background and literacy skills, which in turn are correlated with school success. The Bristol Study 'Language at School and at Home' followed children from the age of fifteen months, and considered a number of aspects of the relationship between preschool linguistic experience and subsequent school attainment. On the basis of the research, Wells (1985) suggests that while there are other contributory linguistic factors, it is "through the place and value given to literacy in the everyday activities of the home and family that we considered social and educational inequality to be transmitted from one generation to the next" (Wells, 1985: 234). Specifically, Wells highlights the experience of sharing story reading, and the context of talk which surrounds this activity, as the distinguishing characteristics linking home experience with school success. Again, however, Wells asserts that while some children come to school with a lesser degree of familiarity with the genres of language associated with literate behaviours this should not be interpreted as a deficit located in an individual, and there is much that schools can do to ensure that this situation is not turned into a long-term educational disadvantage.

In considering the ways in which schools effectively advantage or disadvantage certain language practices (such as familiarity with those language practices associated with literate behaviour) the work of Bourdieu is relevant. In brief, Bourdieu suggests that within schools the cultural and linguistic capital of the dominant cultural faction is privileged and naturalised (Harker, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Schools incorporate a particular habitus, or set of dispositions, such as, in the context of language, "the scholarly mastery of scholarly language" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 72). Harker (1990) suggests that within education the assumption that:

the habitus of the dominant or elite group constitutes the only proper criterion of scholastic success gives de facto sanction to initial cultural inequalities by ignoring them, and treating all pupils, however unequal they may be in reality, as equal in rights and duties ... Hence formal equality marks an indifference or dismissal of cultural differences, and teaching techniques take for granted a background in pupils which is only true for some (Harker, 1990:92).

This process obviously disadvantages those whose habitus is not embodied in the school, but this is concealed because the unequal social class distribution of educationally profitable cultural and linguistic is not acknowledged, and educational success is attributed instead to natural 'giftedness' or intelligence. The power of dominant groups to define and impose on others the habitus of schooling, and through this to maintain and reproduce their dominance is described by Bourdieu as an instance of 'symbolic violence'. Thus, Bourdieu's work suggests, as does Bernstein's, that the role of language in education, and its relationship to educational advantage or disadvantage needs to be understood in relation to issues of power.

The power of dominant groups to define what constitutes the appropriate and valued language practices of schools has, in particular, been challenged by those associated with the concerns of minority ethnic groups and women. They suggest that alternative language practices may have as much, or more, claim to be recognised as educationally valid as those practices that have traditionally dominated in education.

Concern with issues associated with teaching children from linguistic minorities has received considerable attention since the early seventies (see for example: Fishman, 1977; Edwards, 1983; Cummins, 1986; Houlton, 1984; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984). Prior to this time, educational provision in this area when it was available, tended to be directed at immigrants and their children with the apparently unproblematic and unquestioned goal of programmes being the attainment of majority language skills as fast as possible. Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) challenges this automatic privileging of the dominant language. She suggests a framework, based on the work of Churchill (1985) and developed for use by OECD countries, for analysing attitudes towards schooling provision for minority group children. The first four stages are based essentially on deficit theories and these are contrasted with the final two stages which are described as enrichment theories.

In the first stage, children are regarded as having a specific linguistic handicap in relation to the majority language (MaL), the 'solution' is essentially compensatory, and is based on the provision of more MaL instruction (including ESL provision). In the second stage, the child's language/learning deficit is related to family background. Once again compensatory approaches, including social and pedagogical help as well as MaL teaching, are seen as appropriate. In both these stages the primary goal is for the minority child to become MaL speaking as fast as possible. The third stage locates the deficit in the child's "different" cultural background. Associated with this difference is low self-confidence and possibly discrimination

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against the child from majority group members. In addition to the responses suggested for stages one and two, the measures appropriate to this analysis include initiating multicultural programmes through which all children learn about both majority and minority cultures, and eliminating racism and bias in teaching material and teachers attitudes. At the fourth stage deficit is seen as resulting from a combination of all three deficits outlined above. The child's facility with the minority language (MiL) is regarded as limited, and this therefore provides poor grounding for the learning of the MaL. The response is to provide some opportunity for the initial use of the MiL as a medium of study with swift transition to use of the MaL, and the opportunity to study of the MiL as a subject. Instruction in and through the MiL is seen essentially in instrumental terms: more self-confidence; better basis for MaL learning; more co-operative relationship with home (and child); allows the child to 'keep up' in initial stages of schooling. In both the third and fourth stages it is assumed that the MiL may continue in the family for one to two generations, and that until full proficiency as MaL speakers is obtained, minority children need help to appreciate their cultures.

The fifth and sixth stages start from the premise that the child's home language and social background should be recognised as a positive starting point for school learning. The fifth stage acknowledges the benefits of bilingualism to the individual, but prioritises MaL as a prerequisite for equal opportunity. At this stage, early schooling opportunities to learn through the MiL are regarded as important, with the aim of full bilingualism for the child so that the MiL can be maintained for continued personal use, while the MaL becomes the medium of education after the elementary years. Problems that occur will reflect the cost and difficulty in providing adequate bilingual programmes rather than difficulties located in the child, family or community. In this situation continued community bilingualism is a possibility, though this may be limited by demographic factors. In the sixth stage, bilingualism is regarded as beneficial and enriching to both the individual and society. Separate but equal school systems may be provided for minority and majority children, with special support for smaller minority groups. Bilingualism is obligatory, or at least encouraged, for majority as well as minority groups. If minority children have problems at school these will be due to similar reasons as majority children, or racism and discrimination. At this stage, minority languages are given official status, their continued existence as living languages is ensured, and bilingualism is encouraged for all members of the community. It is only really in this final stage that the power of dominant groups to determine the habitus of schooling is successfully challenged, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) suggests that it is only then that transformative change in society is implied.

There has also been a growing interest in the role that language plays in the different experiences that boys and girls have of education. From the mid-seventies on, studies have shown that although girls' academic achievements in primary school are relatively high, but do not appear to be sustained in secondary classrooms, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. Feminist critiques of education have been instrumental in highlighting sexism

within the curriculum, and teachers and publishers have become more sensitive to glaring examples of sexism in materials in terms of the use of he-man language, stereotyping, ignoring the participation and contributions of women (McPherson, 1990). Studies of classroom interaction have also been important in drawing attention to gender bias in teacher-pupil interactions. For example, Kelly's (1988) meta-analysis of classroom interaction research indicates that boys consistently demand and receive more attention from teachers, and that this happens even in classrooms in which teachers assert that they do not wish to treat girls and boys differently.

One response to these observed differences has been to encourage girls to adopt more assertive styles of communication. Such an approach is essentially based on a deficit model of women's speech, in which inequalities in interactions are blamed on girls' inability to 'hold their own' in the classroom. Spender has been particularly vocal in arguing against such interpretations suggesting that they reflect an attitude which indicates that "women can only aspire to be as good as a man, there is no good in being as good as a woman" (Spender, 1984: 201). An alternative approach is based on a 'difference' rather than 'deficit' perspective and has focussed on ways in which teachers can modify patterns of interaction in classrooms so that different genres of language are recognised and encouraged. This approach identifies schools as essentially 'male' institutions, that are shaped by 'male' values: the knowledge that is valued in schools is logocentric and mechanistic rather than aware of human, relational aspects of context; assessment is based on individual competition rather than on collaborative sharing; and classroom interaction favours those who are most adept at accessing and using 'male' genres. Branson (1988) holds that in such a setting girls are required to live a cultural lie, forced to compete in a male mode which stands in opposition to socially constructed notions of what it is to be female. She suggests that within education "the sensitivities of women must be rediscovered, acknowledged, used and respected" (Branson, 1988: 105). Thus, rather than constituting girls as deficient in comparison to boys, and therefore in need of compensatory help in education, this approach asserts the value of non-dominant discourses, and calls into question dominant, patriarchal structures and established power relations of schooling.

However, despite the lack of sound theoretical or research justification for a compensatory view of language in education, there is evidence to suggest that deficit theories have retained much of their credence amongst educationists (Simon, 1984; Wells, 1989). For example, the 1976 Preface to "Listening to Children Talking", the first publication of the Schools Council's Project on Communication Skills in Early Childhood, remains unchanged in the 1985 edition (and subsequent reprints) and suggests that:

> we have always in mind the particular needs of those children who are at a disadvantage within school because of their experiences of using language at home. What can be done in schools to foster the development of communication skills in all young children, but most importantly, in those for whom school may provide the only

experiences which will extend their skills of thinking and using language? (Tough, 1985: 5)

This 'myth of deprivation' is perpetuated when teachers are unaware of the language demands that they make on their students, and interpret failure to meet these demands as a problem that has its source in individual students, their families or their communities.

1.3   Language Across the Curriculum in policy and practice

From its beginnings, LAC has been grounded in the belief that teachers need to be alert to the ways in which the content, form and structure of language use in the classroom may exclude certain groups of children from full participation in classroom interaction and therefore effectively limit the learning opportunities that should be available to them. Initially this belief was not tied to specific notions of countering disadvantage or achieving social justice in education by those most closely involved with the development of LAC. However, the increased attention and debate that has been focussed on the part that language plays in linking social and cultural background and educational success has meant that LAC has been increasingly viewed by its supporters as an obvious vehicle for addressing these issues (Britton, 1970; Barnes, 1976; Marland, 1977, Corson, 1990). This is reflected in the development of LAC in policy and practice since its beginnings in the sixties.

Official support for LAC has been most extensive in Britain, and the potential of LAC to address the particular needs of relatively disadvantaged groups in education is clearly reflected in the national policy documents that have been developed. Although the implementation of LAC initiatives in schools has been limited, the central place of language in mediating educational success highlights the need for an integrated and coherent approach towards language in education such as that presented by LAC.

i)   The Bullock report

In Britain, official recognition of LAC came in 1975 with the publication of The Bullock Report: *A Language for Life* (DES, 1975). The Bullock Committee was appointed by the then Secretary of Education, Margaret Thatcher, in response to public alarm over the published results of a survey indicating that school reading standards were falling. The report, however, situated these concerns in a broader context. The committee felt that it was not appropriate to separate reading from other aspects of language use, nor was it possible to provide an analysis of school language use without considering the influences of the home environment (Davis, 1978).

The report paid special attention to the language learning of "culturally disadvantaged" children and children from families of overseas origin. The low pattern of attainment of minority

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group children, particularly those of West Indian origin and the high correlation between low reading achievement and socio-economic factors are noted and in its summary of conclusions and recommendations the Report states:

> Many young children do not have the opportunity to develop at home the more complex forms of language that school education demands of them. All children should be helped to acquire as wide a range as possible of the uses of language (DES, 1975: 519).

The Report also particularly emphasises the need for early intervention in reading instruction "to compensate as far as possible for the cumulative effect of social handicap" (DES, 1975: 539), however, the limitations of schooling in this process are acknowledged:

> In conclusion we feel it is important to single out again for emphasis the fact that the majority of the pupils who leave school with an inadequate command of reading come from areas of social and economic depression. The problem is more than one of teaching reading, and a combined effort by social services, teachers and administrators is required over the whole period of a child's school life (DES, 1975: 275).

Overall the Report stresses the need for teachers to be sensitive to the child's home and language background, and with particular reference to the needs of minority group children, it states:

> No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, and the curriculum should reflect those aspects of his life (DES, 1975: 543).

In proposing a school wide, school-based response to the need to develop a comprehensive approach to language and learning for all children the Report recommends that schools adopt LAC. The Report devotes a full chapter to LAC and makes a clear call for the development and implementation of LPAC's in schools, declaring, as one of its principal recommendations:

> Each school should have an organised policy for language across the curriculum, establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development throughout the years of schooling (DES, 1975: 514)

The Report was a watershed for LAC. Prior to its publication little was known of LAC beyond a fairly small circle. The report, however, established the phrase as part of the language of education for both teachers and administrators, and did much to legitimate LAC as an important curricular issue, rather than a bandwagon for a minority of dedicated followers. There were, however, problems associated with the 'top-down' nature of the Bullock Report. Difficulties in translating the concept of LAC into a functioning policy were substantial. Torbe, for example in the Preface to the NATE guidelines to LAC for schools points out that:

> The process of devising and implementing such a policy is very complex, and no-one knows the best way to go about it. What is clear is that it is a substantially different

process from putting new materials into use in a school, or to changing from streaming ... to mixed ability teaching (NATE, 1977; cited in Davis, 1978: 5).

More often than not the response to LAC was initiated, not by teachers themselves, but by principals who were in turn complying with requests from Local Education Authorities. Few schools allowed adequate time for discussion of LAC, and while some LAC projects worked well, others, particularly those in secondary schools, raised only resentment, defensiveness, and intra- and inter- departmental disagreement (Minovi, 1978). The nature and purpose of LAC was unclear, and many teachers assumed it to be narrowly concerned with a new teaching method: a formula or set of blueprints that would somehow solve any problems that existed. Three years after its publication, Britton, commented, that at its most misunderstood, the injunction laid at the door of every school to produce a LPAC "might result in no more than a concerted witch-hunt against bad spelling and punctuation" (Britton, 1978: vii).

The general failure of schools to translate the concept of LAC into effective practice is documented in a number of reports published since Bullock (HMSO, 1979; DES, 1982; DES, 1985). The 1979 Secondary Survey found, for example, that:

the policies for language across the curriculum in secondary schools recommended by the Bullock Report are difficult to achieve, for a variety of reasons: it may be indeed, that the phrase itself has not has not been widely enough understood or that it is not forceful enough to convey the notion of the overall responsibility of all teachers for the development of language essential to learning. In the great majority of schools ... no moves of any significance towards language policies have taken place' (HMSO, 1979).

ii)   Subsequent developments

Official support for LAC was also received in Canada with the Ontario Ministry of Education's endorsement of LAC as policy in 1977. This commitment was reaffirmed in 1984. Despite the status that such recognition could be expected to confer on LAC, as in Britain, the movement does not appear to have achieved widespread acceptance in practice. Again this seems, at least in part, due to a sense of confusion that has surrounded the concept of LAC (French, 1985).

In Britain, the need for schools to formulate language and learning policy across the curriculum was officially re-emphasised in *Education for All* (The Swann Report) in 1985. This report reviewed the education of children from ethnic minority groups and was initiated in response to widespread concern regarding racism and the ways in which communities generally seemed to be dealing with ethnic diversity. In particular, these issues had received considerable media attention and public debate following riots in inner city areas in the summer of 1981. Within education there was also concern about racism in schools and about the academic performance of children from minority groups, especially those of West Indian origin.

The Swann Report focussed on language as a major area of concern, and further places LAC clearly in the context of providing for equity. The Report quotes and endorses the view put forward by NATE:

> Since a child's sense of confidence is crucial in the business of mastering language, the nature of the school context in which language teaching takes place is important. Essential though it is to get the language procedures right in the English lesson, unless there is a school language and learning policy across the curriculum there will be wastage of effort and often confusion. Again, getting the content right in one subject may be breaking new ground in a commendable way, but there will be little sustained impact until there is a school view of how syllabuses need to change as Britain faces the challenge of developing a harmonious multi-cultural society (DES, 1985: 417).

The Report stresses the need for LPAC's at both primary and secondary levels and suggests establishing "Language Coordinators" in schools, and increasing LEA and HMI support and training in LAC for all teachers.

Despite these renewed calls for LAC, it continues to receive serious attention in relatively few schools, either in Britain or elsewhere (Corson, 1990). Corson suggests that one reason for this lies in the difficulty that schools face in trying to bring together the areas of curriculum studies and educational administration. To be effective LAC requires, as the Bullock Report suggests, a policy "embodied in the organisational structure of the school", but this has proved difficult to achieve in practice. Misunderstanding also continues to surround the concept. The Cox Report *English for Ages 5-16* (1989) acknowledges one aspect of this confusion:

> for some (LAC) conjures up an unacceptable vision of English reduced to a service subject, and for others an equally unacceptable vision of subject specialists burdened with the responsibilities that should rightly be carried by teachers of English (DES, 1989, Section 1.15)

However the report seeks to allay these fears, and like the reports that precede it, advocates that schools develop and implement LPAC's.

French (1985) also provides an account of some of the confusion that appears to have dogged LAC. He points to the need to clarify the concept of LAC and to agree to a definition which will provide the basis for a more productive understanding of the issues involved. Both he, and Corson (1990) draw on Fillion's definition of LAC:

> Language across the curriculum points out that we often fail to exploit student's language - especially their informal, expressive talk and writing - as a learning resource in our classrooms. By creating classroom environments that restrict their use of language as a means of learning, we inadvertently inhibit student's development and learning, and their awareness and confident command of efficient learning strategies. Three basic tenets of language across the curriculum are that language develops

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primarily through its purposeful use, that language often involves and occurs through talking and writing, and that language use contributes to cognitive development. Each of these principles has important practical implications for effective teaching. (Fillion, 1983: 702-703).

This definition effectively brings together the ideas on which LAC is based. It clearly moves away from a deficit approach to understanding the role of language in learning, and places responsibility on the teacher to fully use the language resources that learners bring to the classroom. Such an approach is likely to highlight the ways in which particular language practices might exclude certain groups from full participation in classroom processes, and as such may provide a basis for challenging and changing the ways language is used within education.

However, although this approach to LAC may question the processes of schooling, and may contribute to reforming the language curriculum so that it is more responsive to the sociolinguistic context of the school population, it may fail to challenge dominant linguistic and social orders. LAC as described by Fillion, and as reflected in policies such as the Bullock Report, does not clearly acknowledge the wider context of power relations and the ways that they are reflected and maintained in the privileging of certain language practices not only within but outside schooling. This may limit the potential of LAC to go beyond an essentially liberal conception of education, in which changes in the process of education are unlikely to contribute to transforming wider inequities in the distribution of power and privilege, and may in fact work to legitimate existing social and linguistic orders. If LAC is to play a role in achieving a more equitable and democratic education which can become a basis for emancipation, it would seem important that it explicitly incorporate a deliberately critical approach to understanding the relationship between language and power.

1.4 Critical approaches to language in education

Since the early seventies radical educational theorists have focussed not only on the ways in which education has been used to maintain and reproduce discriminatory social relationships, but also on the ways in which education might instead be used to challenge and transform such inequallities (Giroux, 1983) They propose a *critical pedagogy* which centres on the belief that for those in subordinated groups to gain greater control over their own lives, they need to be able to identify their own interests clearly, and become more critically aware of the ways in which social reality is constructed and reproduced (Livingstone, 1987).

Freire's work on literacy is perhaps the best known and arguably the most influential examples of a critical pedagogy. Simply expressed Freire's concept of a liberatory education rests on a belief that:

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through education, we can first understand power in society. We can throw light on the power relations made opaque by the dominant class. We can also prepare and participate in programs to change society (Shor and Freire, 1987: 31-32).

Freire suggests that the process of becoming critically conscious of the economic, political, cultural and historic context of our own lives is fundamental to social transformation. Through this process of 'conscientization' we are able to recognise our potential as "agents, makers and remakers of the world" (Freire, 1976, 224), and this in turn provides a basis for opposition and transformative action. Freire emphasises the role of language, and in particular literacy, in a liberatory education: it is through 'reading the word and the world' that that the oppressed are able to critically reflect on the social construction of reality, and "literacy, in this sense ... (also) ... becomes the vehicle by which the oppressed are equipped with the necessary tools to reappropriate their history, culture, and language practices" (Freire and Macedo,1987).

Freire proposes a pedagogy grounded in dialogue in which both teacher and student become learners participating in a process of democratic communication. While dialogic inquiry is situated in the culture, language, politics and themes of the students, Freire stresses that this is not merely a manipulative technique thrown in to motivate students, or simply endorse the status quo (Shor and Freire, 1987: 104). Rather a situated pedagogy seeks to transcend student culture, opening it to reflective scrutiny and relating it to the larger social context. Freire acknowledges the tensions implicit in situating a pedagogy within the language of the students. He asserts the importance of using the students' language, suggesting that the use of only the dominant standard idiom in education empowers the ruling class by sustaining the status quo, while simultaneously alienating subordinate students and denying them the opportunity for critical thinking, reflection and social interaction (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 159). However, he also points out that it is crucial that students are able to grasp and use elite forms, because this is important " (not only) in order to survive, but above all for fighting better against the dominant class" (Shor and Freire, 1987: 73). Therefore, although the pedagogy is situated in student language, it goes beyond this and, within the context of an understanding of the interrelationship of language and power, makes elite and dominant language practices available to students for use in the process of social transformation.

Freire's critical pedagogy was initially developed from 'third world' contexts, and programmes based on his approaches to literacy have been most extensively used in political and economic situations very different to those prevalent in the 'first world' (Shor and Freire, 1987). There are, however, instances in which Freire's ideas have directly contributed to classroom practice in Western contexts, and in particular to the development of programmes in adult literacy and English as a Second Language education (Shor, 1980; Shor, 1987).

A specific approach to language education in schools which draws its inspiration from Freire's work is critical language 'awareness' (Clark et al, 1987; Fairclough, 1989). Critical language awareness is based upon 'critical language study' (CLS) which represents an

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orientation towards language study which clearly emphasises the relationship between language, ideology and power. CLS sets out to explain the ways in which language contributes to the domination of some people by others. It sees language as a form of social practice which is both structured by social relationships, but in its turn contributes to the structuring of those social relationships. There is, then, a dialectical relationship between the 'orders of discourse' and 'social orders' in any society, and, discourse itself becomes both the site, and practice, of struggle. Fairclough (1989) suggests that if children are to develop their capabilities as producers and interpreters of discourse, they need to be critically conscious of the orders of discourse of their society. He emphasises that such a critical awareness is fundamental to developing:

> an emancipatory discourse which challenges, breaks through and may ultimately transform the dominant orders of discourse, as part of the struggle of oppressed social groupings against the dominant bloc (Fairclough, 1989: 240)

Fairclough's model of language education has some important points of contact with LAC. In particular, he stresses the importance of drawing on children's existing abilities and experiences, and he also emphasises the importance of 'purposeful discourse' in developing language capabilities (see Fillion, 1983). However, Fairclough goes beyond these ideas and suggests that purposeful discourse practice must be married to 'critical language awareness'. Critical language awareness is fostered by: encouraging children to reflect on their own discourse practices, and the social constraints upon these practices; helping children to systematise these reflections; and collectively reflecting and analysing these experiences in order to seek explanations. The awareness that grows as part of this cycle is then used to develop the child's capacity for purposeful discourse. Fairclough suggests that through such a process children might be helped to go beyond dominant discourse conventions. This might empower them to infringe discourse conventions and gain access to particular discourse types from which they were previously excluded. Alternatively, it may contribute to their collective potential to transform orders of discourse by systematically destructuring existing orders and restructuring new orders.

1.5   Summary: Language Across the Curriculum as a vehicle for equity

LAC as an educational movement was initiated by practitioners in response to the need that they saw for all teachers to recognise and respond to the pivotal role that language plays in education. The movement itself, and the approaches to learning and teaching that are endorsed by LAC, have received considerable support from academics, and have also received official recognition in a number of English speaking countries. While it has been enthusiastically embraced by some, LAC still has limited currency in practice, possibly because

there is a genuine lack of understanding of the LAC concept, and perhaps also because it challenges persistent pedagogical orthodoxies.

The work of sociologists has suggested that language is a prime mediating factor in linking home background and school success. In addressing issues of equity in education, it is therefore important to consider the ways in which language, and the role that it plays in learning, is approached in educational settings. Much work on LAC in schools has, in fact, been motivated specifically by equity concerns (Corson, 1990), and even where this is not the case, a concern with language will tend to make apparent any disjunctures between the language and culture of the school and the language and culture of children, and is thus likely to highlight issues of disadvantage. It is therefore likely that equity issues will emerge as an important consideration in the development of any LPAC. If however, LAC is to provide a basis for challenging and possibly changing existing inequitable structures in society, then it would seem important that the approach incorporate a critical orientation towards language and its relationship to power.

Chapter two
The New Zealand context: equity in educational policy

2.1 Fairness, equity and education

There has been a strong commitment to egalitarianism in New Zealand since the latter part of the nineteenth century (OECD, 1983; Harker, 1990). This has often been expressed in terms of 'fairness' or more colloquially as "getting a fair go". With respect to education 'fairness' received what is regarded as its classic formulation in 1939 in the words of the then Minister of Education, 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 power (Fraser, quoted by Renwick, 1986: 16).

The ideal that education should not differentially favour any group or individual on the basis of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, geographical location or personal qualities was expressed as 'equality of opportunity' and received strong and consistent support from both the providers and users of public education. In 1962, the Currie Report, for example, stated that the sentiment expressed by Fraser in 1939 had retained its strength as "one of the dominant democratic ideas of the New Zealand community" (Department of Education, 1962: 12) and concluded that:

> In New Zealand egalitarian feelings still exert much of their former power and the trend is still towards uniformity, the avoidance of special privilege, and equality of opportunity (Department of Education, 1962: 218).

As in other Western countries in the 1960's and 1970's, concern that education, rather than providing the basis for social equality, might be reproducing and even sharpening existing inequalities challenged traditional ideas of what fairness might entail. Policies of equal opportunities were patently not helping certain sectors of the population "get a fair go". The rights of women, and the rights of Maori became part of the political agenda, and these two issues heightened concerns over apparent underachievement in education. Beeby (1986) suggests that it was over this period of time that the myth of 'equality of opportunity' was replaced by the even more mythic 'equality of results'. The evidence clearly suggested that such equality could not be attained through equal treatment. In a paper originally presented in 1977, Renwick (1986) stated that:

> the public debate is no longer about equality of opportunity: it is about equity, that is to say fair treatment or social justice ... And the public conscience is, I believe, responding sympathetically to evidence of advantage and arguments for redress (Renwick, 1986: 30)

Within this debate, however, 'fair treatment' was, and is, scarcely unproblematic. Positive discrimination policies which are justified as fair on the basis of the need to redress existing inequalities, are also deemed unfair on the grounds of merit or desert (Renwick, 1986). The need to recognise diversity and accommodate a plurality of values within both the processes and outcomes of education, requires an interpretation of equity that does not rest on sameness, but still maintains some sense of parity.

The debate over these issues continued during the 1980's. Submissions to the 1987 Curriculum Review (Department of Education, 1987) reflect a wide range of opinions regarding which students might not be getting a fair chance in schools, why they might be missing out, and what schools should do to ensure fair treatment for all. However, the rhetoric of the Review provides evidence of an overriding commitment to the guiding principle of fairness, and it also emphasises that an understanding of fairness should take into account equality of outcomes, and diversity, as well as more traditional notions of equality of opportunity.

A number of educational theorists suggest that within the political context of the late 1980's and early 1990's, the traditional egalitarian ethos has found itself in direct conflict with the competitive market culture of the New Right (McCulloch, 1990; Snook, 1990; Codd, 1990). This conflict is starkly evident in debates about education. Within the rhetoric of the New Right, the word 'equity' has been linked to 'choice'. The 1987 Treasury document, Government Management, for example, states that, in meeting the demands of equity and efficiency, a key element:

> is empowering through choice and the maximisation of information flows, the family,
> parent or individual as the consumer of educational sources (Treasury, 1987, cited by
> Codd, 1990: 201).

Choice is presented as catering for the need to recognise and respond to diversity, as well as providing a basis for the efficient delivery and distribution of educational services. The word 'equity' has thus come to be used in contradictory ways: first, as it is used here, in the sense that it incorporates equality and diversity in the service of fairness and social justice; and second in connection with an approach in which educational provision is essentially commodified and choice and efficiency are taken as fundamental goals of this provision. Snook (1990) comments:

> In Aotearoa-New Zealand equity was cynically used to sell free market policies but it is
> − obvious that in education choice and equity are in opposition (Snook, 1990: 12).

Despite these conflicting interpretations of equity, and the threat that new right ideology might pose to old values, equity as fairness still appeared to be an educational priority at the time of the research in 1988-1989, and there is evidence that this continues to be the case. Although Ministerial policy based on Treasury advice may have been underpinned by a changed approach, other Department/Ministry publications continued to reflect equity

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commitments (See for example: Department of Education, 1988b, 1988c, 1988d, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1989d, 1989e; Ministry of Education, 1990, 1991; Metge, 1990)

Evidence of the continuing importance of equity and fairness to those involved in education is also provided in research and academic literature (see for example Middleton, 1988; Codd et al, 1990; Middleton et al, 1990). A study considering the educational perspectives of those on school Boards of Trustees (Middleton and Oliver, 1990) found that the central importance of fairness in education was not questioned, although there were varying and sometimes conflicting opinions on how it might best be achieved. The research notes the prevalence of a rather reactionary "equal opportunities" approach to fairness, and a wide acceptance of the meritocratic assumptions that form the basis of such an approach. Many of those interviewed in the process of the research indicated, for example, that they believed that:

> equal opportunities already exist and that social and educational inequalities result not from social disadvantage (or cultural oppression) but from individual shortcomings (such as lack of ability and laziness) (Middleton and Oliver, 1990: 6).

A recent report on Teacher Training provision (Renwick and Vize, 1991) confirms these findings. Renwick and Vize's study indicates considerable confusion on the part of teacher trainees regarding the ways in which fairness and equity should be approached through education, but again confirms that the principle of fairness itself is not disputed. Thus, although there has been a significant change in political rhetoric, this has not necessarily been accompanied by a corresponding change in social attitudes amongst those directly involved in education.

2.2   The changing context

Three specific publications released by the Department of Education and the Ministry of Education during 1987 and 1988 were particularly important to the context within which the LPAC research was undertaken. The Curriculum Review, the Picot Report and Tomorrow's Schools reflect the changing administrative and political context within which schools were working at the time of the research project, and underline some of the issues that were to the forefront of educational debate at that time.

i)   The Curriculum Review.

Following a two year period of community consultation and extensive debate, during which a total of more than 31,500 responses were received from individuals and groups, the Department of Education released the Report of the Committee to Review the Curriculum for Schools.

The report makes clear from its outset that language and equity concerns are of central importance to education. In its Introduction the Curriculum Review states that:

... This Committee believes that every child is of equal value.

... All children in New Zealand, whatever their colour, race, gender, religious beliefs, intellect, physical abilities, economic or social background, are entitled to an education which respects their dignity and uniqueness.

... Language is both something learned and a fundamental tool for learning. If this tool is to be used effectively, children's home languages should form the base for their learning (Department of Education,1987: 2)

The concept of 'equity' is given a central place in the report, and is defined somewhat vaguely in terms of a "fair treatment for all", and equality of opportunity and outcomes. Within an equitable curriculum it suggests that diversity must be seen as a challenge, rather than a barrier to success. The Review's commitment is to a school system which "gives everyone a 'fair go'" (Department of Education, 1987: 98), and it particularly points out the failure of the system to establish equality for girls, Maori, Pacific Island and other minority cultures, and students with disabilities. Language is given a pivotal role in achieving an education system which meets these equity demands. Language is emphasised as "fundamental to learning, communication, personal and cultural identity, and relationships" (Department of Education,1987: 12), and the report makes a number of specific recommendations with regard to Te Reo Maori, bilingual education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) provision which specifically link language and equity. Finally the review recommends that "a national policy on languages is developed, embracing Maori, English, Pacific Island languages, English as a second language: and including first language learning" (Department of Education, 1987: 41).

ii)   The Picot Report.

The Curriculum Review received considerable support from the Minister of Education, and was thought by many to herald major educational reform. However, Treasury did not accept it as an adequate blueprint for the development of school education. The Review had given priority to "meeting Maori aspirations, countering racism and sexism and creating an enabling and challenging curriculum" but, among other things, "overlook(ed) ... the relationship between education and the economy and the nature of Government assistance" (Codd et al, 1988). In July, 1987 the Taskforce to Review Education Administration to be chaired by supermarket magnate, Brian Picot, was announced. On May 10, 1988, The Picot Report: *Administering for Excellence* was released. The Report proposed considerable re-structuring of the education system, suggesting that funding for schools would be dispensed annually in the form of a bulk grant and that the management of each institution would be carried out by a locally elected Board of Trustees. In order to be eligible for funding each school would need to have a charter,

drawn up by the Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the principal, the staff and the community. The charter would then in turn become a contract between the state and the institution.

The basic philosophies underlying the Picot Report and the Curriculum Review were very different (see Codd, 1990). However, the Report is clothed in a veneer of democratic concern, and has an apparent commitment to equity. For example, the Report delineates two fundamental objectives for the educational system:

> Every learner should gain the maximum individual and social benefit from the money spent on education.
>
> Education should be just and fair for every learner regardless of their gender, and of their social, cultural or geographic circumstances (Department of Education, 1988a: 3).

The Report also makes particular reference to Maori education within a section entitled "Specific Issues":

> The Maori people have told us they want their children to be bilingual and bicultural, at ease in both the Maori and Pakeha worlds. As well they want the opportunity for all Maori children to be educated in the Maori language, in an environment that reflects Maori values and uses Maori forms. We believe our structures will help achieve these aims (Department of Education, 1988a: xiii).

In addition, the Report suggests that

> Cultural sensitivity must play a greater part in the education system - which has been slow in the past to recognise the aspirations of other cultures. New Zealand has a particular and a general need for cultural sensitivity. Maori people have a special status under the Treaty of Waitangi: however, in addition to this bicultural requirement, the issue of cultural sensitivity extends to all cultures of New Zealand (Department of Education, 1988a: 4).

Finally, within the sample charter the Report includes a section "Respect for Diversity":

> The board of trustees will identify and state the ways the school will:
>
> • ensure the board of trustees reflects, in its own membership, the characteristics of the community it serves
>
> • state how the school intends to ensure that its programmes and organisation promote non-sexist and non-racist education
>
> • state how the curriculum will take account of the needs and experiences of all students (including their background knowledge and ideas) and how it will take account of the diverse character of the community (Department of Education, 1988a: 111)

These points are particularly important because, in working on producing an LPAC during 1988, those in administrative positions within schools said that they hoped that the work that they were doing would be able to be utilised within the Charter writing process that they

would need to become involved in during the following year. Equity issues were seen by them as a necessarily important aspect of charters, and they were keen to approach the issues through LPAC.

iii)   Tomorrow's Schools

On August 7, 1988 the booklet Tomorrow's Schools was released. It outlined "the most thoroughgoing reforms to education administration in our history" (Ministry of Education, 1988: 1). The changes, essentially the Picot proposals with a few minor changes, were to be implemented by October 1, 1989. The report confirmed the perception on the part of those involved with the LPAC project, that equity would be seen as a central issue.

In the section of the report discussing "National Issues Impinging at Local Level", equity issues were given first consideration:

3.1   Equity Issues

3.1. 1   Equity objectives will underpin all policy related to the reform of education administration. These equity objectives will be:

- to ensure that a new system of education administration promotes and progressively achieves greater equity for women, Maori, Pacific Island, and other groups with minority status: and for working class, rural and disabled students, teachers and communities
- to ensure that equity issues are integrated into all aspects of changes in education administration and not treated as an optional extra
- to acknowledge the present system of education administration includes some features which promote equity and which should not be lost as a result of the changes
- to recognise that equity is best achieved trough systems which combine enabling legislation with awareness and education
- to ensure that the systems which are put in place enable the monitoring of progress towards equity goals (Minister of Education, 1988: 25).

The Report also stated that national guidelines for education would include a section on the objectives and strategies for equal employment and equal educational opportunities.

The second national issue seen to impinge at a local level concerned Maori interests. Under Tomorrow's Schools:

opportunities will be made available for ... children to learn or be educated in the Maori language, ... the whanau will be able to have access to and participate in education, ... Maori parents - as other parents will be able to educate their children at home or establish their own institutions, ... (and) the interests of Maori education will be

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represented throughout each of the agencies at the centre (Minister of Education, 1988: 26).

Finally, by stating that the Implementation Unit and the Officials Committee should report to the Cabinet Social Equity Committee, further emphasis was given to equity. Like the Picot Report, Tomorrow's Schools had particular relevance in the context of the LPAC Research Project. Participants perceived equity as a priority area of concern for their schools. The link between language and equity was well-established in educational thinking, and was reinforced by the emphasis on Maori language issues.

2.3   Summary: The research context

Thus, by 1988, the year that the LPAC research was undertaken, the word 'equity' had become well established in educational rhetoric. Within New Zealand, 'fairness' had long been taken as a guiding principle of education, and had received consistent state and public support. However, the ways in which 'fairness' was interpreted in terms of policy and action had changed, and over time the principle of fairness was linked variously with 'equality of opportunity', 'equality of results' and more latterly with 'equity'.

In addition to this general emphasis on fairness within New Zealand education, there were three documents published by the Department of Education that had special relevance to the context within which schools developed LPAC's. These documents, the Curriculum Review (Department of Education, 1987), the Picot Report (Department of Education, 1988a) and Tomorrow's Schools (Minister of Education, 1988) stressed the need for all schools to address equity issues. The Curriculum Review in particular highlighted the relationship between language and equity issues. The documents also indicated support for the right of Maori to an education in Te Reo Maori, and this again emphasised the central role of language in addressing equity.

Chapter three
Specific equity and language issues in New Zealand education

3.1 Equity, fairness and disadvantage

State education policy aimed at achieving either equality or equity has generally focussed on the needs of particular disadvantaged groups. Thus, issues of fairness in New Zealand education have tended to be identified in terms of 'unfairness'.

In 1987, a report on education, commissioned by the Royal Commission on Social Policy and prepared by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, was published in two parts under the title: "How fair is New Zealand education?". In attempting to provide a basis for assessing fairness the report suggests that there is a need to consider the distribution of educational resources; the appropriateness of these resources and teaching styles for different groups; participation and retention rates; the distribution of qualifications, and; success rates.

The report identifies seven groups as likely to be disadvantaged in New Zealand education:
- Maori;
- Pacific Island groups;
- ethnic migrant groups;
- girls and women;
- those from low socio-economic status homes;
- people with disabilities; and
- rural dwellers.

This chapter outlines equity issues in education in relation to each of these groups, and highlights links between these equity concerns and language issues in education.

3.2 Issues in Maori education

The priority given to Maori issues in education is reflected in the structure of the Report. The second part, almost half of the whole report, focuses entirely on "Fairness in Maori Education" (Benton, 1987a). In summarising the concerns expressed in this part of the report the Commission cites a statement made by the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986:

> We think that the record to date is quite unmixed. It is a dismal failure and no amount of delicate phrasing can mask that fact. ... Judged by the system's own standards Maori children are not being successfully taught, and for that reason alone, quite

apart from the duty to protect the Maori language, the education system is being operated in breach of the Treaty (Benton, 1987b: 7).

Metge provides a concise history of the impact of policies and their implementation on Maori education which provides the background to this failure (Metge, 1990: 21-28). She emphasises that from the time of New Zealand's establishment as a crown colony in 1840, the bases of power and decision making have been dominated by the British and their descendants.

For over a century, assimilation was the explicit aim of Maori education. However, by the 1950's, it was apparent that in comparative terms Maori were not succeeding in education. Policies of assimilation came under increasing criticism from Maori groups, and they pressed for greater recognition of Maori culture and language in schools attended by Maori children. In 1961, the Hunn Report replaced assimilation with integration, but despite an apparently more liberal attitude towards cultural acceptance, Maori were quick to see that there was little change in practice (Simon, 1986). The Hunn Report, and subsequently the Currie Report (1962) highlighted Maori children's 'under-achievement' locating the cause in their Maori background, and linking this to language deficit:

> Maori children were seen as suffering from inadequate language development, a shortage of concepts, lack of motivation to succeed, and a preference for the concrete over the abstract. These deficiencies were blamed on parents who, it was alleged, did not provide books, nor talk and read to their children, nor reward verbal sophistication as Pakeha parents were believed to do (Metge, 1990: 24).

As occurred overseas, the deficit view came under heavy attack in New Zealand and gave way, at least in some quarters, to the concept of cultural difference. This was accompanied by the suggestion that cultural incompatibility between home and school need be acknowledged as playing a part in the problems faced by Maori in education (NACME, 1970).

Publications by the Department of Education for teachers however, tended to perpetuate a deficit view. The handbook *Language Programmes for Maori Children* (Department of Education, 1972) for example, equates language with standard English. Although it warns against generalisations regarding the 'handicaps' that children might have, pointing out that: "The amount of Maori heard or spoken, and the amount and kind of English heard and spoken may vary tremendously" (Department of Education, 1972: 2), it assumes that language difficulties arise from social circumstances and "the characteristics, which, typically, they (Maori children) bring with them to school" (Department of Education, 1972: 4). More recent research indicates the persistence of this deficit approach (Benton, 1987a). Simon (1986), for example, suggests that Pakeha teachers often continue to assume that Maori children will enter school with "inadequate" or "limited" language, and this in turn reflects the lack of appropriate language experiences made available at home.

Pressure from Maori people for the teaching of Maori language and the recognition of Maori culture at all stages of the curriculum increased throughout the 1970's and 1980's. Courses in Maori language and Maori studies have been available in some schools and teachers' colleges since the late 1960's and more recently special courses for fluent speakers of Maori have been developed at some Colleges of Education. In 1974, official endorsement was given to the inclusion of Maori language and culture in the primary curriculum, however, it was not until 1984 that a primary Maori language syllabus was made available for trialling in schools. An important innovation has been the designation of selected primary schools as official bilingual schools. The first designation was in 1977, and by 1988 a total of twelve schools had been designated.

However, the introduction of Maori language and culture has been uneven in its success. Attempts have often met with considerable resistance from Pakeha teachers, parents and community members. Taha Maori, and especially Te Reo Maori have been typified as a form of cultural imposition, irrelevant to the needs of the majority and the demands of the twentieth century (see R. J. Walker, 1985a; Simon, 1986; Spoonley, 1988; Smith, 1990a). Maori people have also criticised the Taha Maori curriculum initiative as "a Pakeha defined, initiated and controlled policy which serves the interests and needs of Pakeha people" (Smith, 1990b: 183). The Picot Report for example, while it acknowledges the importance of the revitalisation of Maori language and culture to Maori people, also offers an essentially instrumental justification for the inclusion of Maori culture and language in in the curriculum:

It is clear that the revival of the Maori language and culture is seen not as an end in itself, but as the key of lifting the educational performance of Maori children (Department of Education, 1988: 65)

Benton articulates a contrasting approach:

Certainly, there is no evidence that Maori people would wish 'educational performance' to be lowered, but neither is there any compelling evidence that the revival of Maori language and culture is seen by Maori people as having anything directly to do with 'educational performance'. It has been the expectation of many non-Maori educators that educational performance (as measured by non-Maori criteria) will be 'lifted' with the help of Maori language and culture, and there are some indications (e.g. achievement by pupils of Maori secondary boarding schools) that this does happen. However the major motivating force behind the cultural revival has been an assertion of Maoritanga as relevant to Maori people because they are Maori, not because they want to do well in a Pakeha system. Quite a few of the parents interviewed in the evaluation of the bilingual programmes reported on in 1985 had come to regard educational performance in non-Maori terms as somewhat irrelevant (because among other things, of an increasing assumption that their children were

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likely to be unemployed anyway, however well they did at school) and, in some ways because of this they thought that a thorough grounding in Maori language and culture was more important than ever to prepare and fortify them for hard times ahead (Benton, 1988: 4)

Overall, the Royal Commission suggests that Maori students as a group are severely disadvantaged by the state education system, and that support for Maori concerns and initiatives within the system is nominal rather than real (Benton, 1987). It is apparent that the most significant developments for Maori have occurred outside mainstream education, and largely outside the realm of the Department and Ministry of Education. The marae has been an institution for learning, as well as a focal point for Maori community and an integral source of Maori identity since pre-European times. With the migration of Maori to cities over the last 25 years, the establishment of urban marae has been important in ensuring Maori control over at least some aspects of their own education (R. J. Walker: 1985b).

As formal alternatives to the Pakeha-dominated education system, Te Kohanga Reo, and subsequently Kura Kaupapa Maori stand as the most dramatic and potentially far-reaching developments in Maori education. These offer the opportunity for full immersion education which Hollings (1991) emphasises as essential if Maori children are to become truly bilingual. He also underlines the importance of cultural congruence between pupil and teacher. The Kohanga Reo movement was officially launched in 1982 and by 1988, there were over 500 centres with just over 8,000 children attending. Not only did this mean that schools were faced with growing numbers of children coming from a background of Te Kohanga Reo attendance, but that, as a result of their involvement with Kohanga Reo, Maori parental involvement in all aspects of their children's education also increased. In general, however, schools have failed to maintain or further develop the kaupapa of Te Kohanga Reo (Irwin, 1990). This failure provided the impetus for the establishment of Kura Kaupapa Maori schools, the first of which was opened in 1985. Smith states that, with Kaupapa Maori schooling:

Maori people have not only assumed greater freedom from the inhibiting influences of state education = assimilation = colonization; they have set in place powerful alternative structures which endorse the validity and legitimacy of Maori knowledge, language and culture, and which penetrate dominant Pakeha constructions related to the control of education. .... (As such Kura Kaupapa Maori) ... provides the radical potential to transform Maori schooling experience generally - not only for children from Te Kohanga Reo with specific language and cultural needs, but also Maori children in state schooling generally" (Smith, 1990a: 81 - 82).

Maori initiatives outside mainstream education, an awareness that Maori children were being disadvantaged by state schooling, and debate about the place of Maori language and culture in education for both Maori and Pakeha have all been important in highlighting the

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need to consider ways in which the education system might respond more equitably with regard to Maori interests. Language, in particular has been central to equity considerations for Maori. Hollings describes Maori language as "a focal marker for empowerment" (Hollings,1991: 55). As such, Maori claims in education have been instrumental in highlighting the relationship between language and equity. The high political profile given to Maori issues at the time of the LPAC research meant that this was an especially important aspect of the context within which the schools developed their language policies.

3.3   Non-Maori Pacific Island groups

In discussing issues relevant to the education of Pacific Island groups the Royal Commission on Social Policy report highlights the dearth of literature in this area and its limitations (Robinson,1987a: 92). The report suggests that a major problem is that Maori and other Pacific Island groups are often simply grouped together as "Polynesian", and even when research reports and policy documents start out by distinguishing between Maori and other Pacific Island groups, they tend to proceed to discuss issues in so far as they are relevant to Maori. This approach is problematic for both Maori and non-Maori Pacific Island people: It constitutes Maori as simply another ethnic minority group and fails to acknowledge obligations established under the Treaty of Waitangi, and their status as tangata whenua. At the same time it effectively obscures equity claims made by other Pacific Island groups. Where reports focus specifically on non-Maori Pacific Island issues, there is seldom any recognition given to the plurality of cultures which are represented within such a categorisation. Wendt notes for example that: "I am only a Pacific Islander when I arrive in New Zealand - elsewhere I am a Samoan" (Wendt, 1985). However, while there are problems associated with the use of the term "Pacific Island" to cover a diverse range of cultures, it has perhaps given strength to the claims of groups which, as smaller minorities, may not have been heard.

Immigration from Pacific Island countries was encouraged in the post war years, as workers were recruited to fill the relatively undesirable and low paid jobs that had became available during this period of economic growth. However, since the late sixties quotas have successively reduced the number of people from Pacific Island countries entering New Zealand as migrants. The educational opportunities apparently available in New Zealand were important in attracting Pacific Island people. Jones (1991) suggests that it is not surprising that Pacific Island people believe that Western education will provide the key to a "better life". The process of colonisation in the Pacific established a pattern of demands and expectations which equated European education with success, and Western qualifications continue to be regarded as necessary for entry into well-paid and elite employment in Pacific Island nations. Despite, the potential that education might have seemed to offer, this is not apparent in terms

of qualifications, participation in tertiary education, or in the employment destinations of children from Pacific Island families. Pacific Island students tend to move, in disproportionate numbers, into the same subordinate sectors of the labour market that their parents, hoping to provide better opportunities for their children, had entered .

The Royal Commission Report highlights four areas of disadvantage which have specific relevance to language and education.

i)   Relatively few Pacific Island children enter school with any formal educational experience and there is a particular need to develop appropriate pre-school programmes. While Kohanga Reo have had a dramatic effect on Maori involvement in pre-school education, and parental involvement in educational decision-making, the development of Pacific Island language nests has been much more dispersed. Although departmental support for language nests was expressed in 1987, funding per centre was actually set at a lower rate than most other forms of pre-school education, and major support has had to come from outside the Education department (Robinson, 1987a).

ii)   The Report emphasises the need to acknowledge and respond to the specific language resources and approaches to learning of Pacific Island groups which are different to dominant conventions. Jones' (1991) research in an Auckland girls' school suggests that there are different patterns of interaction in classes in which are pupils are either predominantly Pakeha or Pacific Island. Jones does not interpret these differences in classroom practice as being purely teacher imposed, but suggests that they also reflect the girls' cultural beliefs about authority, education and knowledge. However, the interaction results in a pedagogy which ultimately disadvantages Pacific Island children.

The complex interrelationship of class, ethnicity and gender is acknowledged by Jones, and she makes it clear that the socio-economic (class) positioning of Pacific Island communities in New Zealand is bound into their relative underachievement at school. Nash (1991) suggests that it is necessary to consider family-based practices and resources in understanding class and ethnic-based differences in the outcomes of schooling. He cites research by Bardsley which surveys the literacy practices of New Zealand students and their families. The Pacific Island students and their mothers read fewer books than non-Polynesian students, and the working class Pacific Island families owned fewer books than a corresponding group of European (Pakeha) families. Such results would indicate that differences "are not merely a reflection of social class but are associated with ethnicity" (Nash, 1992: 8). He suggests that:

> Pacific Island pupils do have the formal opportunity to succeed but, given the resources of their communities and families, they stand little chance of success in the educational system in competition with better resourced groups (Nash, 1992: 11).

iii)   The Report to the Royal Commission also highlights the relative exclusion of Pacific Island groups from educational decision making at a number of levels. It points to the need for

increased parental involvement on school committees and the need to increase the numbers of Pacific Island people to be recruited and trained as teachers. The report notes that the Pacific Island Education Resource Centre (PIERC) in Auckland, established in 1975, and the Wellington Multicultural Education Resource Centre, established in 1981, have been particularly important in providing information and materials to teachers, and that there has also been a limited increase in discussion of Pacific Island cultures in teacher training.

iv)   Although issues related to bilingualism are discussed more generally within the next section, the situation of the Tokelauan and Niuean languages needs particular attention. A small number of Samoan, Cook Island Maori and Tongan language pre-schools have been established, and there is some teaching of these languages in a limited number of secondary schools. These languages are also maintained as living languages by large populations in the home islands. However, Tokelauan and Niuean groups in New Zealand are smaller and more scattered than these other groups, and, at the same time there is a decreasing storehouse of speakers of these languages in the home islands. While, the report to the Royal Commission (Robinson, 1987a) does not prescribe a position to be taken on this issue, it does highlight the fact that government policy will play an important part in deciding the fate of these languages.

3.4   Issues in ethnic minority education.

There is a considerable literature on ethnic minority education, multiculturalism, bi- and multi- lingualism, and English as a second language (ESL) (see especially Corson, 1990, Chapters 6,7 and 9 for a summary of this literature as it relates to LAC; Cummins, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins, 1988). This section highlights some of the issues raised within these areas as they relate specifically to the New Zealand context.

From the 18th century through to the Second World War immigration to New Zealand was dominated by the arrival of European settlers, particularly those of British heritage. It has been since the post-war years, however, that migration to New Zealand has included significant numbers of people whose first language is not English. Children entering schools fluent in languages other than English have come mainly from the Pacific, Europe and since 1977, from Indo-China (Hawley, 1987).

The concept of multiculturalism emerged during the 70's to replace the integration approach, which had in turn replaced the assimilationist approaches prevalent until the 50's. However, multiculturalism, according to Hawley, has remained "rather vague and controversial" (Hawley,1987, 46).

A particular source of controversy rests on the relationship that is drawn between biculturalism and multiculturalism. Spoonley (1988), for example, suggests that it is the bicultural relationship between Maori and Pakeha that must precede and dominate all issues

in this area, and must be addressed as a necessary first step. Harker (1990) is also critical of the claims of multiculturalism. He argues that although

> New Zealanders have few peers in the world in the rhetoric of multi-culturalism .... we cannot have a multi-cultural educational system in a society which rejects socially, politically and economically the reality of even bi-culturalism in its public institutions (Harker, 1990: 39).

Metge (1990) takes a different line and asserts that biculturalism and multiculturalism do not need to be construed as mutually exclusive. She proposes a model of muticulturalism, which embeds biculturalism at its heart, and gives special place to Maori culture and language in the development of our national institutions and identity. A primary aim of such an approach is, according to Metge, to breach the dominance of a monocultural outlook, and provide the basis for greater recognition of the existence and value of other cultures.

Hawley (1987), suggests that a major problem with the bicultural debate is that it leaves the position of smaller ethnic minorities undefined, particularly in relation to first language support and English teaching. He has been prominent in advocating the need for a National Languages Policy. Work on such a policy was initiated in January 1991 and is due for completion in early 1992. Whilst this document should help clarify issues with regard to the support of children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), at the time of the research in 1988/1989 public policy was not clear with regard to the responsibilities that schools had to provide first language support. English learning was assumed to be the school's responsibility (apart from initial classes provided for refugee children at the Mangere Immigration Centre), and some support for ESL teachers was provided through PIERC in Auckland; the Wellington Multi-cultural Education Resource Centre (MERC); the publication of *New Settlers and Multicultural Education Issues* by the Department of Education, a periodical providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information; and the employment of Advisory staff in some centres. However, the provision of ESL support was largely dependent on the school's own resources, with few schools in receipt of any extra funding for this purpose.

In 1982, the Department published *Language for Learning* by Janet Holmes, the first booklet in a series intended to assist teachers in multicultural classrooms. The booklet outlines some of the features of language and linguistic diversity, comments on the importance of teachers', parents' and pupils' attitudes towards language, and suggests possible objectives for school language programmes. The booklet emphasises the importance of children acquiring a thorough knowledge of English, but suggests that full withdrawal from mainstream classes for ESL instruction is not appropriate. Although Holmes suggests that language programmes should aim to ensure that children maintain their first language, the concept of language maintenance is interpreted very broadly and the booklet does not advocate a particular approach to the ways in which this might be accomplished.

In 1988, the Department of Education published a handbook, which was distributed to all primary schools. As with the 1982 publication, the handbook emphasises the English language development of second language learners, although it states that "a recurring and underlying theme in the book is the recognition and maintenance of these children's first language and cultures" (Department of Education, 1988b: 4). The handbook takes a more proactive stance on first language maintenance, however the extent of the schools responsibility is not specified:

> Although first languages are generally maintained by families and groups within the community, schools have a part to play in first language maintenance. In fact, requests for schools to carry out first language and/or bilingual instruction are frequently made by the community. (Department of Education, 1988b: 13).

The report to the Royal Commission comments on this uneveness in approach, noting that provision of first language support within the education system for non-Pacific Island and Maori groups has been extremely limited. Culturally based pre-school education, and language education outside schools has depended largely on community initiatives without official recognition or funding.

Overall, then the picture of ethnic minority education in New Zealand is one in which there is a lack of a coherent policy or guidelines for schools. ESL provision is uneven, and attitudes towards the inclusion of minority languages either as a medium of instruction, or as 'subjects' within the wider curriculum seem dependant on the insights and attitudes of teachers and communities in individual schools. There appears to be little reference at either state or school level to any common body of theory and research. While the rhetoric of multiculturalism and biculturalism is strong, in practice they appear to have little effect on the outcomes of education, particularly in the case of Maori and Pacific Island groups. In such a situation, LPAC might be expected to offer a theoretically and practically appropriate means of helping schools respond to the equity demands of these groups.

3.5   Gender, language and education

The Education Act of 1877 established equality of access to primary education for girls and boys. Officially, at one level, the intention was to provide a basis from which girls would be given an equal chance in education. However, family practices, official policy and differentiation in the curricula made available to girls and boys at secondary school level, effectively limited girls to a narrow range of occupations and supported the belief that the most appropriate aim of education for girls was to prepare them for domestic life and potential motherhood (Fry, 1988). During the early part of the twentieth century such attitudes towards the education of girls were informed by theories such as eugenics and social Darwinism, which were also used to legitimate racism in educational practice (Ritchie, 1988). Watson

(1988) suggests that access to educational institutions was a result of feminist struggle. However, access in itself was not enough to establish equality.

Postwar policies in education, premised on liberal democratic ideals of equality embodied even more sharply contradictory ideas regarding the aims and ideals of education with regard to girls. The rhetoric of liberalism with its emphasis on education as the gateway to the optimisation of individual abilities, and the freedom to choose according to those abilities, did not match the experience of girls. Women's place was still defined as being ideally 'in the home' but this ideal conflicted directly with the aspirations to participate in further education, the paid work force and public life that liberalism had encouraged. Essentially women were faced with a fundamental contradiction between rationality and sexuality and were expected to make a choice between following a male career or becoming a wife and mother. Middleton (1988b) argues that the experience of such contradictions in attitudes by girls in secondary schools, particularly those in academic streams, gave rise to the second wave of feminism in the 1960's and 1970's. Women had been promised equality but, on leaving school, found that they were excluded from academic discourse, alienated from the culture of the academic and together with their personal experiences of discrimination and oppression these concerns formed the basis of a renewed struggle for social change.

Education has been one of the primary sites of this struggle. At the level of the school this work has focussed on a broad range of issues: equal access to all aspects of the curriculum; equal distribution of educational resources; changing attitudes and practices which reinforce sex-role stereotyping; encouraging girls to enter non-traditional occupations; the use of non-sexist language in classroom materials; changes in curriculum content so that women are not rendered invisible, insignificant or inferior; the use of teaching approaches and classroom processes that do not exclude girls; the relative advantages and disadvantages of single-sex schooling; and equal representation of women in educational hierarchies and decision-making.

Much of the academic and research literature that has informed feminist work in education has drawn on the literature from other Western countries. Watson (1988), for example, suggests that the writer who has had the most influence on New Zealand schools has been Dale Spender. Although there are important similarities in the patriarchal structures, and the education systems in Australia, Britain and the USA, Middleton (1988b), makes a strong case for the need to develop an indigenous sociology of women's education which is bicultural, rather than having to to depend on theories and concepts developed in the Northern Hemisphere, some of which may have limited relevance to the New Zealand context. There are, however, a number of studies which provide evidence of, and information about gender inequalities in New Zealand settings.

Alton-Lee, Densem and Nuthall (1990) report on a number of studies which focus on gender-bias in the content of what children experience in the classroom. Their own research

indicates a consistent gender bias in school science texts and, even in a text that was apparently non-sexist, they found that a systematic analysis of the first chapter revealed that "females were mentioned or depicted in illustrations less than a third as frequently as males" (Alton-Lee et al, 1990: 1). Their research has also indicated that children accept the subordinate status and invisibility of women as both normal and appropriate, and that the teachers are unaware of the bias in materials. They suggest that because the sexism evident in curriculum materials has become accepted as normal, it is necessary to combat it with systematic procedures and training.

These studies confirmed research in other countries that indicated the extent and pervasiveness of gender bias in the curriculum (see for example Whyld, 1983). Similarly, Newton's, 1988 study of classroom interactions in an Auckland primary school (cited by Alton-Lee et al, 1990), confirm studies undertaken in other countries indicating consistent gender bias in teacher-pupil interactions. New Zealand studies have also considered the under-representation of girls in science, mathematics, and technology (Bell, 1988; Department of Education, 1988d; Department of Education, 1989b).

An important aspect of women's studies in New Zealand education has been to acknowledge the influence of both socio-economic status and ethnicity in terms of inequalities between girls at school. The experiences of Maori women in education, and their relative disadvantage in terms of educational qualifications and educational destinations has been important in highlighting the need to consider the social construction of gender, and recognise that the meaning of gender will be different in different ethnic contexts. Much of this work is available in the form of biography and autobiography (Awekotuku, 1988; Pere, 1988). Connell's work in Australia (Connell et al, 1985) has also been important in New Zealand, and has highlighted ways in which families and schools intersect to influence educational experiences and outcomes, particularly in relation to gender.

In assessing the changes over the last twenty years, Watson (1988) suggests that we have accomplished very little overall. Orr (1987) points out that the most significant changes have involved high achieving girls, most commonly from high socio-economic status groups. These girls have increased their years of schooling, their level of school qualifications and tertiary participation, and have then moved into more highly paid, more highly esteemed employment. However, this has done little to challenge the relative disadvantage experienced by the vast majority of girls. In summarising the part that education plays in maintaining gender inequalities, The Royal Commission report suggests that:

> research shows clearly that the New Zealand education system does not offer the
> majority of girls a fair chance to develop their abilities. It is not equipping them to
> contribute effectively to the information-based society into which New Zealand is
> evolving, and hence to look forward to any future in which they can expect to remain

independent of any income or family support provided by the welfare system (Orr, 1987: 11)

3.6   Low socio-economic status and education

Class structure in early colonial society in New Zealand was characterised by its relationship to agricultural production. Economic and political dominance were clearly linked with land ownership and although there was a marked difference between owners and workers, there was also considerable fluidity within the hierarchy for male settlers. This structure, however, from early on "grossly disadvantaged the indigenous population and discounted the contribution of women" (Wilkes, 1990: 73). Socio-economic developments in the early part of the twentieth century, including urbanisation, the increasing role of the state in social and economic life, and changes in farming technology and trade, were accompanied by changes in class structure. The emergence of a distinctive 'new' middle class, to meet the managerial needs of private companies and government bureaucracies, reinforced existing inequalities and patterns of power. Shuker (1987) points to the hegemonic impact that this middle class had on education. The existence of class was acknowledged, but schooling was viewed as potentially offering the passport to white collar and professional occupations, and providing "the route to social mobility" (Shuker, 1987: 55).

The depression had a severe effect on educational funding, but the election of the first Labour Government in 1935 marked the start of a period of major educational reform. Funding lost during the depression was restored, teachers were re-employed, secondary education was expanded and pupils were encouraged to stay at school longer. Wilkes (1990) suggests that it was during the post war period of relative wealth, political stability and high employment that the myth of classlessness arose in New Zealand. The persistence of these beliefs is reflected in the OECD review of education in 1983:

Education has long been seen by New Zealanders as a means of personal betterment. And in a colonial society where social distinctions, though clearly evident, did not, for various reasons, harden into a class-based system of education, the publicly supported education system has been seen increasingly in terms of its contribution to equality of educational opportunity. The only capital that most New Zealanders have access to is the educational capital they can acquire through the education system (OECD, 1983: 126).

The belief that New Zealand was essentially classless has meant that challenges to the myth of equal opportunities in education have tended to focus on disadvantage associated with factors other than class or socio-economic status (SES). There is also a relative lack of political advocacy on behalf of low income groups, especially when compared with the structures of advocacy established by women, Maori and other ethnic minority

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groups. Both educational policy and research in New Zealand have reflected these influences.

In summarising New Zealand based research on the relationship of SES to educational achievement and participation the Royal Commission report states that "the overwhelming weight of evidence concerning SES in education is bleak" (McLean, 1987). McLean states that low SES groups fare poorly at every level of education. This is shown in low participation in pre-school education; high teacher turnover in low SES area primary schools, poorer academic achievement of low SES pupils in both primary and secondary schools; poorer retention rates, and lower qualifications of low SES pupils in secondary schools; lower aspirations regarding qualifications, further education and jobs; poor participation of low SES groups in post-school education at Universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

In 1989, Nash and Harker undertook a survey of 1400 New Zealand families in order to explore the causal processes responsible for the observed differences in educational performance of children with different social class origins (Nash and Harker, 1992). They suggest that certain material and symbolic resources (income, cultural and social capital) are conferred on families as a result of their class position. Families then make strategic use of these resources in establishing their social standing and well being.

Nash and Harker suggest that the most powerful variable in determining educational access is cultural capital, which they define in terms of the "level of involvement a family has with the products of a culture of literacy" (Nash and Harker, 1992: 5). On the basis of their survey, which involved extensive interviews with participants, Nash and Harker make a number of suggestions about the ways in which the practices of literacy adopted in professional families are effectively translated into educational advantage. For example, professional parents are likely to be dissatisfied with their children's reading performance unless it is well above average, whereas "average' is unlikely to be a matter for dissatisfaction in working class homes. Nash and Harker also conclude that "the effective practices of literacy within class categories are not the same for Maori and non-Maori communities" (Nash and harker, 1992: 7). Nash and Harker also suggest that "the effects of social class are cumulative and the educational advantage of children from professional families is not only a product of early childhood (Nash and Harker, 1992: 19). Although Nash and Harker do not suggest changes in educational practice that could be made in helping schools meet the challenge to create greater equity with respect to the education of different social groups, their work does have relevance to understanding the role that language and in particular literacy play in maintaining and reproducing patterns of disadvantage in education.

3.7   Children with special teaching needs

The Royal Commission on Social Policy identifies "the disabled" as one of the seven groups likely to be disadvantaged within the New Zealand education system. This recognition is important, and the report points to a number of ways in which children with disabilities are not "fairly" treated by the education system. However, within discussions of equity in education, this group is often marginalised. Equity issues are most commonly discussed in terms of social class or SES, gender and ethnicity (see for example Shuker, 1987; Secada, 1989; Codd, Harker and Nash, 1990; Middleton, Codd and Jones, 1990; Lauder and Wylie, 1990), and as such this can have the effect of obscuring the political nature of special education and issues of access and discrimination.

Educational services in New Zealand for children with disabilities have evolved in a piecemeal manner often drawing on policies and practices in other countries (Chapman, 1991). It was not until 1987 that the Department of Education developed a single integrated policy with regard to special needs education and prior to 1989 there was no legislative basis for special education. This meant that there was no legal requirement for the state to provide appropriate education for all children, and because of this several hundred children, mostly those with intellectual disabilities were sent to psychiatric hospitals or enrolled in facilities provided by voluntary organisations rather than being catered for through the education system. At the same time the Department of Education was guided by a general principle, partly motivated by economic considerations, of avoiding the segregation of children with disabilities and this meant that fewer specialist educational institutions were established than in other countries (Wylie, 1987).

The 1987 review of special education confirmed the de facto policy of mainstreaming students with special needs, and set special education generally within a 'non-categorical, needs-based' system. Prior to this, categories of disability within the education system, while not legally defined, were used administratively. They included intellectual, physical, and sensory disabilities, speech and behaviour disorders, and social and emotional difficulties. Special educational provisions (ranging from itinerant teacher support for pupils in regular classrooms, through separate classes in regular schools, to separate institutions) were made available to learners in these groups. However, virtually no assistance was made available to students with disabilities that fell outside the parameters defined by these groups (Chapman, 1991). The largest group affected by this approach were children with learning disabilities, who were essentially excluded from special educational provision.

Estimates of the number of children with learning disabilities fall between 7 and 15 percent (Chapman, 1991). Despite these high numbers very few school programmes have been developed and implemented to help these children. Learning disabilities are often associated with reading problems and therefore some children do receive some special

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educational provision through the Reading Recovery Programme (Clay, 1985), though this programme is geared to children with reading difficulties rather than learning disabilities. There are few resources available for children who do not benefit from Reading Recovery either in the short or long term, or for those who have learning difficulties in other areas.

Special provision for children who were formally identified as being disabled and as having distinctive educational needs also suffered from the lack of a coherent policy. The Royal Commission on Social Policy (Wylie, 1987) makes a number of points that are of particular relevance to issues of equity in relation to educational provision for these children:

i)   Low SES groups and Maori are over-represented in groups referred to special classes, special schools and activity centres for disruptive secondary students. Prior to decategorisation Maori and low SES pupils were over-represented in groups identified as emotionally disturbed or mildly retarded.

ii)   Students with disabilities are often encouraged to take 'soft options' which effectively limits future education and career opportunities. This happens in particular to girls with disabilities, who are also expected by both teachers and parents to leave school earlier than other groups.

iii)   Special educational provision for children with disabilities is limited in coverage. Special facilities are only available in certain areas, and teachers with special training tend to work in urban areas. The majority of teachers working with mainstreamed pupils have little or no training that specifically relates to the teaching of children with disabilities. Surveys indicate that teachers are not enthusiastic about mainstreaming and that this is associated with their lack of training.

Despite problems associated with mainstreaming, there is evidence to suggest that integration can benefit students with disabilities (Chapman, 1988). In particular it would appear that gains are made in social skills and language development although academic gains are less apparent (see Wylie, 1987). There are, however certain groups of students who seem to be better catered for in special schools. These include multi-handicapped and autistic children (Wylie, 1987).

In educational provision for mainstreamed students with special teaching needs, it is obvious that language considerations are crucial for children with sensory disabilities and speech disorders. The high incidence of reading problems for children with learning disabilities has also been noted above. Cummins (1984) specifically considers issues relating to language in education for ethnic minority students with special needs. In addition, Chapman (1988) argues that if mainstreaming is not to become 'maindumping' then it is critical that teachers plan individualised programmes for students with special needs, and that activities in class are planned, structured and systematic. He also suggests that cooperative learning structures in particular may work to the benefit of students with special needs. These

issues have implications for a language policy which intends to address equity considerations as they relate to students with special teaching needs.

3.8   Rural education

Historically, New Zealand has placed considerable importance on educational provision in rural areas, and has also taken some pride in the standard of this provision. In 1944, the Minister of Education claimed that:

> one of New Zealand's greatest contributions to the theory and practice of education has been her system of rural education. No country has done more to give the rural child the educational opportunities available in the cities (Shuker, 1987: 264).

This praise has been echoed since then (see Shuker, 1987), and the OECD review of education particularly comments on the high level of commitment in New Zealand to maintaining equity "between widely scattered communities and urban areas", emphasising at the same time the need for "continuous vigilance" in this area (OECD, 1983: 11). Shuker (1987) points out that concern with rural education in New Zealand has its roots in the historical importance of the rural sector. The proportion of the population classified as rural has always been relatively high, and the rural sector has, in the past, been both economically and politically significant, with parliamentary representation that has been successful in making heard the claims of rural constituents.

A feature of rural education in New Zealand has been the continued existence of small rural primary schools. Schools in rural areas can be an important focus of adult community life, and Nash (1983) comments on the advantages to both the community and the school from this mutual involvement, noting in particular the key role played by principals in maintaining this relationship. Archer (1972) suggests that as well as benefiting from closer community links there is greater potential for individual instruction, flexible programming, and independent pursuit of interests, and Nash points out that:

> ... (M)any of the teaching practices now adopted in larger urban schools in order to provide a more suitable learning environment - mixed age and mixed ability teaching - were first shown to be workable in small rural schools (Nash, 1983: 98).

The potential advantages of rural schooling, specifically in relation to language education, are also stressed in a Department of Education booklet for rural principals and staff:

> The family atmosphere of the rural school ... is ideal in creating the spontaneity which leads to growth in language and so to intellectual and personal growth (Department of Education,1975: 30).

However, the booklet also suggests that because of limited opportunities for social contact and lack of access to pre-school education "children in the country are sometimes less able in language when they enter school than one would expect" (Department of

Education,1975: 30). The Royal Commission report echoes this concern, suggesting that rural children may be disadvantaged in their education through "social isolation, the lack of local library services and poor access to a full range of radio and TV programmes" (Robinson, 1987c: 148). Evidence in the report suggests, however, that this disadvantage may not extend to all rural communities. Rather than rurality in itself constituting a problem, it would appear that particular groups, for example low SES groups, Maori and people with disabilities are likely to be those who are disadvantaged in education. However, this disadvantage is not necessarily the same as their comparative disadvantage in urban areas. Distance education services, for example, are seldom targetted at Maori communities. The Royal Commission observes that:

> The needs of the Maori community have tended to be considered as a country-wide totality whereas the situation of rural Maori can be quite different from urban Maori (Robinson, 1987c: 152).

Special education services, as noted in the previous section, tend to be concentrated in urban areas. Access to post-school education may be particularly limited by the compounding effects of rural location, and lack of financial resources. In 1979, the first four REAP's (Rural Education Activities Programme) were set up with the intention of providing supplementary educational resources in rural districts with special needs. It was intended that the REAP's would help in establishing greater co-ordination of educational provision and resourcing across all sectors of the system. However, the success of the REAP's in this area appears limited (Robinson, 1987c). Ramsay (1986) in reviewing the operation of the Westland REAP found that the services offered by the REAP tended to be used by those who were already in possession of above average educational qualifications.

The report also comments in particular, on the effects of economic restructuring including corporatisation, the downturn in farming and on-going population drift into urban areas. At the same time case study material for the current research (McPherson and Corson, 1989) suggests that there may be some movement, particularly of families in low SES groups, away from urban centres because of the relatively cheap cost of housing in rural areas. Overall, there is a comparatively high percentage of rural families in low SES groups, and the Royal Commission suggests that educational policy considerations should take account of this.

These concerns highlight the crucial role that formal education in rural areas may play in providing access to a broader range of language and experience than might otherwise be available, particularly for specific groups. Such concerns would seem to provide an important focus for an LPAC designed for a rural school.

Chapter four
The LPAC research project

4.1   Purpose of the Project

The LPAC Research Project was a one year study involving eight New Zealand schools. The project was supported by a state Department of Education research contract and undertaken by a research team from Massey University consisting of David Corson, who acted as Research Co-ordinator, and myself as Research Officer .

The broad aim of the research was to undertake a series of case studies which would help provide a picture of some of the issues and concerns that New Zealand schools might be facing in terms of developing school-based language policies.

The specific research questions were:

i)   Can the school contexts be described so as to bring out the unique set of educational and linguistic influences that combine to give each school its language problems?

ii)   What process of negotiation and enquiry did each school follow in designing the tentative language policy (e.g. to include such things as: the use of relevant support documentation; the use of outside consultants; the use of theory and course materials; processes of language policy identification; collegial involvement and reaction in the school setting; small-scale research undertaken; planned staff development; deciding priorities etc.)?

iii)   What is the tentative language policy for each school?

iv)   What rationale supports the policy's tenets?

These questions were answered within a set of case studies which were presented in a final report made in 1989 to the Ministry of Education (McPherson and Corson, 1989).

In answering these questions, it was intended that the research would provide useful practical insights into two main areas:

i)   The nature of school-based policy development.

This would include consideration of: the practical steps involved in producing curriculum policy in various school contexts; management and administrative issues involved in policy development; approaches to collaborative decision-making in schools; constraints on policy development; and the relationship between policy development, policy and practice.

ii)   The nature of language across the curriculum.

LAC had received significant support, interest, and comment from a variety of quarters, including practitioners, educational administrators and academics. However, although some introductory ideas regarding putting the ideals of LAC into practice were available (see for example: Barnes et al, 1969; Rosen, 1969; Marland 1977; Maybin 1985; Department of Education, 1988f), there were few recent examples of what such a policy might look like in practice. The research hoped to provide a clearer idea of: the issues that LAC might address; the scope of LAC; the structure and form that a language policy might take; and the relevance of LAC to specific school contexts.

4.2   Participants and procedures

The opportunity to become involved in the project was offered to schools through students enrolled in a Master of Educational Administration course on "Language Policy Across the Curriculum" , taught at Massey University. These students were all working full-time in schools, generally either as principals or senior staff members. Within the funding and time constraints of the project it was not possible to include more than eight schools in the research. In selecting schools to be included in the research it was hoped that the case studies would represent as wide a range of school types and language environments as possible.

Eight schools participated in the project. These included one area school, five primary, and two secondary schools. Two of the primary schools were integrated (formally private, now state funded) Catholic schools. The schools ranged in size and location, from a two-teacher rural primary with a roll of 24, to a suburban secondary with a staff of 67 and a roll of 1110. The ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the schools' populations also varied considerably. (See Table 1).

The Massey LPAC students acted as "contacts" for participant schools and their role was crucial to the research process. Burgess (1985) describes the part played by 'key informants' in his own research. For Burgess, key informants were able to act as guides, assistants, interpreters and providers of historical narrative. In the present study the LPAC course students acted very much as key informants. My first meeting with them took place during an 'On Campus Course' at Massey University prior to visiting participant schools. At this first meeting we were able to discuss possibilities for the research in each setting, and arrange for visits to the schools to be made at times which were appropriate. During visits to the schools these contact people arranged interviews and meetings with other participants in Language Policy development and set up opportunities for in-class observations. They kept records of meetings, provided relevant documents and background

Case no.	Roll range	Roll/staff	Urban/Rural	Ethnic composition	
1	J1 - S4	76 / 4	R	European	97%
				Maori	3%
2	J1 - S4	370 / 19	U	Maori	38%
				Samoan	17%
				European	13%
				Tongan	10%
				Cook Island	5%
				Niuean	5%
				Indian	5%
				South East Asian	4%
				Other	2%
3	J1 - S4 (boys)	400 / 21	U	Samoan	72%
	J1 - F2 (girls)			Maori	10%
				Cook Island	6%
				Tongan	6%
				European	5%
				Other	1%
4	J1 - S4	116 / 5	R	European	84%
				Maori	16%
5	J1 - F2	30/ 2	R	European	83%
				Maori	17%
6	F3 - F7(girls)	850 / 51	U	European	98%
				Other	2%
7	F3 - F7	1110 / 67	U	European	80%
				Maori	10%
				Asian	4%
				Pacific Island	4%
				Other	2%
8	J1 - F7	275 / 18	R	European	91%
				Maori	7%
				Pacific Island	2%

Table 1: Roll range, roll and staff numbers, setting and ethnic composition of participant schools.

information, and provided their own interpretations of the process of policy-development within their schools. These interpretations were invaluable in providing insights that could not otherwise have been obtained within the time-frame of the project. To a large extent the contact people became 'prime interpreters' for the research. However, in each case there were also extensive interviews with others, involved in policy development. These interviews involved different sets of people in each case study, and included other teaching and administrative staff, pupils and parents. These interviews were important in allowing different perspectives to be revealed, and together with my own observations, provided a basis for triangulation.

Following the initial meeting with the contact people, I made a one-day familiarisation visit to each of the participating schools during the second school term. A second two to three day visit was made to each school during the third term, and a third visit was made to one school early in 1989. In the case of the school nearest Massey University it was possible for me to visit more regularly and I attended a series of seven staff meetings which focussed on language policy issues. Between visits I had regular contact with contact people both by mail and telephone.

Draft case studies were made available to teachers and administrative staff at all schools for their comment before inclusion in the report. In three instances I was able to make a final visit to the participant schools so that these comments could be discussed at some length. At the other schools comments and suggestions were made in writing. Finally, all schools were given the option of case studies being included in the report either under the school's real name, or under a pseudonym, so that the school's identity would not be made public.

4.3   The nature of the research

Case study seeks to provide an understanding of a process through representation of what that process means to its participants. Its aim is not to establish objective facts and attempt to find causal explanations for them, although it may well represent participants' own explanations for a certain course of events. Stake (1980), conceives of case study as portrayal, and advocates an approach to research and evaluation which is essentially 'responsive' in that it: responds more to programme activities than intents; responds to audience requirements for information; and responds to and reports the differing value perspectives of participants. The descriptions that arise are "complex, holistic, and involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables" (Stake, 1978).

Parlett and Hamilton's (1972) model of 'illuminative evaluation' suggests that programmes cannot be separated from the learning milieu of which they are part, and that there is a need to take account of the wider context within which a programme functions. Their approach does not define the research strategies to be used, but they suggest observation

and interviews as methods which are likely to be appropriate to an attempt to make sense of the whole situation.

The nature of the case study approach used in the LPAC research was essentially responsive in its nature, and the methodology used in each instance was adjusted to fit the various settings discovered in each school. In a real sense the role of the research was slightly different in each instance, although the broad focus of the research as outlined above remained constant. This was consistent with Walker's (1980), view of case study as being first, committed to studies of individual instances, and second, as being committed to forms of research which start from and remain close to educational practice.

In different schools it was possible for me to attend meetings and discussions, spend time in in-class observation, interview individual teachers, parents and students, gain access to school records and other information, and spend time at informal staff gatherings. It was not possible, nor would it have been desirable to have standardised the procedures used in each situation. Similarly, my role was perceived quite differently in each setting. In some schools, I was asked to participate quite overtly in policy development; in others I was regarded primarily as a 'collector of information'.

The research was also designed to be democratic in its approach (MacDonald, 1976). The methods and purposes of the research were made clear to participants, and their involvement was carefully negotiated. Similarly, the content of the final case studies was open to negotiation by participants. Value pluralism was recognised in the process of the research and a range of interests were represented in the final case studies.

When the research project was initiated it was not intended that I, as researcher, would take an active role in policy development. It was felt that time constraints would severely limit the likelihood of either facilitating or influencing the development of policy in any significant way. Although direct intervention in policy development was not an aim of the research, we recognised that there were certain values and beliefs implicit in the the research which would be apparent to participants. For example:

i)   The very fact that the subject of the research was LPAC carried an explicit message that LAC was regarded as a worthwhile, and desirable policy priority;

ii)   certain attitudes about what constitutes 'good' educational practice followed from i);

iii)   The fact that the processes of policy-making being studied were school-based rather than centrally determined implied a preference for the former;

iv)   The democratic model on which the research was based suggested that collaborative models of policy development were preferable to hierarchical, top-down policy initiatives.

Collaborative processes of policy making based on negotiation and participation were also specifically recommended to the contact people through the LPAC course at Massey. Within the course, policy was presented as "a collaboratively produced set of documents,

responsive as far as possible to the perceptions of the organisation that each individual has, (which) may represent the only hope of offering a satisfactory plan of action" (Corson, 1990).

Processes of reflective deliberation and consultation are central to collaboration and consensual decision-making. Bonser and Grundy (1988), suggest that "if the aspiration to ground curriculum development in deliberation is to be realized, then researchers who have the opportunity to be involved in curriculum deliberations have an obligation to facilitate deliberation without controlling it" (p.37). To a very great extent, the research paradigm, and the course at Massey required contact people to become involved in deliberation, and they, in turn, were encouraged to become facilitators of collective reflection within their own schools. Through their involvement with the course the contact people had access to a wide range of academic literature relating to language, its place in learning, and its use in schools. Material discussing different models of school-based policy development was also made available to them (specifically: Caldwell and Spinks, 1986: Chapter 6; Bonser and Grundy, 1988; and Goodhand,1986). It was also established from the outset that the participants themselves were an intended audience of the final case studies. We hoped that the case studies would provide a useful record of the processes of policy development, which could in turn be used to facilitate further deliberation and development.

The presence of the research project also contributed to the context within which policy development took place. What became increasingly apparent throughout the course of the research was the extent to which its presence was likely to affect the processes which it sought to observe. Walker (1986) recognises this fact and warns that case study research is "an uncontrolled intervention in other people's lives" (Walker: 105). Being observed is almost bound to make teachers more aware of, and sensitive to, certain aspects of their teaching, possibly, as Walker suggests, at the cost of others. Walker also focuses on the power of the interview as "potentially undermining of the facades which individuals and institutions construct in order to make the management of schooling possible" Walker: 105). To some extent, it is almost inevitable that this will happen if the beliefs upon which a research project is founded differ significantly from the commonly held beliefs in the organisation. Research which is democratic in its philosophy and action may challenge structures which are essentially hierarchically organised. A naturalistic case study paradigm works 'as if' its political context is a participatory social democracy (Elliot, 1981). By bringing the value pluralism of participants into the open, non-democratic processes may be highlighted and threatened. Within the LPAC project there were, in a number of the case studies, instances of tension between the democratic principles espoused by the research paradigm and the essentially hierarchical structures of the schools and their communities. These tensions were in most cases recognised by the research participants as problematic and were, in themselves, an important part of the context of policy development. Within the case studies we sought to represent these differing perspectives without privileging any particular stance, including our own.

Although within an interview it is likely that power is vested primarily in the questioner, interviewees may also take the opportunity to rationalise their own standpoint, or as a potential way of conveying their views to others through the researcher, rather than directly. In this sort of research there is a real danger that the whole enterprise will be hijacked by the interests of particular participants, researchers or sponsors. Walker (1986) warns that use of interview data can make too much of the perspective of those who are located at specific points within the system. This was a particular problem faced in the LPAC Project because of the necessarily major role played by contact people. This situation was recognised and discussed with contact people, who were aware of potential problems. In the process of the research an attempt was made to collect as wide a range of views as possible, and to balance interview data with observation. In addition, all participants had the opportunity to comment on the fairness, accuracy and relevance of the case studies (except in the situation in which they had left the school before completion of the draft case studies).

There are as well more obvious, less complex ways in which research can influence processes. In the LPAC research, the existence of the research helped give focus and possibly legitimacy and strength to language curriculum development. In some cases it also probably increased certain teachers' antagonism towards or cynicism about LAC as an academic bandwagon, which has little relevance to real school life. A further danger is that some teachers may feel intimidated by the supposed academic expertise of an outsider. Interviews no matter how sensitively handled are not always empowering. Within the present project almost all teachers and parents involved said that they were very happy to be interviewed and also said that they enjoyed the opportunity to put forward their views, have them listened to, and taken seriously. Participants, particularly those in country areas, said that they often felt cut off from what was happening in the wider educational spectrum. The research not only brought them into contact with outsiders, but made them feel that what was happening in their schools was of importance. For them, participation in the research project was a self-affirming process.

There are dangers that stem from the power of research as an intrusive aspect of the context within which school decision-making occurs. However, it would also seem that this power might also be utilised in ways which can empower participants and support development.

4.4   Emergent Issues

The approaches to policy development and the issues addressed by the policies themselves varied considerably from school to school. However, there were a number of common issues and themes which emerged during the process of the research.

a)   Policy development issues

Participants identified a number of issues which they saw as being particularly relevant to the nature of policy development: These included:

i)   Time constraints

This would appear to be a perennial problem for schools, but is nevertheless, an issue which needs to be considered seriously in evaluating the opportunities for successful and relevant policy development in schools. Some schools appeared to be "meeting saturated", with teachers regularly attending up to four after school meetings per week. In addition to this many teachers organise extra activities during breaks in the school day, and primary teachers, in particular, are often expected to undertake non-teaching duties in these times. It is important to re-emphasise the lack of time available for curriculum development in most schools.

ii)   Participation in policy development

At the time that the research was undertaken it was apparent that there were no formal mechanisms for involving parents, students or communities in curricular decision-making. Only the country schools made any attempt to involve parents in the policy development, and only one school sought input from students. Interestingly in each of these cases wider involvement lead, at least initially, to conflict, with parents and students maintaining more conservative standpoints than teaching staff.

While in smaller schools it was possible to fully involve all staff in development of a school-wide LPAC, this was not a realistic option in larger schools. Within the research it became clear that involvement in the policy development process was crucial to the perceived relevance and usefulness of the completed LPAC, and the likelihood of its implementation.

iii)   Staff relationships

Participants highlighted the influence that both structural and interpersonal relationships between staff had on policy development.

In one school, for example, the Principal, who was contact person for the research, felt that his role as principal had directly conflicted with his role as LPAC co-ordinator. He believed he would have been more effective as supporter, rather than instigator and organiser, of policy development. He felt that if staff perceived policy development as a "top down" initiative then it was likely to heighten any feelings of resentment and worry.that might exist. He pointed out that this was particularly relevant in the case of LAC: because it had direct implications for classroom management and teaching strategies it was likely to be seen as very threatening by some staff. In the process of the research it did, in fact become apparent that his concerns were justified.

In contrast, in another school it was felt by some staff that the lack of support from the principal had made it very difficult to take policy development much beyond the group of staff who were already "converts" anyway. Without administrative commitment it was felt that the draft policy had little chance of moving beyond recommendatory status, and that it was liable to have little widespread influence within the school. Not only was support necessary in terms of the provision of resources and staffing, but it was also important that the policy be seen to have some"clout".

In all schools teachers commented on the crucial role that personality and interpersonal relationships had played in policy development. In one case, interpersonal differences had very nearly sabotaged the whole process, and staff meetings were characterised by resistance and disagreement. In other instances, the success of policy development was attributed, at least in part, to the fact that teachers felt that they got on very well with each other, that they enjoyed working together, and that the person co-ordinating policy development had been sensitive to the contributions, abilities, skills and needs of the staff involved.

iv)   The purpose and place of policy in schools

An initial problem in policy development was uncertainty as to the purpose and nature of 'policy'. In primary schools in New Zealand, 'school schemes' were traditionally documents of some length which made specific recommendations about what should be taught, when it should be taught, and methods and materials that were appropriate to teaching it. In general schemes seemed to be viewed as optional rather than mandatory. Schemes often appeared to be out of date and no longer relevant to practice.

Whole school policies concerning classroom practice were also not standard in secondary schools. In both secondary schools involved in the LPAC research, departmental and subject boundaries were reasonably strong. Some departments had established guidelines which had an impact on methods of teaching and classroom organisation, but whole school policies tended to deal with non-curricular matters such as discipline, standards of dress or uniform, and the setting of homework. Ideas regarding teaching and learning methods were discussed in staff and year group meetings, but the adoption of suggestions that evolved from such discussions was largely left to the discretion of individual teachers. In one school, a major focus of staff attention during the year had been a curriculum review for the third and fourth forms. Although the changes made had implications for classroom practice (e.g. a change in the system of banding, and subject options made available), these alterations were regarded primarily in structural and administrative terms. In both schools, teachers said that they felt that although staff were often asked to contribute to this sort of policy-making, the ultimate decision was often made unilaterally rather than collaboratively.

Finally, in both primary and secondary schools some teachers expressed concern that curricular policy would impinge on their autonomy in the classroom. They felt that they might be

expected to teach in ways in which they felt were not appropriate to their own teaching styles, the nature of the subject that they taught, or the needs of their pupils.

b)   Policy content: the emergence of equity

From the outset of the project participants expressed considerable uncertainty regarding the relevance of LAC, the areas that it should address and its purpose. Prior to their involvement in the project teachers, in general, had not identified the place of language in learning as a priority issue for staff or curriculum development. In the participant primary schools teachers often felt that language was already a central focus of all their teaching, and that work on LPAC was really requiring them to talk about the same thing under a different name. In the secondary schools, language competence was still mainly regarded as primarily the responsibility of the English Department.

In addition to questioning the relevance of LAC, teachers in all schools felt very uncertain about what areas it might address, how it might be structured, and how it might provide guidelines which would be useful and practicable.

A starting point for almost all those involved in the project was to look at the specific language resources and needs of the pupils, and to consider these resources and needs in terms of the expectations and requirements of schooling as a whole. Whilst this focus of attention was not necessarily clearly stated or made explicit, particularly in the early stages of policy development, it remained a central idea throughout the policy development process. The policies that were developed reflect complementary lines of thought:

i)   How can learning be organised so that pupils' language does not become a barrier to learning?; and

ii)   How can learning and teaching be organised so that pupils' language develops in ways which promote more effective engagement in learning and operating both within and outside of school?

It was a concern with these ideas that formed the basis of perhaps the most contentious and problematic area of policy development to emerge during the course of the research: **How can LAC address the language needs of those children, who at present do not seem to be getting the most out of schooling?**

This concern with the ways in which language can either advantage or disadvantage children both in and out of school focussed primarily, although not exclusively, on the needs and rights of specific social groups, particularly those who were felt to be marginalised by traditional educational processes. The groups identified as likely to be disadvantaged in this way matched closely with the groups identified in the Royal Commission on Social Policy Report and included

•   Maori

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- other Pacific Island groups
- other ethnic minority groups
- girls
- rural children
- children with disabilities
- children from low socio-economic status home backgrounds

In addressing the needs of these groups, policy discussion and provision focussed on the following six main areas:

- Maori issues: Te Reo Maori and Taha Maori
- ethnic minority education (including multiculturalism, ESL provision and bi- and multi- lingual education)
- gender and language
- rural education
- home background (class)
- mainstreaming

Thus equity emerged as a central concern across schools. While this focus grew out of broader discussions relating to the purpose of LAC, and the role of language in education, it also reflected the particular political and social context in which the research was undertaken. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three: equity was high on the agenda of political and social debate at the time; policy changes indicated that in the near future all schools would be required to address equity considerations; and the link between equity and language was given added prominence by the need to consider the place of Maori language in education.

Chapter five
The case studies

5.1 Collaborative policy development

There were considerable variations in the approaches taken towards policy development within the eight schools included in the LPAC Research Project (McPherson and Corson, 1989). Staff in all schools had initially committed themselves to a collaborative process of policy development, and this went ahead in six of the eight schools. The case studies of these six schools provide the basis of the current study.

It became apparent during the research that collaborative work on LPAC would not be possible within two schools. There were a variety of internal and external factors that limited opportunities for collaboration within these schools. These included: staffing difficulties due to illness; staffing changes during the year; and prior commitment to other areas of curriculum development, including the requirement to develop a new health syllabus. There were also significant management problems in both schools, and staff were reluctant to embark on LPAC development at the time of the research. The LPAC's in these two schools were written unilaterally, and whilst it was intended that they may contribute to subsequent work on LAC within the schools, they are limited in terms of providing a broader perspective on the ways in which teachers of LPAC's might address equity issues. Therefore, the current study focuses on those six schools in which policy development was collaborative.

Each of the case studies presented below draws on the case studies written for the original research report (McPherson and Corson, 1989). They also include additional data collected during the research and specifically highlight the approaches that were taken towards equity issues in each school. Each study provides a description of the school, its community, and the process of policy development that was followed. In each case, the issues associated with equity considerations are then outlined and discussed.

5.2 School 'A'

School 'A' is a two-teacher rural primary situated approximately 70 kilometres from a main South Island centre. A main road and railway passes through the town, and in its early years it was a staging post for Cobb and Co. coaches to the West Coast, and more recently was the site of a large railway depot.

In 1988, the school was divided into two classes (Juniors and Seniors) for most lessons. However, these groupings were very flexible, children were able to change groups for specific lessons if it seemed appropriate, and children and teachers worked together as a large group for at least some time on most days.

The school was reasonably well accommodated with two classrooms, a good library, ample storage space and an expansive play area. There was very little in the way of sophisticated electrical equipment, but the school committee hoped to buy a video by 1989.

Community

The closure of the railway depot in March, 1987 and the downturn in the rural economy had a very marked effect on the community, its make-up and the school population. Prior to 1987 approximately one third of the school's children were from railway families, 1/3 from farming families and 1/3 from town families (mainly involved in the rural servicing sector). With the closure of the depot almost all the railway families left the area and the school was faced with a sudden drop in roll. Railway houses were left empty but had gradually been resold, particularly to people seeking cheaper accommodation than was available in the city. The social and economic make up of the school population had changed dramatically: of the 23 families with children at the school, six were involved with farming (either as owners or employees); four parents were employed in rural servicing industries; one parent was a taxi-driver. There are three two-parent families in which neither partner was in paid employment and nine solo parent families in which the parent was not in regular paid employment. In the last six months of 1988 the school roll rose from 21 to 30. Twenty-five of the children were Pakeha, and five were Maori. Most of the children of new families to the area since the closure of the railway depot had already been to several schools before coming to School 'A'. Their academic success tended to have been very limited, and a number had histories of erratic attendance at their previous schools. The teachers at School 'A' said that these children were often reluctant to participate in classroom dialogue and they described their playground behaviour as frequently either aggressive or withdrawn.

There was a wide range of language ability and experience within the school. A major concern expressed by both teachers and parents related to the fact that they believed that rural children often missed out on experiences that might well just be taken for granted in an urban setting. The teachers said that this was evident in the language that the children were able to use. For example, in reading a story to a group of younger children, it was discovered that one child had no idea what a merry-go-round was - quite simply he had just never seen or heard of one. Teachers were concerned that this lack of experience was sometimes compounded by home situations in which some children were seldom talked with, or listened to, by adults.

The teachers both commented on the excellent working relationship that they shared with each other, which they felt reflected complementary teaching skills; a willingness to spend a lot of time talking about their teaching (they travelled to and from school together, and the car journeys provided the opportunity for informal "staff meetings" almost every day); and a willingness to look for compromise when their ideas differed. Although they did not live in the town itself, both teachers were from a nearby town, and were well aware of, and sympathetic to, the problems faced by rural families under the current economic circumstances. They had tried

very hard to make the school accessible to all members of the community, and commented on the important role that the school could play in creating links between the more established and newer members of the community. Attendance at parent evenings was generally high, with at least half the families at the school represented at any meeting.

Policy development

The decision to work on a specific policy for LAC was prompted primarily by the principal's involvement as a student in the LPAC course at Massey. The assistant teacher was also involved in an in-service reading course, and a course on Maori language in 1988, and this provided another impetus to work on language. Both teachers had an active interest in language in teaching and an awareness of its importance in learning which pre-dated participation in the LPAC research, and there were a number of LAC initiatives already unofficially in place within the school. However, the school scheme for language was in need of re-vamping, and both teachers indicated that they felt that it was the right time to focus specifically on language, and put their ideas together in a coherent policy.

Initially, work towards an LPAC took the form of informal discussion between the two teachers, with a focus on the specific needs of children at the school, especially given the rapidly changing nature of the community and school population.

The first formal discussion about LPAC took place at a Parents' meeting. Prior to the meeting parents had received a sheet outlining questions that might be relevant to the formation of a Language Policy for the school:

Parents' Meeting, June 15, 1988.

The basic aim of teaching language in a Primary School is:
to develop children's ability to understand and use language effectively. We have to plan to meet this objective. Planning involves -
  • identifying needs and setting objectives;
  • selecting and providing appropriate learning experiences.

The Language Modes include:
speaking, listening, writing, reading, moving, watching, shaping and viewing.

Discussion Topics:
1. When children leave School 'A' what language skills do you expect your children to have?
2. Children from rural areas have different experiences from urban children. Do you think that the school has a role in providing other experiences for your children? If so, what do you see as the school's role?
3. Education is a partnership between parents and schools. What do you see as the parents' role and how can the school help you?
4. There have been changes in presentation and approach to language teaching. What place do you see for second language teaching in the Primary School?

Parents tended to 'avoid' the first question, and suggestions made were very general ("able to read, write, listen"; "fit in at the school they go to next"). The general tenor of the

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discussion was that it was the teachers' responsibility to be aware of the specific skills and abilities which children needed to attain before moving onto the next level of formal education. It was much easier for parents to talk about the language needs of their children within the context of the second question, which highlighted the possibility that rural children may have special, and different needs to children in urban schools. Parents expressed a number of specific concerns that they saw as related to living in a rural community. These centred on difficulties that they foresaw for their children at later stages of education and in the work force. Parents also talked about their relationship with the schools and the ways in which they felt they could be involved. Finally, parents commented on the place they saw for Maori language and culture in the school's curriculum.

Following this meeting with parents, work on the Language Policy continued mainly in the form of informal but regular and intensive discussion between the teachers. In October, a Teacher Only day was used to write the first draft of the Language Policy. The teachers worked together co-operatively, and used the parents' concerns as a starting point for discussion. These ideas were extended by the teachers' perceptions of the general objectives of a language policy designed to fit the community context of the school. Discussion also focussed on ways in which points established in the policy could be implemented in the classroom for specific children. The Principal then 'tightened up' the wording and organisation of the policy drafted at this meeting to produce the final policy statement, which was then agreed to by both teachers.

Equity issues addressed by the policy

i)   Maori language and culture

The final point of discussion at the parents' meeting focussed on the place of Taha Maori and Te Reo Maori in the curriculum. Parents generally felt that learning a second language, whether Maori or another European language, was not appropriate at this level of schooling. They felt that it would "mean nothing" to the children at that time, in that setting, and that the learning of another language was more appropriate as an option at a later stage in life (post-school).

At a meeting held earlier in the year, a group of parents had apparently made it very clear that they felt that there was no place for either Maori culture or language within the curriculum of School 'A'. However, at the meeting held in June there was no overt antagonism towards the teaching of Maori culture within the school and the inclusion of Maori words within that context. However, one of the teachers suggested that the apparent absence of anti-Maori sentiment was in part due to my presence at the meeting, and the presence of two Maori parents who were new to the school.

In phrasing the discussion topic the teachers had deliberately focussed on second language learning in general, rather than Maori language learning. This was done in the hope that the discussion would be less acrimonious and more constructive than the previous meeting. Both teachers said that they felt that there was a real need for the school to incorporate more Maori language and culture within the curriculum, but they were both concerned about how such moves would be greeted by members of the community, and felt that it was extremely important not to antagonise parents. They were also very wary of providing parents with a situation which might be used as a platform for the expression of racial tension.

The LPAC makes only one statement that specifically refers to the place of Maori:

Taha Maori and Te Reo Maori will be a part of the programme. At least half an hour per week will be taken to introduce at least one new word or phrase, and to consider some aspect or legend of Taha Maori. Maori greetings and phrases will be integral to the daily routine.

The introduction to the policy, does however quote from the Draft National Curriculum Statement for NZ Schools (1988):

Language is both something learned and an essential tool for learning. There is a close relationship between the language that students use, their identity, and their culture. Language reflects the way people think, the way they feel about themselves, and the way they relate to others. This view of language has relevance to issues of race and gender.

In interviews the teachers said that they believed that it would take time and patience for parents to be fully persuaded of this point of view. The LPAC was an initial attempt to formalise a commitment to Maori at School 'A', and reflects the teachers belief that avoiding confrontation was the approach that, in the long run, was most likely to be effective in changing community opinion, and gaining community support.

ii)   Rural schooling

During the Parents' Meeting parents made a number of specific points that they believed were related to the children's rural home environment and schooling:

•   Difficulties faced by children when they moved to secondary school were social rather than academic.

•   Children found it difficult to cope in environments in which there was not so much obvious caring, sharing and discipline.

•   Children often found it very difficult to talk in front of people that they did not know well.

•   There were a number of specific areas in which children lacked experience. These included shopping, phoning and dealing with money.

•   It was important that the school did not take things for granted, but actively sought to broaden children's experiences, and their ability to talk about them.

Overall the parents' concerns fell into two broad categories. First, a focus on the need to develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence, and second, a concern that children's

experiences be broadened at school. After the formal part of the meeting was over, parents returned to the issue of self-esteem. This was an aspect of their own education which they felt had been lacking, and was an area that they felt should be central in the planning of a language policy for the school. They felt that it was crucial for their children to have the confidence necessary to be able to participate in meetings such as this one, and the self esteem and language ability that was needed to be able to put forward their own ideas clearly and without hesitation.

When the teachers wrote the policy these concerns were given priority. The first section of the policy deals specifically with *Language and Self Esteem*:

1. *The ability to use language with confidence and pleasure is central to children's self-esteem.*

2. *Children will be encouraged and given opportunities to take part in planning programmes, organising news presentations, and in house activities.*

3. *The use of derogatory remarks, racist and sexist language, name-calling, belittlement and deliberate embarrassment by children to or about one another will be dealt with promptly by the teacher. Teachers will make it clear to children that these are not an acceptable part of classroom discourse.*

4. *Resources, including the teachers' own language, will reflect non-racist and non-sexist attitudes.*

5. *Listening skills will be developed. Teachers should make particular effort to listen attentively, and without unnecessary interruption, to what children are saying. Children will be encouraged to do the same.*

6. *The children will be made aware that their views are valued and respected.*

7. *A supportive and encouraging environment will be created in which the children will feel that they can experiment and take risks with the language that they use.*

8. *The children will be given ample opportunity to use oral language. It is recognised that a strong oral base provides sound foundations for the development skills.*

9. *Teachers will discuss corrections to written work with individual children. Where necessary correction of oral work will be done discreetly.*

The second section of the policy is concerned with extending the range of language that children are able to use (Points 1-4 and Point 6), and broadening the children's experiential base (Point 5):

1. *The school environment should be language rich. Provision should be made for children to have the opportunity to extend and widen their own use of language.*

2. *The reading programme will be eclectic. It will include shared reading, guided reading and independent reading.*

3.   *The children will be given frequent opportunities to express themselves in written language. They will be encouraged to use different language forms to express their feelings - prose, poetry and drama.*

4.   *Children must be provided with an extended range of situations in which they can use and practice language. The opportunity will be provided for all children to express ideas and feelings in verbal and written language for a variety of different purposes.*

5.   *Broadening the experiential horizons of the children will both depend on and result in broadening their language horizons:-*

      • School and Class visits are an integral part of each term's plans. These plans should be made keeping in mind the specific language needs of children.

      • At least two events during each term should involve other groups of children or other groups within the community.

      • Resources that are accessible to the children and that will extend their language through discussion, interviews or projects will be used. These will include people in the community, local and National Library, magazines and video.

      • The outdoor education programme includes opportunities for language development through imaginative writing, through meeting new situations and people from different backgrounds.

      • Children will be made aware of the existence of other languages used in the world. Greetings and other appropriate phrases will be introduced when other countries are studied in the Social Studies programme.

6.   *The ability to use language is critical to the future success of children. Language is an essential tool for learning and is something that has to be learned.*

      • Children will be introduced to and given the opportunity to practice using a variety of styles in both spoken and written work.

      • Children will have opportunities to develop the appropriate use of language in a variety of situations - formal, informal, casual.

      • Children will be encouraged to develop high expectations of themselves and confidence to use language appropriately in all situations.

iii) Social class

Social class was not mentioned at the Parents' Meeting, and the need to increase children's self-confidence, and broaden their language use and experiential base was phrased in terms of the special nature of rural schooling. The teachers, however, felt that these issues were very much related to matters of social class, and the depressed economic circumstances that many members of the community were facing. They felt that the changed nature of the community had had significant implications for the ways in which they approached teaching. They saw the two sections of the policy dealing with 'language and self-esteem' and 'language

and experience' as directly related to class as well as rural issues. It is important to note here that both teachers felt that class was a much more salient feature of children's background in terms of problems that they might have with the expectations and norms of schooling than ethnic background.

At the Parents' Meeting, parents also said that they, and others in the community, often did not feel confident in dealing with teachers and schools in general. They felt that many parents still found schools to be threatening environments. Teachers felt that social class was a significant factor in this. On the other hand they felt that the size of the school and the community had made it possible to forge links with parents in ways which would have been much more difficult in an urban area. Parents at the meeting suggested that the initiative for contact between school and home should come from the school Parents appreciated being kept informed about school programmes and topics, and also wondered if it would be possible if teachers could advise them about the sort of home activities that might be appropriate for children at different ages and stages. The third section of the policy deals with 'parental involvement:

1.   *A parents' meeting will be held at least once a term to discuss programmes and to enable teachers and parents to share their expectations.*

2.   *Parents will be provided with a copy of the terms topics so they can contribute any resources or expertise they may have.*

iii)   Gender issues

Gender issues were not a focus of the policy, although it does state that resources, including the teachers' own language, should reflect non-sexist and non-racist attitudes, and that sexist or racist language use by children is not acceptable. Teachers were aware of gender inequalities within the school, particularly in terms of the children's attitudes towards one another. However, they felt that this was an issue which was generally more appropriately dealt with through other means rather than through the LPAC.

Summary

The agenda for policy development was set firmly in the context of the concerns expressed by parents and these centred around the implications that they believed living in a rural community had for their children's ability to survive and succeed at later stages of education and beyond. Teachers saw these points as directly relevant to issues of social class. The inclusion of Maori language and culture in the curriculum was the object of some contention within the community, and although this was discussed in relation to policy development, it was dealt with very briefly in the policy itself. Issues related to gender received limited discussion and were dealt with only in relation to the use of material or language that was obviously sexist.

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5.3   School 'B'

School 'B' is a four-teacher full primary school (New entrant - Form 2), situated in a rural farming district in the South Island approximately 35 kilometres from the nearest main centre. With the closure of a neighbouring sole-charge school at the beginning of the third term, 1988, the school roll rose from 58 to 76, teaching staff allowance was raised from three to four, and a fourth class was established. This class was being temporarily accommodated in the local hall until a relocateable classroom could be transported onto site.

Classes were divided roughly according to age: New Entrant - J2; Standard 1 - 2; Standard 3 - 4; and Standard 4 - Form 2. Teachers had responsibility for teaching of all subjects in the curriculum with their own classes, although a small number of children (three in 1988) moved to another classroom for reading or mathematics instruction if they were working at a level significantly above or below their chronological age. Five hours per week of extra part-time teaching was available and this was used to withdraw children requiring individual language and reading assistance.

Most of the children at the school went on to the nearest rural high school after completing Form 2 although a minority travelled to the nearest city to attend the Girls' or Boy's High Schools there.

Community

In 1988, of the 37 families represented on the school roll, only five were not farming their own land. This group comprised families whose income was derived principally from farm labouring, truck driving, school teaching, unemployment or domestic purposes benefits, and semi-skilled positions at a nearby freezing works. In the past, farming in the area had been very successful. However, the current downturn in the rural economy was reflected in some changes to traditional patterns of country life. A significant number of mothers (and in some cases both parents) had taken up at least part-time positions in the nearest city, and a number of families who were formally involved in farming support services (farm managers, labourers, shearers, stock agents and so on) had had to move away from the district.

The community from which the school drew its pupils was almost exclusively monocultural. There were, out of the total roll, only two children of Maori descent. No other minority cultures were represented.

Those parents interviewed as part of the research were very positive about the school. In particular, they stressed the importance of the school's close relationship with the community. One parent, for example, said:

.. it's very open here. You're always very welcome to come into class and observe or assist. I feel that they get to know the families better, so they also get to know the children better. Because you have a lot to do with the school sports and everything.. it's

more relaxed (than in town) - you know more people, there are meetings, sports days, pet days......pet days are big things here! (Interview, November, 1988).

Generally, the school was seen as a 'centre' of the community. School functions were held frequently and were well attended. Parents were keen to be involved in school matters and played an active role in their children's education.

Formal pre-school education was limited to a once weekly afternoon session with the area's mobile kindergarten service. Nevertheless, most children entered school with well developed social and literacy skills. Parents commented that:

mostly they've had access to books and been members of libraries. All our children join (the city Library) at age three.

The children are with their fathers (as they go about their work). They have both parents to talk to... and they're in a situation in which there are two parents talking, two parents to listen to.

They can't go to kindie five days a week, so we make more efforts to read stories and things (Interviews, November, 1988).

The teaching staff had been relatively stable over recent years, though there was a change of principal at the beginning of the second term, 1988. Two of the assistant teachers were married to farmers (brothers) in a neighbouring district and the principal's wife was appointed to the fourth teaching position when it became available. The school secretary was a parent of children at the school.

The staff felt that they worked together very well, and that their relationship with the community was good. A number of parents also commented on how quickly the new principal and his family had "fitted" into the community.

Policy development

The contact person for the research in School 'B' was the newly appointed principal. The other teachers at the school had been used to being involved in school decision-making about curricular matters, and central to the policy-making process at School 'B' was a commitment to collaboration between staff and consultation with the school community.

Prior to initiating work on LAC the principal had felt that there was a need for the staff and parents to consider how the school was going to respond to the growing pressure from the Department to acknowledge biculturalism. He felt that the work on an LPAC offered an opportunity to begin to address the issues involved, and that in coming to terms with equity issues that this was the area that was most in need of consideration at the school at that time.

The principal said that he believed that there was a reluctance on the part of both staff and community to address the issues involved. He saw this reluctance on the part of staff as stemming from their lack of confidence in their own competence and knowledge in these areas. This was reflected in interviews with the teachers. One teacher said how uncertain she felt about

her Maori pronunciation, and in class this lack of confidence was covered up by making a joke of the way she said Maori words. The teachers also felt considerable uncertainty regarding the role that they should be taking in teaching Taha Maori and Maori language. They were aware of the range of views held by parents, some of whom they felt were very antagonistic towards the inclusion of either Maori cultural perspectives, or language, in the school curriculum. This point was noted by one of the parents interviewed:

> They're getting virtually nil in Maoritanga at the moment - they're getting more at cubs and scouts! I think it's a very controversial area at the moment, and quite frankly I think the teachers are steering away from it (Interview, November, 1988).

As part of the policy-making process a Home and School Association meeting to discuss LAC had been called. Included on the agenda was a suggestion by the principal that "the need for a Taha Maori component in our policy" be discussed. At that meeting, while there was some support for the inclusion of Taha Maori in the curriculum, all but one parent expressed considerable reservations regarding the teaching of Te Reo Maori. These views were echoed in the interviews conducted with parents as part of the research, and are reflected in the following comments:

> I don't think they need to learn the language. I think Taha Maori, the cultural side is important, but I don't see language as being any use to my children. But I would like them to learn about the Maori culture, and customs and people and learn to respect them, because I think that there's a lack of that here in this area. I'm not so interested in whether they can count to ten in Maori or whatever. In fact I more or less object to it. In fact my husband would pretty quickly pull the kids out of class - he'd seriously think about it. A lot of people would think about it (Interview, November, 1988).

> We're really all one - we should be New Zealanders first, and Maori or Pakeha second. I think we're more prejudiced down here, because a lot of the Maoris are more working class, they haven't made it in the North Island, so that does tend to colour our views (Interview, November, 1988).

Equity issues addressed in the policy

i)   Rural schooling

One area of concern expressed both by teachers and by parents was that rural children have specific language characteristics that should be addressed in a language policy, although this was not identified as an equity issue in itself either by parents or staff. Both staff and parents commented on the 'extra' effort that parents often made to ensure that the children were not disadvantaged by their rural upbringing:

> Maybe our children miss out on town experiences; we try to overcome that by carting them everywhere. We're aware of this and we try to compensate. We put our children in

the car and take them to town for swimming lessons. And we take them to cubs and scouts and brownies, music lessons, elocution lessons (when there was a teacher living locally). ... It's a strong ballet area - so lots of little girls go to ballet. And we form car pools, so it's really quite fun because we can travel as a group....85%, 90%, maybe even higher, parents do this (Interview, November, 1988).

Teachers and parents felt that children's home backgrounds and experiences fitted them well for school learning and success, and that, in particular, most children's literacy skills were of a high standard. However they were concerned that children's oral and listening skills were limited. One parent, for example said:

I think confidence is a big thing in the country. To say what they think and organise their thoughts logically, and express themselves especially in front of a class. I think that's a big thing in the country. A lot of them won't get up and say what they want to say for fear of ridicule by their friends. So it's a two way thing. You've got to teach the children not to ridicule somebody or make fun of them.Teachers also felt that the children's work often lacked imaginative and/or expressive qualities (Interview, November, 1988).

Teachers said that they felt that the children's written work tended to lack imagination, and that while the children could deal with "facts" they weren't confident about expressing feelings or writing creatively. They saw this as an area that was more likely to be a problem for rural children than city children.

In line with concerns that parents and teachers felt were related to their rural environment the policy makes the following points:

2. *Oral Language*

   Our children tend to have difficulty expressing themselves orally, in a logical sequence.

2.1 *As a general strategy, when faced with a child having such difficulties, we will help the child to "stop, think, and then tell".*

2.2 *We will, each term, plan to include some of the following suggestions as class activities:*
   * *ordering pictures, telling the story orally, and then discussing the order*
   * *making a flow-diagram to show "what you would do if ...?"*
   * *telling the plan orally, then discussing the order.*

3. *Written Language*

   We have noticed that our children's work lacks imaginative and/or expressive qualities.

3.1 *We will include in our planning for each term, some of the following co-operative group activities, to allow children to learn from each other:*
   * *co-operative story writing in pairs*
   * *co-operative story writing in small groups*
   * *co-operative story writing as a whole class activity*
   * *activities using the 'cloze' technique.*

3.2   In forming the groups we will allow opportunities for both child choice and teacher direction, to pair particular children on occasion.

4.   **_Listening Skills_**

We are concerned that children may currently be discouraged from expressing themselves because of fear of ridicule.

4.1   As a matter of urgency, we will allocate some whole school assembly and 'buddy time' to role play situations, helping children to practice supportive listening skills. Suitable activities are suggested in the 'Self Esteem' and 'Making Friends' health units.

4.2   We, as teachers, will provide an excellent model ourselves by avoiding the use of ridicule in our classrooms.

4.3   When faced with an example of ridicule in our classroom our main aim will be to minimise further embarrassment. However, we will attempt to refer the children back to our role play sessions asking, for example, "how do think ... felt?" or "what would have been a better thing to say?"

Summary

The final policy that was adopted by the school did not in the end address biculturalism, nor the place of Te Reo Maori, or Taha Maori, in the curriculum. To some extent the principal felt that the issue had become "too hot to handle", and that pushing the issues at that time was likely to be too divisive to warrant any gains that might have been made. The principal was aware, and the other teachers acknowledged, that they were likely to be forced, by requirements set at a national level, into facing the issues in the future.

Issues relating to the special nature of rural schooling were seen as important to the school's LPAC, and a focus on these concerns was reflected in the policy that was developed. Other social justice issues were not considered by staff as being relevant to their school's LPAC, because the cultural and SES mix of the schools was so predominantly Pakeha and middle class. Gender differences in language needs or abilities were not felt by staff to be significant.

5.4   School 'C'

School 'C' is a large contributing primary school situated in Auckland. In 1988, the school had a roll which varied between 360 and 410, and a teaching staff of 19. Classes were broadly organised in straight year groups: New Entrants through to Standard Four, with parallel classes at each level.

The school was set in relatively spacious grounds and was bordered on three sides by walled industrial areas (which was, according to the Principal, significant in preventing vandalism). The school's main block (seven rooms) was built about 1980, the standards block (four rooms) was over 60 years old, and the remainder of the rooms were 'modern' relocateables. The main

block had been designed as an 'open-plan' teaching space. Although two of the seven rooms can be partitioned off with sliding doors, the others were divided only by moveable screens and shelving units. The noise level in this space built up very quickly, and teachers were repeatedly having to ask their children to be quieter. Every member of staff that worked in this area spoke about the stress associated with working in conditions in which they were under a constant pressure of noise and numbers. They felt that they were limited in the activities that they could do with classes because they were anxious not to disturb other teachers and children too much. They were also concerned about the stress that was placed on children:

> It's tremendously stressful on teachers. Just never to have a time when you can have the children just quietly doing something without all this extraneous noise - just bang, bang, banging all the time. It's not any particular child, or any particular area. It's not just these children. They find it stressful. I think they raise their voices to get up above it, and this in turn is a sort of cycle and everybody gets louder and louder and louder. And they want to make themselves heard, and this is stress for them. And people can't listen (Interview, November, 1988).

Teaching resources were generally poor, and there was an obvious need for updating and renewal of materials. However, funding was inadequate and there was a limit to the amount that could be raised in the local community. The Principal identified five areas of particular need:

- instructional reading materials at all levels;
- 'big books' for shared reading at all levels;
- resources to support multicultural programmes;
- the inclusion of multicultural materials in the school library; and
- improved organisation of storage and the development of simple issue and retrieval systems.

Community

Features of the community which the school serves included its multiethnicity (see Table 2), cultural and linguistic diversity, the high percentage of children for whom English was a second language, the transience of its population, and the low socio-economic status of the majority of its members.

The school population reflected a changing pattern of enrolment, with decreasing numbers of children of European descent, and an increasing percentage of Pacific Island children. This had resulted in a growing percentage of children entering the school who spoke English as a second language (46% in 1988). One teacher conducted an informal survey of languages spoken in his classroom and found that between them they could speak ten languages fluently. One child spoke four languages other than English.

Ethnic Origin	1.7.86	10.3.88
Maori	41%	37.6%
Samoan	15%	16.8%
European	17%	13.0%
Tongan	7%	10.3%
Cook Island	6%	7.0%
Niuean	3%	4.9%
Indian	2%	3.2%
Fijian Indian	-	1.9%
Chinese, Cambodian, } Laotian,Kampuchean, Thai }	6%	4.8%
West Indian	1%	0.5%

Table 2: Ethnic composition of School 'C' (March, 1988).

Not only were children coming to the school with different languages, but also with widely diverging language experiences. Many children had very little exposure to literacy-based stimuli outside school, and their language experiences were described by one teacher as tending to be dominated by "peer group, television, home videos and the 'spacies' (Video Parlours)".

The population of the area tended to be very transient. This was due to a range of factors: the preponderance of rental accommodation; high rates of unemployment, and temporary rather than permanent employment opportunities; and the presence of minority ethnic communities, which attracted new migrants and relatives to the area so that accommodation could be shared while the newcomers found more permanent situations. The school's enrollment statistics reflected this dramatically: of 369 enrollments in 1988, there was a net gain of only 80 pupils. Many of the children who came to the school had already attended a number of different schools, and had missed the benefits of learning within a secure, stable and consistent environment. Teachers said that some of these children had not had the chance to develop many important social and academic skills, and were in need of considerable extra attention to help them "catch up". However, this was made especially difficult because the transience of the population meant that class membership was constantly changing and this in itself created considerable extra pressure on teachers and made long-term planning almost impossible. The Principal commented:

This factor cannot be over-emphasised. It is a dominant and over-riding consideration and influences in some way almost all educational decision-making within the school (Personal communication, 1989).

Teachers said that levels of health care tended to be low. This was due to a range of socio-economic factors: some families were simply unable to afford doctors' fees; lack of sleep and the prevalence of head lice and scabies were a direct result of overcrowded and sometimes substandard accommodation; and poor nutrition was due to inadequate incomes, lack of

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budgeting skills and insufficient knowledge about diet and health issues. In a survey of teachers' concerns conducted by the Principal in 1988, one teacher wrote:

I find it heartbreaking to teach children with open, infected sores, and to be unable to do anything about treating them. Other health problems are less obvious (sore ears, undernourishment, untreated eczema, etc. etc.), but just as debilitating.

The school also had a higher than average number of children identified as having severe emotional problems and/or severe social interaction difficulties. In 1987, there were 26 referrals to the psychological service, a further 10 to the Guidance Unit, 10 were involved with the Department of Social Welfare, 24 were referred to the visiting teacher for problems associated with attendance, and 20 were involved with the Youth Aid section of the police.

In a survey conducted at the end of 1988, teachers were asked to identify children with special needs which negatively affected their learning ability. A total of 76 children (approximately 20%) were recorded as suffering from: severe emotional / interaction difficulties; physical / sexual abuse (teachers only included confirmed cases, which they felt probably represented only the "tip of the iceberg"); physical neglect; chronic asthma / bronchitis etc.; severe hearing / visual impairment; and / or major speech difficulties. 75 children were felt to be in need of ESL support, and a total of 144 children (approximately 38%) were in need of Reading Language Support.

Teachers commented on the low self-esteem of many of the children. This was reflected in their lack of social and academic confidence, and the low value that they place on their own work. A new teacher to the school in the third term, 1988, found that by the end of her first art and craft lesson only 7 of her 35 children had produced a piece of work. The remaining work had been either openly destroyed or mysteriously mislaid during the lesson. This class had not had a permanent teacher during the preceding term so this situation possibly represents an extreme, however, the teacher concerned felt that it clearly illustrated the children's lack of confidence and pride in their own work.

Although there was a small group of very supportive parents at the school, parental and community participation in school activities tended to be low. The Principal said that he believed that the majority of parents were reluctant to be involved in school activities, and that this was often due to parents lack of English skills, and the school's lack of staff with skills in languages other than English. He pointed to the need for a coherent and well-thought out programme aimed at involving parents.

In interviews and conversations with staff the importance of the supportive atmosphere among staff and strong leadership was re-emphasised. Teachers felt that these factors were crucial to the relatively low rate of staff turnover that existed in the school despite the very difficult working conditions that they faced. As part of a survey of the teachers' "Smiles, gripes and changes" conducted by the principal early in 1988, teachers were asked to write one positive comment about working at School 'C'. Thirteen of the 23 replies focussed on the "excellent /

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supportive / caring / co-operative / cheerful / friendly / great" staff and the "happy" environment of the school Four of the other replies focussed on the children ("relaxed", "cheerful and responsive" and "variety of cultures"); four on the principal ("on the ball and up with the play", "approachable" and "positive and supportive"; one on the central location of the school; and one on the parents ("positive").

Departmental recognition of the special needs of School 'C' had been very limited. The school did not have the advantage of a notional roll, which would allow for provision of extra staffing in recognition of the school's special nature and needs, nor was it included in the Pool Relief Scheme. It had received a 2.5 teacher allowance under 1:20 staffing provisions, 0.4 discretionary assistance for ESL support, and 0.25 support for reading programmes (1/4 of a teacher shared between 4 schools).

One teacher at the school was Maori and one, Samoan. All other members of staff were Pakeha. The Principal felt that there was an "urgent need for a more culturally diverse staff". He saw a need to actively seek out staff who had

> not only a commitment to the development and implementation of multicultural programmes, but are desirably bicultural and bilingual themselves (Interview, 1989).

Policy development

The contact person for the research in School 'C' was the newly appointed principal. Prior to his involvement in the project, he had identified "multicultural" issues as those which were most in need of attention within the school. He felt that the most constructive way to address these issues would be to focus on the language needs of children in the school, and to explore ways in which bilingual opportunities could be created for the children. He saw developing an LPAC as a key way in which to address equity issues within the school.

Areas for curriculum development during 1988 had been set prior to the Principal's appointment to the school. The school had been designated by the Department of Education to work on the new Health Syllabus, and together with work in this area, senior staff had chosen to focus on spelling and handwriting. Given the ethnic composition of the school and the language needs of the children, the principal felt that spelling and handwriting were not priority areas for curriculum development work. He felt that the choice of two relatively non-contentious areas reflected teachers' uncertainty about their own competence and knowledge, and their awareness that both within the staff and the community as a whole, there were a range of often conflicting attitudes regarding "multicultural" education in general, and bilingual education in particular. Thus, although many of the teachers were aware of the need to address these issues, they had deliberately avoided confronting them at that time.

Rather than pushing staff into work on language and equity issues the Principal felt that it was important that teachers themselves were able to openly identify these issues as priority areas. During the year, there was in fact a significant shift in the staff's willingness to look at ways

in which the school might respond to the language needs and skills of the children. In interviews in November, 1988, both deputy principals at the school spoke of the need to work on better ESL provision within the school, and they both felt that the school needed to consider ways in which children's mother tongue language skills could be used to enhance their learning in the English-speaking classroom environment. A number of other staff also made it apparent that they felt that it was important that these issues be addressed. On the final visit made to the school, a discussion including almost all staff was initiated (by staff members) during the 'social hour' after school on Friday afternoon. Staff expressed concerns about the ways in which they were limited in providing help for children whose home language was not English, and spoke about both successful and not so successful strategies that they had used in classrooms. They also discussed their attitudes towards the provision of bilingual education, both in Maori and other Pacific Island languages. Although the Principal felt that staff were keen to work together on a policy which would address these issues it became obvious towards the end of the second term that this would not be possible during 1988:

> In view of the pressures that exist within the school, I decided that I wasn't able to ask the staff to do more, over and above what they already had (done). ...... I think it's been a good experience: the machinery for making policy has been established, and it was established in areas which were relatively easy to manage. Language Policy will be a much more complex issue.... In general teachers have liked it (being involved in policy development) in that they feel that they are involved and are given an opportunity to have some input. I do suspect that one or two of them feel that it's a lot of work. And it is. Some of them are finding that they are spending more time in meetings. There have been comments about "the paper war". Unfortunately meetings and paperwork tend to be one of the things you have to deal with if you're going to be involved in collaborative and consultative policy makin (Interview, November, 1988).

There was however a commitment to work on a collaboratively produced language policy during 1989. In order to facilitate this the Principal wrote a draft LPAC which was essentially an administrative document outlining the necessary organisational structures and providing working guidelines for on "language and multicultural education" during the following year.

Equity issues addressed in the policy

i)   Maori language and culture

Although bi- and multi- culturalism are addressed together in the policy, there is an important difference in the focus of the policy with regard to language. Whereas the policy commits the school to supporting the *revival* of Maori language, it suggests that the *maintenance* of other home languages should be its goal. The wording implies that while teachers should be prepared to encourage children to use home languages other than English in class, there was

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some expectation that Maori language would be actively taught as part of the curriculum. Some teachers felt that this was unrealistic, and that given the problems that many children had "coping with learning English", the introduction of another language was not appropriate. The Principal was very aware of the contention that surrounded this and other issues related to the weight given to Maori language and culture with respect to not only the dominant language and culture, but also in relation to the place of other minority languages and cultures. The policy reflects the Principal's position on this issue, it does not foreclose on further discussion, and sets the ground for further debate.

ii)   Multicultural and bilingual education

The Language Policy for School 'C' acknowledges the essential role that language plays in every aspect of the school's programme, and refers in its introduction to a statement made in the Curriculum Review:

"Language is both something to be learned and a fundamental tool for learning" (Curriculum Review, 1987, 2).

In addition the policy reflects *"a corporate commitment to multiculturalism"* (Paragraph 1.2) and makes clear from its outset that language and culture cannot be dealt with as separate issues:

Language ... involves much more than communicative competence and the development of skills which facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and enhance cognition:

It has a key role in the maintenance and revival of the traditional culture of an ethnic group and is a salient feature of ethnic identity. Language is fundamental to a group's culture. It embodies traditions, the practices and ideology of the cultural past and present. Language is more than just a medium - it is an instrument or symbol of unity, and something which is usually common to group members (Kerslake and Kerslake, 1988:144).

This statement reflects the Principal's belief that ultimately, if the needs of minority culture children were to be fully and adequately met, then the school would need to institute bilingual programmes. Later the policy states that:

Scheme development in multicultural education will be guided by a commitment to supporting the revival of the Maori language and to the importance of assisting pupils from other ethnic minority groups to maintain their mother tongues (Para. 3.1.2).

The Principal recognised that in the short, and possibly even the medium terms "mother-tongue schooling" at School B was "a Utopian concept". Although there would be considerable practical difficulties in setting up bilingual or mother-tongue units within the school, there were also significant reservations on the parts of both community and staff about such developments. Parents of children at the school had differing expectations of what role the school should play in maintaining community languages. Some members of the Maori community had indicated that they would like to see Maori language taught at the school and used as a medium of instruction, but, as one teacher pointed out "others are definitely not in favour of this at the expense of basic

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(English) skills". Pacific Island parents in particular tended to see the school's prime responsibility as being the teaching of English, and the communities themselves as being responsible for the maintenance and teaching of their own languages. Similarly, there were concerns amongst staff that bilingual or mother-tongue units would prove to be divisive, for both staff and pupils; that competence in another language would be attained only at the expense of competence in English; and that competence in community languages would in any case be unlikely to be useful in "the real world".

Despite these reservations, staff in general supported the idea that children should be encouraged to use their own languages in their learning. Most staff interviewed saw the ultimate aim as proficiency in English, but believed that supporting children's use of their own languages might be useful in helping their learning and understanding. Encouraging children to use their own languages was also seen as an important source of self-confidence, and self-esteem.

In order to facilitate the development of bilingual opportunities within the present structure the policy makes specific suggestions regarding staffing and community involvement also:

> *Advertisements for all teaching vacancies will require applicants to have an interest and ability in assisting with the development and implementation of multicultural programmes and indicate the desirability of fluency in Maori or any one of the Pacific Islands languages (Para 3.1.2).*
>
> *Every effort will be made to tap the pool of linguistic expertise available within the community and to involve willing volunteers in multicultural programmes (Para. 2.7.4).*

The policy also states that class organisation would be based on composite vertical groupings rather than age groupings. This would create more opportunities to establish formal and informal support groups within classes, which would include the opportunity for older children to help younger children in their home language.

The commitment to the joint issues of language and multicultural education was also reflected in the setting up of a curriculum team. The team was to have responsibility for:

i) *general oversight of language and multicultural education programmes.*

ii) *promoting language and education issues within the school.*

iii) *initiating and co-ordinating the implementation of the policies outlined in this document and recommending additions, deletions and amendments where necessary (Para 2.3.2).*

In addition, the team was also to be specifically responsible for:

- planning and implementing the teacher development programme in 1989;
- evaluation, organisation and acquisition of resources;
- the promotion and organisation of community participation and involvement; and
- the development of school schemes in Multicultural Education and Oral Language.

These responsibilities ensured that language and multicultural education would be accorded top priority in the coming year. At the time that the policy was written the precise nature of the demands that Tomorrow's Schools would make were still unclear, but it was felt by the Principal that the policy was likely to be able to "fitted in" to the framework of community consultation and school organisation that would be required within the coming reorganisation of schooling.

ii) ESL provision

Within the school, there was general concern that ESL provision was not satisfactory. There was very little extra Departmental support given the high percentage of children whose first language was not English. It was recognised and agreed by staff that in effect every teacher within the school needed to be an ESL teacher, and it was agreed that where available ESL support would be provided in class rather than through withdrawal of children for small group work. However, for children with specific reading difficulties a withdrawal system would still operate. Staff development was also considered crucial to continued progress in this area.

2.2.2 *Discretionary part-time staffing granted by the Department of Education for 'special needs' will be utilised as follows:*

i) *provision of support for second language learners within their home classroom (10 hours per week).*

ii) *individual and small group instruction in reading on a withdrawal basis (10 hours per week).*

NOTE: This support will be available to Team 4 (S2-4) only. In Teams 1-3 support for these programmes will be provided by 1:20 staffing.

2.2.3 *Where necessary, and appropriate, provision will be made for the release of teachers with expertise in Maori and/or Pacific Islands' culture to enable them to develop programmes in these areas.*

2.2.4 *Responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of special needs programmes will be delegated to Syndicate Leaders (i.e. D.P. and A.P.).*

In recognising that all teachers in the school needed to be, in effect, ESL teachers, staff had discussed the need to focus more effectively on children's oral language.

3.2 *Oral Language*

3.2.1 *The School Scheme in Oral Language will be revised during 1989.*

3.2.2 *Scheme revision will be guided by the following principles:*

i) *an acceptance of the principle that oral language occurs across the curriculum and that it is both something learned and a fundamental tool for learning.*

ii) *a recognition of the primacy of oral language and its role in providing a base for both reading and writing.*

iii)   *a recognition of the importance of oral language in the development of*
            self-esteem and its role in cultural transmission.

iv)   *a recognition of the need to develop and promote pedagogical*
            strategies supportive of minority language speakers in the classroom.

3.2.3   *The LAME (Language and Multicultural Education) team will be responsible for*
            revising the School Scheme in Oral Language.

Summary

Concerns related to the education of children from ethnic minority groups are the whole focus of this school's LPAC. Within the school there was some disagreement and confusion voiced regarding the differences between, and the weighting that should be given to, bicultural and multicultural initiatives. Some teachers said that, ideally, priority should be given to establishing biculturalism and bilingualism in Maori and English before working on policy addressing the specific interests of other cultural groups. Given the population of the school, however, and the demands that teachers faced everyday in the classroom, the overall feeling amongst staff was that biculturalism and multiculturalism had much in common and would be best addressed together.

5.5   School 'D'

School 'D' is a Catholic Integrated School, catering for 116 children from New Entrant to Form 2. The school is situated in a small provincial town surrounded by a relatively affluent farming area, approximately 50 kilometres from the nearest main centre.

The school was opened in 1915, and was in a state of considerable disrepair by the beginning of 1988. Re-building scheduled to begin in 1990 was brought forward to 1988, following an Inspector's visit early in the year during which he put his foot through a hole in the floorboards as he entered the building. The school moved to its new building in November, 1988 and was officially opened at the beginning of the 1989 school year. Resources and other facilities were also in a very poor state. The school's library was very poorly stocked, sports equipment was minimal, storage space in the old school was virtually non-existent and teaching resources and materials were sparse.

In 1988, there were 18 Maori students on the school roll (16%). The Principal described the school as being "relatively sheltered from society in terms of cultural, social and intellectual 'mix'. We have few Maori or 'foreign' students. We have few mainstreamed students".

Community

Despite its physical state, both Catholic and non-Catholic parents were keen to enrol their children at the school. The school had a well-established reputation for high standards of

discipline, academic achievement, and an emphasis on traditional values. The out-going Principal's theme for a parent attended Senior Assembly at the end of 1987 was " Back to Basics - A Positive Move", and parents tended to support this attitude. The current principal described parents as generally regarding "poetry, mime, drama and to some extent oral language ... as 'frill' subjects that detract and interrupt the flow of knowledge from the teacher to the pupils". Many parents had supported the school's strict handling of the children, and they had endorsed the school's traditional emphasis on politeness, neatness, accuracy and obedience. One of the teachers at the school described her perception of the situation:

> this was a very formal school, where courtesy in speech and language was expected, but risk-taking wasn't. And I think children were hammered if they spoke grammatically incorrectly, or they swore, little things like that. And it wasn't a supportive, warm, friendly, risk-taking atmosphere ... but you get comments from parents. I've had one or two saying that they hope that the formality of the school will remain. You know little things, like when a teacher walked into the room, the children had to stand bolt upright, but I wouldn't like to throw all the courtesies out of the window. I think that the school has actually become more caring, but I'm mindful of that (parental expectations) right through the day (Interview, August, 1988).

The school community was close-knit. Many families knew each other through their involvement in the church, and the priest was seen as a central figure in the life of the school. Religion was a focus for the school: every classroom had an altar, statues and a crucifix, and prayer was a significant part of the school day for both staff and students. Similarly, the school and its teachers were regarded as an important part of the wider church community itself.

There were five full-time teachers at the school. A number of changes in staffing occurred during 1988. Both the Principal and Deputy Principal were appointed at the beginning of 1988. One of the teachers in the Junior area of the school left at the end of the second term, and was replaced by a relieving teacher who later won a permanent appointment at the school. The new Deputy Principal moved to another school at the beginning of 1989.

The new Principal instituted a number of changes during 1988, and these received mixed reactions from staff, parents and the wider Catholic community. These changes included:

- attempting to 'open' up the school so that there was the opportunity for teachers to move towards using more innovative teaching methods;
- changing the school environment so that children were encouraged to take risks and ask questions rather than merely 'behave well' through fear of punishment;
- involving teachers in school decision making; and
- updating school curriculum, schemes, methods of evaluation and resources.

Although all staff agreed that there was a very real need for considerable change at the school, and to a large degree were supportive of the sorts of changes that the Principal suggested, there were damaging personality conflicts between staff. At times these conflicts

made progress difficult, and unfortunately did little to reassure parents that changing patterns of teaching and learning would be beneficial to their children.

Teachers said that they felt that the very formal approach to education that had dominated teaching methods at the school had constrained the way that children were able to use language at school. Rather than using talk to explore and clarify ideas, speech in the classroom had been used to assess pronunciation and enunciation. Written work had been scrupulously marked, with every error corrected. Although there had been many changes during the year, teachers said that children were still often very hesitant about participating in classroom talk, and lacked confidence in written expression.

Policy development

Prior to 1988, teachers said that they had not participated collaboratively in curriculum development, except on a very informal level. The school schemes had not been updated for some years (one teacher said that they had actually been adopted wholesale from another local school 15 years earlier) The following excerpt on "Discussion" from the scheme's section on 'Language in the Primary School' serves as an example:

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2.   **Discussion:**

Because the language programme is part of the whole curriculum, the medium in which teachers and children think and work, there are numerous opportunities for discussion throughout the day, eg.,
> What does the associative law of addition mean?
> How can you show perspective in a street scene?
> When will the solution become crystallized?
> Why did the author make the eagle speak?
> Why didn't the Maoris wear warmer clothes?

Take discussion after a reading unit, eg.,
> Std. 3:   Kathy's Birthday Present. Journal 3. 1968.
> Discussion: Animals known to be kind to their young.
>   Use of N.Z.B.C. for help. When? What? Why?
> Std.4: Cub Reporter. Journal 3, 1970.
> Discussion: Is it a healthy thing to have ambition?
>   Talk about Leonard Cheshire, Kiri Te Kanawa, etc.

Other instances will occur in the daily topics, experiences and activities that take place throughout the curriculum studies.

During the first term of 1988, staff had worked together on Physical Education and Science with the Deputy Principal as co-ordinator of work in these areas. In the second term, the Principal asked staff to work with him on LPAC. Staff were aware that this area had been selected partly because of the Principal's Massey studies, but they also felt that it was a high priority area that was very definitely in need of attention.

Staff worked on LAC through a series of eight discussions held in the weekly staff meeting slot. As indicated above, interpersonal differences and changes in staffing tended to

make collaborative work on policy development quite difficult at times. Meetings were often marked by disagreements which were associated with other problems rather than the issues under discussion. Despite this, much of the work done on LPAC was very constructive. During the first meeting staff talked very generally about language issues, and points or areas that they felt were important. They spent a considerable amount of time deciding which concerns they would focus on. The areas that they felt were most relevant to the needs of their pupils were:

- oral language
- written language
- reading
- evaluation and school records
- multiculturalism
- religion and language
- policy implementation and evaluation

They then discussed in fairly general terms how a Policy might address these issues, and worked out a broad outline that they might be able to follow.

During the meetings that followed staff discussed each of the areas listed above in greater detail. An outside speaker was invited to one of these meetings and worked with staff on the place of oral language in learning. Following each of these meetings the principal wrote up a summary of the main ideas that had come through during the discussion. These notes provide a comprehensive record of staff-meetings, and also provide a 'rationale' for the policy that was subsequently developed.

The policy itself was written up by the principal and was based directly on the discussions held during staff-meetings. It drew together suggestions made by staff on specific ways in which LPAC could be reflected in classroom practice and school procedures.

The policy was distributed to the staff, and then discussed in detail during a staff meeting towards the end of the school year. At the meeting, two members of staff said that they felt that the policy was a useful document which accurately represented the ideas that they had expressed during earlier meetings. They felt that the policy reflected the developing philosophy of the school, and that the points made in the document provided clear guidelines to expected classroom practice. They also felt that the policy provided a very useful framework for the construction of school schemes, which could then be made more specific to the needs of particular classes. The newest member of staff, who had only been to one of the LAC meetings, felt that the policy was both clear and comprehensive:

> having had no input into this I can go through it and say: "Yes, I can actually see the overall direction which I think where this is heading". There are things in here that I might find difficult to implement or that I would have to update on, but at least it gives me some idea of what the total direction of the school is (Staff meeting, December, 1988).

One member of staff was much less positive about the policy. There were a number of criticisms that he felt should be made. As a whole he felt that the policy was "a warm fuzzy". In order to be a useful document he felt that it needed to be much more specific, and should include a clear guide to the specific language skills that should be expected of a child at different ages. He felt that the points made about evaluation were not acceptable. Essentially he felt that the main purpose of evaluation was to provide a norm-referenced quantitative assessment of student's' abilities. Finally, he felt that it was impossible to accept that there could be a commitment to bilingualism within the school, as he felt that the issue was too contentious and that there was not the necessary expertise available.

Other staff felt that the commitment to bilingualism had been fully discussed in a previous meeting, although one member of staff expressed some personal discomfort at having to use Maori greetings in classes in which there were no Maori children. Teachers said that they had already been successful in implementing many of the points made in the policy. It was emphasised that a commitment to bilingualism did not imply that the school would become fully bilingual "immediately", but that it would gradually develop the place of Te Reo in the curriculum. It was also pointed out that the commitment was to both English and Maori, not a commitment to Te Reo Maori at the expense of English The following two comments best sum up these points of view:

> ... we were all a little scared about how heavy we were able to be committed into it - but we all agreed that we did have to (do it)

> ... it comes down to attitude, so even if you do feel a dick using a Maori phrase, the fact is, the way I see it is, that we've really got to look at what's best for the children, not what's best for the staff, and how uncomfortable or sweaty palmed we feel about it. It's our children who are going to be growing up in a New Zealand which has more racial tension obvious than perhaps there was in our generation. If they are able to have a more open attitude to both cultures; if they are able to perhaps know the procedures, know the odd phrases, and are able to relate to another culture perhaps that's the smallest step that we can take, and an important one for the school (Staff meeting, December, 1988).

The discussion amongst staff on these points became quite heated, and the issues were not really resolved at this meeting. It was however agreed that there should be an attempt to implement the policy in the first term of 1989, and that further evaluation and criticism should be based on experience of the policy in practice.

Equity issues addressed in the policy

i)   Maori language and culture

The section dealing with bilingualism focuses specifically on developing a bilingual curriculum in Maori and English, and it is within the context of the section of the policy dealing with bilingualism that issues relating to Maori culture are addressed:

7.1   *We have a commitment to bilingualism at School 'D' school. We intend to develop this aspect of our language across the curriculum policy gradually. A review of the time-span will be made at our next policy review.*

7.2   *We are developing an awareness of and an understanding of things Maori using the following strategies. Te Reo will be introduced throughout the school:*

- *the junior department will introduce words and phrases in conversational exchanges.*

- *middle school students will be exposed to the Maori language programme booklets supplied by the Department.*

- *the senior school will also use these books. The senior school will apply Te Reo in the following situations:*

      greetings/commands/self-introductions (Mihimihi).

      when welcoming visitors to the school.

      when thanking visitors.

      during their visits to our local Marae.

      when learning waiata. The meanings of the words along with the sentiments and reason for the songs will be discussed.

7.3   *We will implement Te Reo and Taha Maori studies using a shared teaching, cross-class exchange approach.*

7.4   *Taha Maori and Te Reo should not be an isolated event on the class timetable. We will incorporate it into all aspects of our curriculum and practices. These will include:*

- *mathematical activities (i.e. counting/measuring in Te Reo).*

- *signing the cross, saying Lord's Prayer in Maori.*

- *examining scientific concepts from a Maori cultural perspective.*

- *studying the art and craft of the Maori people.*

- *studying Taha Maori as part of the social studies programme.*

- *utilising reading books written in Maori. Studying Maori myths and legends.*

7.5   *Our school resources are limited at present but the following are available for use:*

- *a complete Taha Maori scheme with teaching strategies, suggestions, and a resource list.*

- *a range of books in our school library.*

- *local people who are prepared to assist in programmes when they are approached to do so.*

To initiate and sustain programmes in Te Reo and Taha Maori, teachers will need to become familiar with these resources, add to our list and use them in their teaching and learning activities.

Staff expressed some ambivalence in taking on a commitment to bilingualism, especially in the early stages of policy development, and it was very much the principal's enthusiasm that persuaded staff that it was in any way possible. In doing this it had been important that teachers be reassured that full bilingualism was a long-term goal, and that the process of becoming bilingual was not expected to be accomplished "overnight". The principal had felt that it was critical that the policy acknowledge that bilingualism was the school's ultimate goal. He believed that there was a fundamental difference between "working towards bilingualism and biculturalism" and "including aspects of Taha and Te Reo Maori" in the curriculum, even though , in the short term, both approaches may have the same outcome in practice. These issues were discussed at considerable length, and apart from continued objections from one member of staff, other teachers supported the intentions of the policy, and felt that the guidelines for action within this section of the policy were appropriate and realistic, if not necessarily "easy".

ii) Multicultural education

There is no specific section dealing with multicultural education in the policy, although this had been one of the areas that staff had identified as important early on in the policy development process. The teachers decided, after considerable discussion, that in terms of extending the cultural base of the school their priority should be Maori language and culture. They believed that if they were able to "start getting it right" biculturally, then wider cultural issues would start falling into place anyway. However, there are a number of points in the policy, within the section dealing with 'issues of access' which refer to children from "minority groups":

6.1   *We believe that access to knowledge affects life chances. We intend to give minority group children the opportunity to explore and become familiar with the lexicons that will give equality of opportunity and outcome.*

6.5   *We will create classroom programmes and atmospheres that are conducive to examining racial discrimination, sexual bias and stereotyping using the following techniques and activities:*

- *Discussion of moral and ethical issues relating to minority groups.*
- *Research and presentation (drama, mime, art, speech, written report) relating to these issues.*
- *Locate (teacher/students) films/videos/newspaper items/books on these issues and use them in class programmes.*
- *Allowing visitors and/or students to discuss their own experiences.*

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- *Teachers will be aware of group differences and plan learning experiences appropriate to the individual's needs. Teacher sensitivity of their attitudes and behaviour is a pre-requisite for a classroom that welcomes and sees diversity as a strength to the teaching/learning process.*

6.6 *We will allow students to work in a wide variety of language modes. This will give a holistic 'picture' of the individual.*

6.7 *We will view the child as an individual to be educated, not socialised into the dominant culture. Comparisons between students and/or unfamiliar or unreasonable expectations of individuals could subjectively influence the teacher's assessment and programme for the student.*

6.8 *We will allow the child to work from, and within their own culture. ...*

6.12 *We will evaluate our minority group students using a wide variety of language activities and modes. We are interested in developing teaching strategies that give access to knowledge for our students. For this reason the evaluation process will be child-centred and on-going.*

These points have specific relevance to children from minority ethnic groups, and this is the way in which most staff interpreted the phrase 'minority group'.

The principal saw this term as having a much broader frame of reference and considered it to encompass all groups who were not part of the dominant (Pakeha, male, middle class) culture. These issues were not, however, discussed in depth in any of the meetings held during the research project. The Principal felt that given the level of disagreement that surfaced at meetings, discussion over definitions of dominance could become a real 'red herring', and might be used to divert attention away from policy development itself.

iii) Gender and education

Issues of gender and education were discussed at some length by staff. Two staff felt quite firmly that this was not a problem in their classrooms, and that they treated boys and girls in the same way, responding to them as individuals rather than on the basis of gender. Following some discussion, they did agree with others that despite what they believed was their "equal treatment" of students, there may be certain inequalities evident in classroom processes. The following points were made during the meeting:

• Equal opportunity to explore and use language in the classroom is the right of all students.

• Research shows that boys tend to dominate the classroom setting and activities when compared to girls.

• More time is spent helping and talking with boys.

• Teachers tend to use a more extended vocabulary when working with boys than when working with girls.

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• Generally speaking boys have louder voices and dominate class and/or group activities - this includes oral language.

• As a result of this bias, girls often leave school with inferior language skills in comparison to boys.

• Demure, quiet-spoken girls or women can often be attributed to the lack of classroom opportunity to develop confidence and language skills.

• Teachers must be aware of this sexist behaviour in their pedagogy.

• Strategies in teaching must be employed that ensure an equal opportunity to express and explore knowledge through language for both sexes (Staff Meeting Minutes, July, 1988).

All staff present at the meeting agreed that gender issues should be considered within the LPAC, and the following specific points were included within the section on "issues of access":

6.2   *We will not use gender as the basis for classroom organisation. Learning to work in mixed-sex groups is important for everyone.*

6.3   *We will make the same demands of girls and boys. Knowledge is not gender-biased.*

6.4   *Precision and creativity in all language areas across the curriculum will be expected from boys and girls.*

iv)   Mainstreaming

Although language had not been linked with issues associated with mainstreaming in the early phases of policy development, staff felt that there were points that should be included about mainstreaming, when considering the access that children have to the school curriculum. It was agreed that language problems experienced by mainstreamed students often made it difficult for them to participate fully in classroom activities, or to benefit fully from the cognitive and social aspects opportunities available. The following points were regarded as a "start":

6.9   *Mainstreamed students will be given extra-teaching time where and when the teacher and specialists consider there is a need. We have a wide range of specialists (see school scheme) these are available on request.*

6.10   *Mainstreamed children will work within the social and emotional setting of the classroom. These children will participate in classroom activities in a language mode that they enjoy and use competently.*

6.11   *We will use a wide range and level of resources that will allow the mainstreamed student access to material/activities that they can handle. They can then contribute to class programmes.*

Summary

Of all the schools participating in the research, School 'D' made the most conscious attempt to address a broad range of equity issues and these were addressed specifically in the

two sections dealing with "Issues of Access" and "Bilingualism". This reflected, in particular the principal's concern with, and commitment to equity and biculturalism. It also reflected the commitment that the majority of teachers had made to changing the school from what they perceived as having been a very repressive institution into one in which a diversity of values was respected and encouraged. Underlying much of the discussion about LAC was a desire to see the school become a place where children were active, critical, and confident "explorers", and the curriculum was both "alive and thought provoking". In the section on oral language, for example, the policy states:

2.8   We shall value diversity of opinion and language mode selection. Children will feel free and secure when talking. We will develop an atmosphere of trust, tolerance and respect. This will be achieved by: taking time to listen; letting children interact to relate their experiences and understanding; and by making the dialogue real and purposeful.

5.6   School 'E'

School 'E' is a single-sex girls' school in one of New Zealand's larger cities. In 1988 there was an enrolment of 823, with approximately 90 boarders, and a teaching staff of 51. The school was founded 111 years ago but is now relocated in modern, purpose-built buildings not far from the city centre. Between one-half and two-thirds of the enrollments were from the school-zone. Others were selected from applicants from other areas of the city.

The school itself was physically very attractive, and its setting, very beautiful. Although the site was relatively small, and some of the classrooms were not as large as teachers felt they should be, the facilities were excellent. The school had built up enviable resources, and the library, and the video and sound cassette collections were well-stocked and well-utilised. A large number of paintings and other pieces of art had been donated to the school over the years, and these added to the very pleasant working environment which the school afforded.

The staff was stable, highly qualified and experienced. Teaching was organized on subject lines and the departmental structure of the school was very strong. Health Education at the third form level was the only example of subject integration, although most departments, if not teachers, used the computer centre for some part of their course.

Community

The school had a reputation for high academic attainment and 'strong discipline', and it was possibly for these reasons that the number of applicants for the school was consistently greater than the number of places available. Some parents had indicated that they felt that it was also academically advantageous for girls to attend a single-sex school. The pupils were drawn from middle-class families in the main, and the girls entered the school well prepared for, and expectant of academic success. Most had received extra tuition in a musical instrument, or other

creative art or had been coached in sport. The ability to use language well was valued highly within the school, amongst both the staff and the girls. One teacher described the rich language environment of the school as being very much part of the special character of the school itself. The school had a very high retention rate: In 1988, there were 181 girls in the third form, and 101 in the seventh. A high proportion of leavers (80% in 1988) intended to enrol at university. The school was largely mono-cultural, with only two percent Maori and Pacific Island students.

It was decided that the LPAC should be developed for a particular class - 4X. The fourth form was divided into six classes in three bands. Girls in the top band were offered Latin as an option in the third form, and then those who continued with Latin into the fourth form came together as one class. 4X were this top band, Latin option class. There were thirty-three students in the class, with an average age of fourteen years eight months (as at September, 1988).

As with the school as a whole, 4X was largely mono-cultural. There was one girl whose father was Indian, and one girl from Greece who had lived in New Zealand for only six months (her father was Greek and her mother, a New Zealander, and despite some initial difficulty with written work, she had made excellent progress). All the other students were Pakeha New Zealanders. The group was also fairly homogeneous in terms of socio-economic background. Only seven mothers, and no fathers were not in paid employment, with all of those who were in paid employment coming into the supervisory, managerial or professional classifications.

The class were perceived by their teachers as being bright, sophisticated, imaginative, hard-working and self-motivated. They genuinely seemed to enjoy learning, they liked working together, and were very good at keeping on task when working in groups. There was very little need for overt discipline. Not surprisingly, they were well-liked by their teachers. On my first visit to the school (June, 1988), two teachers indicated that they felt that the class were not doing as well as comparable classes in previous years. This perception seemed to have changed by the time of the second visit (September, 1988), and teachers commented on the growth in maturity and competence that they had seen in the girls since the beginning of the year. One teacher described them as having "untapped resources and potential", and there was general agreement amongst the teachers concerned that one of the demands of working with such a group was to stretch and extend the students to their fullest.

The teachers of 4X were all senior members of staff (Senior Mistress, four Heads of Department, and two Deans), and all had been working at the school for some time. In addition to these teachers, the teacher with special responsibility for Reading in the school was co-opted into the group because of her special interest in the area of LAC.

Policy Development

The contact person for the research was the Senior Mistress. She decided that rather than working on a whole school policy, that working on a policy for one class would be more manageable, and might in the long run be more effective. During a meeting with other staff involved in developing the policy, she explained:

> ... I could have taken a gamble on trying (a whole school policy) but after watching ... the Health Education, I decided to be a bit more modest and (try) working gradually up because everybody is flat out (a); and (b) a bit conservative. ... I'd like to have a little success, rather than a complete and public disaster.

Working with one class meant that there would be a group of eight teachers working together. This seemed to be a "manageable" number, in that it would be small enough to allow all teachers the opportunity to participate actively in drawing up the policy. It also avoided some of the practical difficulties in trying to bring a larger group together within a school in which the staff were already expected to attend a large number of meetings during the school week.

The policy making process would also bring together teachers from different subject areas, and this was felt to be important because, prior to the work on the LPAC, inter-departmental discussion had generally arisen in response to poor progress or disciplinary problems associated with a class or an individual. LPAC provided a positive, rather than negative focus for crossing subject boundaries.

Finally, within the school as a whole, some concern about the need to extend the girls who were perceived as being most academically able had been expressed. Discussion of language policy with reference to a 'top' fourth form group would provide an opportunity to consider this aspect of the educational environment.

The teachers involved met together on six separate occasions. The first five meetings were each twenty minutes long and held within the course of the school day. During these meetings, the general nature of LAC, and the special attributes and language needs of 4X were discussed. The senior mistress also conducted a survey within the class, asking for their attitudes towards the ways in which different approaches and teaching methodologies were used. The questionnaire used in the survey was completed by students twice: first by girls alone prior to any discussion; and second after they had had opportunity for discussion with each other in small groups. The Senior Mistress also asked teachers to write a brief statement outlining the ways in which they felt that language growth within their own subject was being, or could be, encouraged.

A final two-hour meeting was held early in the third term of 1988. This meeting made use of a total of sixteen hours 'Teacher Only' time which had been obtained from the Department of Education specifically for the work on LAC. During the first hour of the meeting, discussion centred on a series of readings presenting a range of theoretical perspectives on the learning

process. These readings had been distributed to teachers by the Senior Mistress before the meeting. In the second hour of the meeting the teachers wrote the Language Policy itself.

Teachers commented that the whole process had been "very good-humoured" and that:

> Everybody participated, nobody was squeezed out. Everybody made the contributions that he or she had wished to make. We all gained. ..Most of the teachers involved have been here for some time, and there was an awareness of what it is to work together - a sense of needing to get on and make progress. We got ahead, rather than milling around in the same place (Interview; September, 1988).

Although the teachers had not initially perceived LAC as an area which needed attention, by the time of the second visit to the school there was general agreement amongst the teachers that both the policy itself, and the process of drawing up the policy, had been relevant and worthwhile. The following comments reflect this attitude:

> ... The best thing as far as I'm concerned is that it just gave us time to pause and think about how we were teaching and what were the best ways of teaching, and what we should be doing in the hurly-burly of school. Discussing it in a group with others who are teaching in other subjects - that's been really useful.

> ... As a teacher, because you get tied up in the day to day operations, coming back to the really meaningful things you should be doing with the students is valuable.

> ... It's made me more aware of the things I should be doing. It's made me try and get the kids do more work for themselves; and make them stand up in front of each other; and do more group work. (Interviews; September, 1988).

Teachers attributed the success of the process to a number of factors:

- the sensitive leadership skills of the Senior Mistress, "her genius for organisation", and "her ability to direct things";
- the fact that, as a group of senior teachers, they did not feel "threatened" by the process, and came to the discussions with a certain confidence in their own teaching ability, and a sense of purpose;
- the group "was not hierarchical, there was no-one giving orders" , and there was "no sense of conflict;
- the smallness of the group; and
- the specific class that the group had chosen to design a policy for:

> I think the catalyst was the class - they're fantastic. They've got untapped potential and resources. That's the challenge. And the better I can untap those resources - that's my measure of success in the end (Interview, September, 1988).

The final policy was recognised by all the staff involved as being incomplete. Although some of the teachers felt that the policy lacked clarity and specificity, and certainly breadth, the

general feeling about the policy was positive, and it was considered that, as far as it went, it "embodied the thoughts we had, and fairly reflected everybody's views".

Equity issues addressed in the policy

i)   Gender and language

In one of the early meetings between the group of teachers involved in policy development it was agreed that the main thrust of the language policy should be to 'extend' the girls in 4X. It was recognised that the home backgrounds of this particular group of students equipped them well for success at school. It was felt that, for the students in 4X, there was very "little disjunction between school and home life" and that the language of the school was not "decontextualised" for these girls. However, the issue of whether the learning styles and language activities promoted within the classroom were appropriate to the learning needs of the students **as girls** was raised for discussion. Increasingly discussions focussed on gender and language, rather than on the idea of 'extension'.

Following from this concern was a belief that it was very important to encourage the girls to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, rather than always rely on an outside authority (the teacher). The group felt that this was a gender-related issue. They were concerned that the girls lacked self-confidence. Given that the class as a whole were so academically able, teachers suggested that this lack of confidence may have reflected a tendency for girls to be more self-deprecating and less confident than boys. The teachers discussed the importance of balancing the need for certain items of factual knowledge, particular skills, and 'automaticity' with the need to develop learning processes. They also stressed the need to provide opportunities for 'holistic' as well as 'atomistic' approaches to learning:

> I think that 4X are beyond the need for an authority figure - they are about to break out into relativism. ... but....there is a risk that in taking control of their own learning, that they go too fast; teachers need to act as brakers as well as accelerators - it's often necessary to anchor, quite firmly, the skill that they have come into contact with, so that it hasn't just found a temporary home (LAC meeting; September, 1988).

The group discussed how to help the girls to be active participants in their own learning, and the importance of providing learning opportunities in which the emphasis was on co-operation rather than competition.

These ideas are summarised in the three beliefs which are set out at the beginning of the policy:

- *We believe that 4X have been 'encultured' into success at school.*
- *We believe that there is a body of factual knowledge and mental and physical skills that 4X need at this stage in order to share their learning with others and as a preparation for further learning.*

- 	*We believe that students learn by observation, co-operation with other learners in situations that generate talking and moving, questioning (themselves and other learners and the teacher), practice, problem solving and applying skills in a particular situation for a known purpose.*

The group felt that extension and development of reading skills were central to enabling students to take control of their own learning. The policy includes five statements which reflect this concern:

We shall :

- 	*encourage them to read as much as possible*
- 	*give time in class for reading (Maths and P.E. would find this a problem)*
- 	*stimulate interest in reading by bringing relevant books and articles into the classroom to talk about*
- 	*encourage the girls to bring and share such material*
- 	*encourage, when appropriate, close analysis of texts for comprehension of meaning and understanding of structure*

The teachers then went on to discuss the need for girls to develop oral skills. They said that the girls were good at listening to each other, and that although most of the class felt confident about talking within smaller groups, some felt shy about speaking to a larger audience. There was a general concern amongst teachers that they needed to help the group move towards public forms of discourse. One teacher noted that there were some girls in the class who had indicated that they were not happy about presenting work to the whole class. In an interview one of the teachers said that

> We came to the idea of moving sensitively, of preparing the girls, so that they can stand in front of the group ...(knowing that) ...at least some of the girls in the class had contributed to what (they) were going to say, and would be supportive in that sense. (Interview, September, 1988).

These ideas are reflected in the final two points made in the policy.

- 	*emphasize co-operation and sharing of ideas so that thoughts can be crystalised in discussion*
- 	*promote the growth of self-confidence by preparing a support group for any girl who is asked to speak to an audience*

The group was aware that the policy was incomplete. One area of language and learning that the discussion had focussed on in the first hour of the final policy meeting, was the impact of technology (including television, videos, computers and the sophisticated visual material available for use in education) on the ways in which children learn and think. Again, it was felt that these were areas in which girls were often less confident than boys, and that often girls had less access and opportunity to become technically competent. The school had already made a stand on this issue. The Department of Education had insisted that the school have a classroom of

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typewriters, although the school had indicated a preference for computers. In order to overcome the Department's intransigence, the PTA had raised money for a class set of computers and staff had installed them in the centrally located typing room, relegating the typewriters to a less accessible room. The Senior Mistress noted that

> Needless to say the school has many fewer entries in School Certificate typewriting than the national average for females. On the other hand, Old Girls figure prominently in the computer courses at University and Polytech (Interview, September, 1988).

Summary

This was the only school in the research project which did not discuss issues relating to Maori language and culture in the context of language policy. Equity issues in general were not covered, perhaps because they were not seen as relevant to the class: as a "top group" they were perceived as, and treated as, academically very able; socially, the group were regarded as relatively privileged; and all students shared a common European ethnic background. However, gender issues as they related to this group of high achieving, middle-class girls became a focus of LAC discussion, and this was reflected in the LPAC that was developed.

5.7   School 'F'

School 'F' is a state co-educational secondary school in a city area. In 1988, it had a roll of 1037 and a teaching staff of 67. Its zone encompasses an area which was of predominantly high socio-economic status.

Facilities and resources at the school were excellent. Teaching resources were generous and readily available: the School Prospectus 1988 described them as being "recognised as...the most advanced in New Zealand". There was a well developed media centre containing a large library, visual and audio resources; and two computer laboratories each with 16 terminals. Physical education and recreation facilities were excellent.

The school offered a very broad curriculum encompassing traditional and non-traditional courses (eg. journalism, ceramics, graphic design, film studies). At seventh form 17 subjects were offered, with a further 5 courses offered as an alternative to University Bursary; there were a total of 42 sixth form courses, with about 35 being available in any year; at fifth form 20 School Certificate subjects were taught, and in the junior school (Forms 3 and 4) a variety of options (approximately 15) were available in addition to core subjects.

The school was divided along traditional departmental lines, but also had a particularly strong guidance network which cut across departmental boundaries. A number of staff commented that departments had to some extent become "disempowered" in recent years, and said that they felt that in order to maintain academic excellence there was a need to restrengthen departmental ties.

As part of the guidance network the school had a small (one full-time and three part-time teachers) but very strong Special Needs group: the R-team. The 'R' was meant to signify 'reinforcement' and the team saw its main function as reinforcing the role of the classroom teacher and assisting students across the ability range who were not achieving their full potential. Despite this the team was still referred to as the "remedial" team by some teachers who obviously perceived it as catering primarily for students who were at the lower end of the academic ability range.

Community

Approximately 80% of the school's population was Pakeha and although numbers of Maori and Pacific Island students were close to national averages there were fewer students from these cultural groups than might be expected in this area. The majority of Maori students were from the local Marae. Almost half the number of Asian students in the school were in the seventh form and had come to New Zealand to study for one year before seeking entrance to New Zealand universities (See Table 3).

Ethnic origin	Numbers	%
Pakeha	822	79.5
Maori	104	10.0
Asian	43	4.0
Pacific Islands	37	3.5
European	12	1.0
Australian	11	1.0
Other	10	1.0

Table 3: Ethnic composition of School 'F' (1988).

In a survey of third form students in 1988 it was found that of 159 students, 11 (6.9%) spoke English as a second language. Of these students, five had done all their schooling in New Zealand, and six had been in New Zealand schools for periods varying from 4 years to six months. Languages other than English represented in the third form included: Cook Island Maori, Niuean, Tahitian, Korean, Tongan, Italian, German, Samoan and Dutch. It was generally felt that there was no need for a separate ESL programme within the school although some students who had poor English language skills were withdrawn for extra help as part a more general programme covered by the "R-team".

In 1988, bilingual education for the purposes of language maintenance was not an issue at School 'F'. There were few Maori speakers in the school: there were none in the 1988 third form intake for example. One teacher said that this situation would need to change in the future

as children who had been to Kohanga Reo and had attended local primary school bilingual programmes entered the school.

A significant feature of School 'F' was the high percentage of sixth and seventh form students (42%). This "top-heaviness" was due to the fact that the school attracted a large number of new entrants at these levels from both within and outside the school zone. There were two main reasons for this: firstly, the particularly wide-ranging and flexible curriculum at both sixth and seventh form; and secondly, the "university-like" atmosphere of the school (school uniform was not compulsory, and students were generally given a large degree of responsibility for their own progress).

On entering the school at third form students were given PAT tests of reading comprehension and vocabulary in conjunction with a school-based writing test. The tests were used for diagnostic purposes, particularly to pinpoint underachievement, and as a guide to where remedial help was needed. Apart from external examinations, this was the only stage at which any nationally standardised testing of language was done. It was felt that careful monitoring of students' individual progress provided more appropriate and valuable information. PAT scores provided the only quantitative guide available to the academic ability of the school's intake. Analysis of these scores indicated that there were higher than average numbers of students in both the top and bottom quartiles. It was felt that these results suggested a significant need for extension as well as remedial work within the school.

Policy development

Prior to work on language policy undertaken in 1988, some interest in LAC had been expressed by a number of staff in different subject areas. In particular a member of the English Department had been keen for work to go ahead on a whole school language policy for some time, and one of the Science teachers had been involved in a number of meetings and workshops on LAC organised in Auckland and nationally. The HOD Language's involvement in the Massey LPAC course provided an extra impetus to pull the various strands of interest in LAC together and in the first term of 1988, a small group of teachers met twice in order to look at issues that might be addressed by an LPAC, and ways in which such a policy could be developed within the school. This was not a formally constituted group and during the year different members of staff attended LAC meetings, depending upon their other commitments and time they had available. There were however a 'core' group of five or six staff who were able to attend meetings fairly regularly. Overall development of LAC during 1988 was co-ordinated by the English teacher mentioned above and by the HOD Languages.

In the second term an outside speaker from the English Department at Auckland University was invited to come to an HOD's meeting. Her presentation focussed on the need for teachers to be aware of ways in which language functions in learning. Through group work on a science text staff looked at possible sources of linguistic difficulty and misunderstanding. A

handout given to those at the meeting also described the role of language in the school, the principles of LAC, and suggestions of ways in which to start thinking about LAC. Although some members of staff expressed enthusiasm for the concept of LAC, the response of others, while not openly antagonistic, indicated that they did not see it as a priority in their department.

Following this meeting a full staff meeting was held two weeks later. In the interim a brief description of LAC and its implications for teaching was distributed to staff through inclusion in the staff weekly bulletin. Minutes of the meeting summarise the major areas of concern raised by staff:

Staff meeting minutes. (June 22, 1988).

The following suggestions for ways in which the LAC Committee could assist departments were received in the course of the meeting:

1. Resource material on helping students cope with the language of exam instructions.
2. Resource material on making the language of the 'NEW' Maths intelligible.
3. The provision of readability texts and other teaching material.
4. The raising of consciousness about mono-cultural and sexist language.
5. The provision of self-administered teacher language analysis material.
6. The provision of a systematised approach to reading.

Departments were asked to discuss the language they use in their subject areas and to identify problems of communication, getting feedback from their students on how well they (the students) think they cope with written and oral language demands. Could be most useful and findings could go back to the LAC Committee.

We have been asked to (1) evaluate how well language works for us in our particular subject and (2) build into our lesson plans opportunities for students to talk about what they are learning. We are building towards a whole school approach to the problem of establishing clear language based communication. Training opportunities are a vital consideration in the light of this aim.

One of the teachers on the LAC committee described staff response as being quite positive but also pointed out that:

what we asked for out of that was for Departments to consider ways in which the small group that had constituted itself could help Departments in the work that they were doing. I think that what we were groping at was the concept of a group that might work as LAC co-ordinators helping teachers. We didn't get a response from departments. Nothing, even informal, came back (Interview; November, 1988).

The LAC Committee met a further two times in second term and then twice early in third term. These meetings followed up on issues of language testing, reading, and concerns raised in the staff meeting. A questionnaire designed by the HOD Languages to gauge attitudes towards the place of language in education was distributed to all staff during this time. Of 67 teachers 31 (46%) responded, with half of these replies coming from English and Language teachers. The HOD Languages felt that the level of response was disappointing and possibly

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reflected a lack of widespread concern among staff about language matters. He suggested that the results of the survey raised several points:

- staff who replied had a clear process orientation towards learning (a critical factor in implementing LAC);
- many staff were concerned about reading levels of materials they used;
- reading and comprehension skills were not being taught;
- a major concern for many teachers was the teaching of specialist vocabulary;
- staff were concerned about students' writing skills, and needed to look at how writing styles were taught across the curriculum;
- there seemed to be no clear understanding of how correction of language errors (punctuation, grammar, spelling etc.) should be carried out in marking written work.

In summarising staff attitudes towards LAC he said that:

> there are a number of people on the staff who see it as an important priority, and are enthusiastic about that kind of approach. And there are others perhaps ... who would see it as an intrusion upon the way that they do their jobs, as impinging on their professionalism. For others it isn't an issue, or they don't want to know about it, or it's going to make their jobs more complicated, or you know "I'm just a (subject) teacher, and that's what I want to do..." (Interview; November, 1988).

The draft Language Policy was written by the HOD Languages using data from the survey, ideas and concerns expressed in staff, HOD and LAC committee meetings, and his own knowledge and understanding of the school and students. The policy was then posted in the staffroom for staff to read, and comment on if they wished.

A full staff meeting focussing on LAC was held some weeks later. During this meeting a visiting speaker spoke to the staff about the work she had done with LAC at another school. This was followed by a discussion about directions that could be taken at School 'F' in 1989. In summarising this discussion, one of the LAC Committee noted that:

> There was a lot of enthusiasm among the half of the staff present for concentrating our efforts on such an issue, that is directly related to learning and teaching. The goodwill is there. (We were given) a kind of structure to work with. Some data gathering will be started right away. A "task force" will be set up (is being set up today). I think that there is quite a deal of expertise among the staff which can be used, and (the speaker) offered to act as consultant (Personal communication, December, 1988).

Equity issues addressed in the policy

i)   Te Reo Maori

The policy states that:

2.1   *The school affirms both recommendations of The Curriculum Review:*

      "26   the school system accepts its role in the promotion, retention, and preservation of Maori language and culture;

      27   Maori language is available to every student who wishes to learn it, or learn through it;" (pp.40-41).

2.2   *It is only in the last two years that Maori language has been fully introduced into the school, and courses now operate in forms 3-5. These should be given every assistance to become established, in accordance with our curriculum obligations.*

2.3   *It is vital that those courses be timetabled, regardless of class size. In 1989 the establishment of a sixth form course will be a priority.*

One of the teachers involved in developing the policy said that the Maori language classes had become a focus for Maori children at the school. She felt that this was particularly important, because the school, in the past, had done little to enhance the school experience for Maori students, and that this had been reflected in the drop out rate of Maori from the school, and the consequently very low numbers of Maori in the Senior School. As with other teachers involved in policy development, she felt that it was essential that Maori language classes be offered at sixth form level despite low numbers.

Despite these concerns the Principal, in responding to the policy, said that, within the foreseeable future, support for Maori language as suggested in the policy, could not be guaranteed.

ii)   Students from non-English speaking backgrounds

Within the policy it is suggested that an LAC Co-ordinator/language consultant be appointed, and that as part of this position: 's/he would act as a consultant to staff concerning ESL students'.

As part of policy development, however the following information had been distributed for staff discussion:

In the 1988 third form at School 'F', eleven (out of a total of 159 pupils) come from a non-English speaking background. The languages represented are: Pacific (Niuean, Cook Island Maori, Tahitian, Samoan, Tongan); European (French, German, Italian, Dutch); Asian (Korean).

There are no more than two speakers of any one language. Of the eleven pupils, five have spent all their years of schooling in New Zealand. Of the remaining six, five have been here for periods between one and four years, and the sixth has been here for a term.

The usual approach to such students in NZ schools has been to provide an ESL course shortly after their arrival, where staffing has been made available for the purpose. Courses have usually been run by the remedial department or by an assigned ESL teacher.

This is now changing. Research by Campbell et al (1984) in Australia pointed up the need for the whole school to be aware of, and responsible for, the needs of ESL students. They stated, "the most effective professional unit is not the ESL teacher, but the school". It has been recognised for some time that NESB students can best be supported by mainstream teachers working to facilitate language development across the curriculum. One of the best resources for learning language is native-speaking peers, who can provide models and stimulus for NESB students.

Recent research also supports the needs for strategies within the mainstream that assist NESB students to cope with language demands, and indirectly, with the cognitive demands of higher learning. The Campbell study in Australia highlighted the fact that NESB students who appeared to be coping well at age 13 and 14 began to experience difficulties and fell behind in the fifth form and beyond. Research by Cummins (1984) into NESB students in Canada showed that those born in the host country have interpersonal and social language comparable to native speaking children within a year of attending school. However as they progressed through primary school, the language that was indicative of the cognitive development and academic learning potential was five years behind.

The Curriculum Review places a responsibility upon us:
"The school should take account of the languages of the community". (p.35)
The Committee recommends that:
"provisions for second or other language learners, such as Pacific Islanders and South East Asians, are reviewed and more suitable support and resources provided" (p.41).

The LAC group saw this as an area that required attention. At the time of the research, primary responsibility for ESL provision was taken by the 'R-team'. While those involved with LPAC felt that the needs of ESL learners were best met in mainstreamed classrooms, and that each teacher had responsibility for the specific language needs of NESB students, they felt that there were members of staff who did not see this as part of their job. In describing teachers' reactions to the ideas behind LPAC, one teacher said:

> I think it's too esoteric for people. People might in theory agree that this is jolly good, and yes, you should be doing this, but really "You know where it's at, I mean we've got exams, and we've got this, and we've got that, and I'm not trained to do that..."(Interview, November, 1988).

In the short term, teachers indicated that they felt there was unlikely to be any development in this area. The principal had indicated that there was no chance of establishing a LAC co-ordinator's position, and without someone to take on the responsibility for co-ordinating ESL provision, it was unlikely to receive the attention that was needed.

Summary

The policy itself makes few specific references to equity issues: Within the reading policy it is suggested that reading material " should be checked for .... sexist and culturally sensitive material"; the provision of Maori language classes is covered; and oblique mention is made to ESL students. In interviewing those staff who were involved in policy development it was clear that they believed that ultimately equity should be given much higher priority in an LPAC. Gender issues, in particular, were discussed as relevant to LAC (in 1988, an all girls' maths class had been trialled, and the teacher of this class had been closely involved in the LAC group). However, at the time that the policy was written, there were considerable differences in attitudes towards equity issues amongst staff. Those involved in LPAC development stressed the need to "sell" LAC to other staff and in particular to the Principal. In doing this they said that it was important to avoid contentious issues which could then be used to discredit the value of LAC.

Chapter six
Responding to equity through language across the curriculum

6.1   Areas of concern

Across and within schools there were very differing ideas regarding the ways in which LPAC's might or should respond to the claims of different groups. Policy discussion and provision in relation to equity tended to focus on six main areas: the inclusion of Te Reo and Taha Maori in the school curriculum; ethnic minority education (including multicultural education, ESL provision and bi- and multi- lingual education); gender issues in education; rural education; home background (class) issues in education; and mainstreaming of children with disabilities.

In drawing together the ways in which participants responded to each of these areas, some of the constraints on the potential of LPAC's to address particular equity issues become apparent. Although there were a wide variety of approaches and attitudes represented in the schools, there also appeared to be points at which the specific interests of some groups were not acknowledged.

6.2   Te Reo Maori and Taha Maori

"Maori issues" emerged as the most contentious area within LPAC development. Concern with the place of Maori language and culture within the schools was identified as a source of conflict and uncertainty for both teachers and parents at five of the six schools included in this study. In only one school, a secondary school that had the lowest percentage of Maori students (less than one percent), were issues pertaining to Maori language and culture not considered in relation to the development of language policy. Given the high social and political profile of Maori issues at the time of the research (Benton, 1987a; Department of Education, 1987) the focus on these issues and the level of controversy and disagreement were to be expected.

Although attitudes towards the degree to which, and ways in which, Maori language and culture should be included or reflected in schools differed amongst participants, a common concern that was expressed by almost all the teachers in each of these schools was their own uncertainty in these areas. Teachers reported feeling a very low level of confidence in their ability to use and pronounce Maori words correctly; they indicated that parental attitudes were not consistent, and they felt uncertain of how to react to conflicting demands; some said that they felt pressured by policy decisions made at higher levels that paid little

heed to the realities of their own abilities and situations; others described the area as a "minefield" in which they felt that they were "bound to get it wrong no matter what they did".

For some teachers this uncertainty was not problematic, although others indicated that they felt worried, and even threatened by the debate. Uncertainty was sometimes perceived by parents, other teachers and even by themselves as likely to impede constructive action and change. In two schools the principals, both of whom perceived the need for a more culturally inclusive curriculum, said that they believed that if staff felt "pushed" into using Maori language, or referring to Maori culture in class, then they would become defensive, and that this would ultimately be damaging to any real progress. Both these principals said that they perceived teachers' resistance as due to lack of confidence and knowledge rather than racism. The danger here was that in effect this may have meant that Maori claims could continue to be dismissed. However, in both these schools principals commented on changes in attitudes and practice within the schools during the year in which the research was undertaken. They suggested that addressing Maori issues through a focus on LAC had provided a constructive, and relatively "unthreatening" approach to teacher development in this area.

In the five schools in which Maori culture and language issues were discussed, very differing approaches were taken. Overall, the discussions themselves were characterised by a lack of consensus regarding:

Policy responses: The nature of, and extent to which, Maori language and culture should be part of the school curriculum; and

Policy rationales: Reasons given for wishing to either include or exclude Maori culture and language from the curriculum.

Both these areas of debate were marked by an underlying tension regarding whether Maori language and culture were seen as valid components of the curriculum for all students, Maori students only, or students who chose to opt into bicultural/ bilingual groups/ classes.

i)   Policy responses

The secondary school that did address the issue of Maori language did so within its Second and Foreign Language Policy. Thus, the only formal recognition of Maori language was within classes which were optional and open to all students. One teacher described the school as showing very little concern for the needs and rights of Maori students, and said there was little hope of any broader action for the inclusion of either Te Reo or Taha Maori within the curriculum. The setting up of Maori language classes for Forms 3 - 5 was seen by this teacher as having been an important step in providing a "place" for Maori students in an almost overwhelmingly Pakeha environment. Although the LPAC suggested that establishing sixth form Maori courses should be a priority regardless of numbers, the Principal said that such a guarantee was not possible. This was seen by some teachers as indicative of

the lack of any real concern at the school for Maori students: they argued that the high Maori drop out rate was reflective of the school's lack of cultural sensitivity; at the same time, low numbers of Maori students in the Senior School made the provision of Maori language classes at that level most unlikely. To some extent this seemed to be a self-perpetuating situation: Maori language classes were the only available structural mechanism for providing support to Maori students, but the high drop-out rate of Maori students meant that there was no guarantee of provision of these classes beyond fifth form.

Within the primary schools, a broad range of views were expressed: some teachers who felt that the ultimate aim should be a school that was fully bicultural and bilingual for all children; other teachers felt that separate educational provision for Maori children, in the form of bilingual units within the school were most appropriate; and, at the other end of the spectrum were teachers and parents who indicated that while there may be some place for Taha Maori in the curriculum, particularly within a Social Studies context, that any attempt to incorporate Maori language would be inappropriate.

In the primary school with the highest percentage of Maori children, the principal hoped that, in the short term, the school as a whole would reflect a growing understanding of Maori issues, and a willingness to incorporate more Maori and other minority languages in the curriculum, while maintaining English as the main language of instruction. In the long term it was hoped that the school would establish a number of bilingual units and it was intended that the first of these units be Maori-English. Within this school, however there was considerable opposition to such a move on the part of both some staff and parents. It was feared that the setting up of units would be divisive for staff, children and communities. There were also worries that educational standards would fall, and that, in particular, children's facility with English would suffer, thus disadvantaging them in "the real world". The principal in this school saw the process of changing attitudes and "shifting school climate" as being a long and drawn out procedure. However, it is notable that within this school there was a considerable shift in opinion over the time in which the research project was in operation: for example, the Principal had noted that teachers were more willing to use Maori phrases and greetings and were consciously attempting to incorporate more Maori songs and material in the curriculum. Staff indicated that this was because they felt that the processes of change were not being forced upon them. In the short term, lack of resources, particularly in terms of teaching staff with expertise in Te Reo, was acknowledged to be a problem. However, the principal and other members of staff said that they believed that if there were a commitment by the staff as a whole to the moves towards bicultural and bilingual schooling, then resource and staffing problems would be resolved within the process of change.

The other primary school at which biculturalism and bilingualism were seen as long term goals had a lower percentage (16%) of Maori at the school. The commitment to bilingualism and biculturalism to a very great degree reflected the particular stance of the

principal, who believed that Taha Maori and Te Reo Maori should increasingly become woven into the curriculum for all children. Two of the five staff were not supportive of his moves to include Te Reo Maori in an increasing way across all curriculum subjects. One teacher in particular felt that such a goal was inappropriate both educationally and socially. This teacher also said that the area was too contentious and unlikely to receive community support, and finally that even limited moves towards the inclusion of Te Reo were beyond the resources of the present staff. Community input was not sought in this school, though staff indicated that they felt there would be little support for the mooted changes. Despite the level of conflict at this school certain initiatives were undertaken during 1988: a school-wide joint social studies/language theme culminating in a visit to the local marae was organised; and by the end of the year some Maori phrases, especially greetings, were in use both in formal situations (eg. assembly) and informally in most classrooms.

At both the other primary schools, parents in general indicated that they felt quite strongly that there was no place for Te Reo within their schools. At both these schools discussion about Maori issues was avoided to a certain extent. It was acknowledged by principals at both schools that central Ministerial policy was likely to outstrip local attitudes, and to this extent it was possibly better, and certainly easier, to 'depersonalise' any disagreement that was likely to occur. In these situations there was some conflict for these principals in attempting to follow democratic models of policy development, while maintaining commitment to educational goals and procedures that they felt to be important. At the time of the research, parents at both these schools indicated that some Taha Maori might be appropriate, but this was seen as being covered as an aspect of another curriculum area: for example as a special social studies topic; or by including a Maori legend in English from time to time. Teachers at the schools indicated that, in the past, more hostile reactions from parents had been received. At one school the policy made no reference to either Maori language or culture. At the other school, despite lack of parental support, the policy states that one half-hour period a week will be devoted to the introduction of a new word or phrase in Maori and to "an aspect or legend of Taha Maori", with Maori greetings integrated into the school day. At neither of these schools was the provision of special Maori language classes for Maori children discussed.

Overall, the degree to which and ways in which Maori language and culture were included in the curriculum varied greatly between schools and reflected local teacher and community attitudes rather than drawing on Department of Education policy. The extent to which recognition was given to Te Reo and Taha Maori in the LPAC's tended to reflect the percentage of Maori students in schools and this highlights a particular concern regarding educational fairness for Maori students in areas in which Maori representation is limited. These observations bear out some of the concerns expressed in the Royal Commission report which notes that:

Although the (Department's) intent is obviously that the Maori content of the curriculum should rise dramatically in quantity and status, no coercive measures are proposed to bring recalcitrant schools and teachers into line. In communities where Maori people are neither numerically or politically strong, local pressures are unlikely to facilitate rapid change in the status quo. A massive financial and political commitment would be required to implement the recommendation that Maori language be made available to all who wish to learn through it (Benton, 1987a: 25)

ii)   Policy rationales

A minority of teachers were openly cynical about moves towards biculturalism in education. They described such moves as part of a "liberal, warm fuzzy" approach, which had little relevance to the "real word", and saw attempts to incorporate either Maori language or culture in the curriculum as essentially a sop to political pressure and the need "to be seen to be doing something".

Teachers in favour of including Maori language and culture in the curriculum gave a range of reasons in support of their viewpoint, although these were not often expressed clearly. While participants consistently acknowledged Maori children as a group as likely to be doing comparatively poorly in schools, policy responses to this perception, and discussion appeared very fragmented. In part, this may be because in discussing policy, "Maori issues" tended to be discussed in terms of Te Reo Maori and Taha Maori. These areas of policy in turn were discussed in relation to non-Maori children as well as, and sometimes instead of, Maori children. In this process, it seemed that there was some confusion regarding whose needs were being considered, and often the particular interests of Maori appeared to get lost in the process.

Most teachers explained the inclusion of Maori language and culture across the curriculum in terms of the benefits that these areas of study might have for 'all children'. Many felt that cultural, and in particular bicultural, awareness was essential to the lessening of racial tension, and that as New Zealanders it was important that "we all know something about both our Pakeha and our Maori heritage". This view was also expressed by those parents who participated in the project. However, although these parents said that some knowledge of Taha Maori might be relevant, they expressed the opinion that Maori language was unlikely to be useful or relevant to their children. A number of teachers described the need for children to gain bicultural and bilingual skills in clearly utilitarian terms: they said that it was important for all children to be familiar with Maori language and culture as it was fast becoming a prerequisite for participation in certain professions.

Teachers who supported the inclusion of Te Reo and Taha Maori in terms of the value that it may have for Maori children most often explained this in terms of increasing children's "self-esteem" by making them feel that the school valued their culture, and this, in turn, was

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seen as being important in helping Maori students feel less alienated by school. Teachers suggested that increased self-esteem and decreased feelings of alienation were important factors in helping Maori children succeed in the school environment. This essentially instrumental or functional view contrasted with the view expressed by two participants in the research. While they recognised that including Maori language and culture may influence the success of Maori children in schools, their prime motivation for striving towards biculturalism and bilingualism was in terms of the rights of Maori children and parents to an education which paid more than lip service to their place as tangata whenua in this country. Rather than a means to an end, an education which was bicultural and bilingual was seen as a right in itself. One of these teachers felt that ideally the whole education system should reflect a truly bicultural/bilingual basis in which equal value was placed on both Maori and Pakeha language and culture, and to this end curriculum change was planned to be school wide. The other teacher's plan for change focussed on setting up a separate Maori unit within the school, with first option for entry being Kohanga Reo attendance, then Maori ethnicity. If spaces were still available entry would become open to other students. Both these teachers expressed a specific commitment to the revival of the Maori language.

It is significant that within the schools involved in this project there was a general lack of reliable information about Maori community attitudes towards the including Te Reo and Taha Maori. One teacher, for example, suggested that she did not "think that the Maori people here are really very interested in their Maori culture", while in the same school another staff member said that the Maori community had expressed considerable interest in setting up a bilingual Maori-English unit within the school. Similarly, in no school were there formal records indicating children's level of ability or experience in Te Reo , although some individual teachers had attempted to gather this information in their classrooms.

These points support the claim that it is Pakeha rather than Maori interests that are likely to be served through Pakeha controlled policy initiatives purporting to address Maori needs. In a paper entitled *Taha Maori: Pakeha Capture,* Smith (1990b) discusses a number of issues which indicate that the observations described here are illustrative of widespread problems associated with curriculum initiatives such as Taha Maori. Smith suggests that "in being directed to *all* pupils, Taha Maori has become 'co-opted' into being more concerned with educating Pakeha pupils" (Smith, 1990b: 188). As such Taha Maori will fail to respond to the specific cultural needs and rights of Maori pupils, and effectively appropriates resources away from this purpose. Smith also criticises the way in which Taha Maori is perceived as a vehicle to enable Maori to improve their school performance by enhancing their self-esteem. Within this instrumental approach (see also Benton, 1988), school performance is equated with Pakeha learning, and the validity of Maori knowledge is effectively demeaned in this process. Self-esteem theory also essentially disempowers Maori by constituting them as

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victims in need of uplifting. In addition, Smith discusses problems associated with the dependence on a mainly Pakeha teaching force for the implementation of Taha Maori:

> These teachers are mostly monocultural and inadequately trained for such a task. Many of these teachers need to develop appropriate attitudes and personal skills before they can begin to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to pass on to pupils. In many instances, these teachers cannot be sufficiently trained at short notice to do justice to the task with which they have been charged. Again the failure of teachers to be adequately prepared will have counter-productive effects on Maori people and Maori culture, notwithstanding the 'setting up' of teachers to fail by placing an unrealistic demand upon them (Smith, 1990b: 191).

These points suggest that the uncertainty expressed by teachers in the research may have been well grounded.

Overall then, the success of the LPAC's in addressing Maori interests would seem to be limited. However, in the two schools with the highest percentages of Maori children work on LAC provided an effective means of starting to address teacher development needs. It was also apparent that the majority of teachers in these two schools were very concerned to increase their own bicultural understanding. Thus, although the policy responses to Maori issues may not in themselves have provided an effective means of creating a more equitable education for Maori students, the policies do reflect the willingness of teachers to critically examine their own attitudes, and to initiate a process of change. This may provide grounds for some optimism.

6.3   Ethnic minority education

In contrast to the approach taken to Maori issues in education, where 'biculturalism' was not necessarily tied specifically to the needs of Maori, 'multiculturalism' was discussed in those schools in which there were significant numbers of non-Maori ethnic minority students. Such an approach contrasts with the concept of multicultural education developed in other countries such as Britain, where multicultural and anti-racist education are encouraged in all schools, regardless of the ethnic make-up of the school community (DES, 1985). In one school (without a multi-ethnic population) multicultural education was not entirely dismissed, however, it was decided that in moving beyond monoculturalism and monolingualism, their priority should be Maori/Pakeha bilingualism and biculturalism. Although the policy at this school makes reference generally to children from 'minority groups', discussion had focussed on the particular needs of Maori children; multiculturalism would follow in due course. Such an approach fits closely with Metge's (1990) suggestion that biculturalism should be central to multiculturalism, with the intention of overcoming monoculturalism and establishing a basis for recognising and valuing other cultures.

In terms of the ways in which LPAC's responded specifically to non-Maori ethnic minority students three broad areas of need were identified: multiculturalism; bi or multilingualism; and ESL provision. Two schools, one primary and one secondary approached these issues in policy development. In the primary school concerned, the focus of the LPAC was multiculturalism, and ESL provision and mother tongue maintenance were incorporated under this umbrella. In the secondary school the policy itself referred only to ESL provision, although the group working on LPAC said that there was a need to consider other issues in the future. Again, in moving towards "accommodating diversity" a number of teachers at this school suggested that Maori-Pakeha biculturalism should take priority.

i)   Multiculturalism

The multicultural make-up of the primary school was identified by teachers as its defining feature. While teachers at the school were clearly very concerned to meet the needs of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, there had not been any whole school policy which specifically addressed these issues prior to the appointment of the new principal in 1988. In the first term of 1988, teachers had developed a statement of school goals, and discussion regarding this had clarified a number of common concerns which were also emphasised in the research interviews. It was apparent that most teachers saw the diversity of cultures within the school population as a special and positive aspect of the school. The 'School Goals' included the goal of "foster(ing) pride in each culture represented and in our corporate multiculturalness". In interviews teachers also commented on how much they enjoyed working with a "variety of cultures".

A major concern was that the majority of children at the school were educationally disadvantaged in some way. These disadvantages stemmed from the interrelationship of factors including ethnic minority membership; new immigrant status and low socio-economic status. In addition to having large numbers of children from non-English speaking backgrounds in the school, teachers identified a range of other "problems". These included: limited communication between home and school; having home backgrounds in which literacy was not valued; the transience of the population; substandard accommodation; poor nutrition and access to medical attention, and subsequent low standards of health; the prevalence in particular of glue ear; and the high proportion of children with behavioural problems. While teachers emphasised the stress associated with teaching in this situation, most made it clear that they had chosen to work in the school, and there was some pride in having opted to work in an area that was "difficult". To some extent, teachers' choice to work at the school reflected an active commitment to achieving "a chance of success" for children that they identified as educationally disadvantaged.

One of the underlying problems was seen by teachers as lack of self esteem in the pupils. This issue was emphasised by almost all teachers interviewed, and they made it clear

that they viewed high self-esteem as essential if children were to achieve academically at school. Teachers said that a primary aim of multiculturalism should be to foster self-esteem through helping children develop pride in their own cultural background. This in turn would require the school to become more inclusive in terms of curriculum, materials, links with the community, and through employing ethnic minority staff. Some teachers indicated that multiculturalism would also entail developing teaching and assessment approaches which were more culturally sensitive to different (non-Pakeha) ways of learning. Again the rationale for this was made in terms of helping children achieve academic success. Thus, overall "multiculturalism' tended to be seen as a means to an end, rather than a justifiable end in itself, although this to some extent conflicted with teachers' expressed enjoyment and valuing of the multicultural environment in which they worked.

Despite a significant number of ethnic minority students at the secondary school, these students were not in general identified as a 'disadvantaged' group, and 'multiculturalism' was clearly not seen as a relevant issue by most staff. In part, this may be because the largest single group of ethnic minority students in any one year group were seventh form Asian students who had come to New Zealand specifically to prepare for university entrance in this country. These students tended to come from high SES backgrounds, and also tended to do very well in academic terms. Some teachers commented on the language problems of students whose first language was not English, but these were seen largely as individual problems that were most appropriately dealt with through special ESL provision.

ii)   Bi- and multi-lingual education

Although expressed support for multiculturalism at the primary school was strong, attitudes towards bi- or multi-lingualism were much more mixed. There were some teachers who said that they felt uncomfortable about encouraging children to use languages other than English in school. They supported this attitude with a number of points. They said that they believed it was best for children to be using and practising English at school, and that encouraging the use of other languages would be at the expense of English. These teachers were also concerned that if children were using languages other than English they would have no control over either keeping children "on task" or on checking the quality of work that children were producing. However, most of these teachers also said that as a short term measure, if a child entered school with very limited English language skills, it was often useful to ask another child with the same mother tongue to act as a translator. The Principal, and other teachers said that this view was also shared, in particular, by members of Pacific Island communities, who had indicated that they believed strongly that the key to their children's success was good English, and that this was the school's responsibility; responsibility for mother-tongue maintenance rested with the community, not the school.

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Other teachers said that they felt that there was real benefit to be obtained from encouraging children to use their mother tongues in both oral and written work. As with discussions about multiculturalism, these teachers said that they believed that this was most important in terms of raising children's self-esteem. Other teachers felt that there were also significant advantages in terms of helping children extend their thinking in ways that might be difficult in English. One teacher in particular suggested that if children were able to develop fluency and confidence in written and oral work in their own language then this would "transfer" naturally to work in English as their expertise and confidence in English grew. However, most of these teachers were uncertain of whether they would support full bilingual units in the school, and the focus of discussion tended to be on ways in which bilingual opportunities could be encouraged within mainstream classrooms. The most significant structural change suggested within the policy was through the use of vertical groupings which would ensure that teachers could group children according to mother tongue background for different activities if they wished. Encouraging closer links with the community and drawing upon the pool of language resources there, was a further intention of the policy. Finally, the employment of bilingual staff and staff training were covered by the LPAC. However, in appointing bilingual staff there was concern that it would be difficult to meet the needs of smaller ethnic groups in the school.

iii)   ESL provision

In the secondary school, the LPAC made only passing reference to ethnic minority students, and this was to state that an LAC co-ordinator should have responsibility for acting as a consultant to staff regarding ESL issues. However, the policy provides no guidelines regarding possible or desired approaches to ESL provision. For those directly involved in policy development this reflected a "realistic" response to attitudes within the school. Although they believed that there was a need for "the whole school to be aware of, and responsible for, the needs of ESL students" (Staff Handout, 1988), they felt that this approach would not be supported by the Principal or most other staff. At the time of the research formal ESL provision took the form of student withdrawal by the 'resource-team' and some individual teachers made an attempt to use teaching strategies that were appropriate to NESB students.

In the primary school there was limited (10 hours per week) special needs ESL provision available. This was to be used to support ESL students in their home classroom, reflecting the view, shared by most staff, and supported by research (Corson, 1990), that mainstream support of ESL learners was more effective than withdrawal. Within the school it was also accepted by all teachers that ESL support, and the use of appropriate teaching strategies was the responsibility of all teachers, in all curriculum areas.

It is possible to draw on the set of measures suggested by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) in analysing these schools' responses to minority group children. The overall response of the secondary school would appear to have been clearly located at stage one in which lack of knowledge of English was seen as the major problem faced by non-Maori ethnic minority students. Competence in English was seen as the solution and ESL provision was made available if necessary. Although individual teachers expressed attitudes which were more consistent with later stages of Skutnabb-Kangas's schema, there appeared to be little likelihood of establishing multicultural programmes, or of introducing minority languages as subjects of study within the school, at least within the foreseeable future.

Within the primary school there was a range of attitudes and practices evident. In general, these indicated that teachers had moved beyond stage one and two. Family background and cultural difference were identified as contributing to the difficulties that children faced in schooling. Lack of self-confidence was identified as associated with these problems and the initiation of multicultural programmes was seen as important in overcoming this. These approaches are typified as stage three by Skutnabb-Kangas. Some teachers had moved to a stage four approach and were providing opportunities for children to use minority languages in their learning. The LPAC written in this school is located within this stage. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) these first four stages represent deficit theory approaches, and as such do not offer the potential for any significant change in the education of minority language children. Although these descriptions may be accurate of teachers' practice, it was evident that at another level their beliefs about minority education were more representative of what Skutnabb-Kangas describes as "enrichment" approaches which emphasise that schools should be adapted to children rather than vice versa, and accept the minority child's linguistic and cultural backgrounds as positive rather than deficient. This tension is indicated in the contrast commented on above, between the apparently instrumental rationales for multiculturalism put forward by most teachers and phrased in terms of increased competence in English, and their expressed belief in a positive value of multiculturalism for both child and society.

The Principal's ultimate aim, that the school would be able to provide fully bilingual education for all children fits with Skutnabb-Kangas's description of stage five. Skutnabb-Kangas states, however, that it is not until the sixth stage that schooling really has the potential to become transformative. As this stage requires separate but equal school systems, at least some official status for minority languages and the encouragement of bilingualism for all children, it would appear that transformation requires changes that go beyond what may be accomplished at school level.

Although policy at the secondary school would seem to bear out criticisms that assimilationist/deficit approaches to minority groups are dominant (Robinson, 1987b), the changes made in the primary school during the process of the research would indicate the

potential for progress, and suggest that in the future the school may well be able to move beyond deficit models of multicultural education. The focus on language through work on LPAC had been useful in providing the basis for teacher development in multiculturalism, and teachers saw continued work in this area as the "key" to improving education for ethnic minority children.

6.4   Gender issues in education

Only two schools ultimately focussed in their policies to any extent on issues of gender in relation to language issues in their policies, although there was a broad range of attitudes expressed across schools. In two schools, gender issues were not mentioned at any stage of policy development. In two other schools, there was some discussion of gender issues in relation to LPAC, but in both these schools reference was limited to stating that resources and teacher language should be non-sexist. In both these schools it was agreed that gender issues should be approached other than through LPAC. In one school this was necessary according to those involved in working on LPAC because gender issues were the focus of some contention within the school and their inclusion in the policy would be likely to detract from the perceived legitimacy of LAC.

There were a number of teachers at both primary and secondary levels who made it clear that they believed that gender issues were not relevant to their practice. The majority of teachers felt that they treated boys and girls equally and that sex discrimination was generally something of the past. Other teachers indicated that they felt quite antagonistic towards the views of "feminists" in education: one teacher, for example, described the suggestion that either girls and boys might use different styles of language, or that teachers might talk differently to boys and girls as "rubbish".

Language and gender issues were most extensively discussed in the all girls' secondary school. Initially gender was not a focus of policy discussions, nor was it seen as particularly relevant to language policy or the needs of the group of girls for whom the LPAC was being developed. However, in considering students' needs, attention increasingly centred on gender-related concerns. These concerns were also specifically related to the fact that as a group the girls were perceived as high achievers. The teachers felt that if they were to achieve their full potential both at and beyond school there were a number of specific language issues that should be addressed. Teachers particularly identified the need to increase the girls' self confidence in a number of areas: taking control of their own learning; dealing with a wide range of reading material in terms of both content and style; presenting ideas to wider audiences; and, dealing with new technologies. Teachers also suggested that a cooperative rather than competitive learning environment encouraged self-confidence, and would "fit" better with the ways in which the girls seemed to learn best.

At the other school at which gender issues were specifically covered in the LPAC there was much less agreement about the relevance of gender to language in education. The level of disagreement limited the breadth of discussion on gender issues, and argument focussed only on whether girls and boys received differential treatment from teachers. Two members of staff in particular were adamant that this did not occur in their classrooms. The LPAC aimed to ensure equal treatment of girls and boys, and was finally agreed to by all staff because it was not seen to require them to act in a way which was different to their current practice.

These findings support concerns that equity provision for girls may tend to be geared primarily towards high achievers, who in turn are most likely to be from high SES groups, rather than also being extended to girls from low SES and/or ethnic minority groups (Orr, 1987). What was perhaps most discouraging in terms of providing a more equitable education for girls was the level of antagonism that was expressed by some teachers towards the discussion of gender issues. Of similar concern was the widely expressed view that equality for girls had already been achieved in education, despite evidence that indicates that there are significant limitations on the aspirations and life chances of most young women at the completion of their secondary schooling (Orr, 1987). These limitations reflect: girls' subject choices in secondary schools; girls' limited participation in tertiary education; and the high proportion of low SES, Maori and Pacific Island girls who leave school early (Department of Education, 1989a). Teachers also tended to assert that they treated girls and boys the same. While this may have been the case, research indicates that this is not generally so (Kelly, 1988), even in those situations in which teachers believe that they are treating girls and boys equally. These issues lend support to the claims of feminist researchers in New Zealand regarding continuing lack of progress in achieving gender equity (Middleton, 1988a). At the same time it was apparent that some teachers were aware of research indicating inequalities in classroom interaction. A minority of teachers were also interested in investigating alternative styles of classroom interaction which might be more appropriate for girls. LPAC potentially provided a basis for initiating such changes, and in both schools in which gender issues were covered in the LPAC, it had been through a focus on LAC that these issues were raised.

6.5   Rural education

Issues associated with rural schooling were identified as central to the LPAC's developed at the two smallest schools in the research. At both schools parents and teachers said that they felt that lack of self esteem was a very real problem for rural children, and that it was this, more than anything else that was likely to disadvantage children in achieving success, particularly at later stages of their education. Parents and teachers suggested that lack of self esteem was most apparent in the difficulty that children had expressing

themselves orally, particularly in organising their ideas coherently in an ordered manner, and without hesitation. Linked to this was concern at both schools that the children were not good listeners, and that there was a tendency for children to make fun of each other when they were asked to speak in front of the group. At one school teachers said that they believed that lack of self esteem was also reflected in poor imaginative and creative written work. Both schools focussed on these issues within the LPAC's that were developed.

At both schools, parents and teachers also expressed concern that rural children often missed out on a range of experiences that were more readily available to city children. However, each school's response to this perception was very different. In one, few children had attended pre-school and access to out of school activities was limited. Teachers explained this not only in terms of rurality, but also in terms of the local economy and the high percentage of parents who were either unemployed or in low-paying and often temporary jobs. Teachers and parents at this school decided that a focus of the LPAC should be concerned with extending the range of language available for children to use, and broadening their experiential base.

In the other school, parents indicated in interviews that they made a particular effort to "compensate" for living in a rural area, and teachers supported this observation. Most children in the school had received pre-school education and almost all were involved in a range of out of school activities, including music, drama, sports, ballet and clubs. Families in the area tended to group together and share transportation to and from these activities. However, in interviews with parents it was apparent that not all families were included in this group. In particular, there was an apparent division between the Pakeha community and Maori families in the area. In this school, the LPAC did not focus on the need to extend children's experiences and opportunities to use language in different situations. While the majority of children were clearly not disadvantaged in terms of access to a broad range of "educational" experiences, the approach taken in the LPAC meant that it did not address the situation of those children for whom this was not the case.

The different opportunities for children at these schools confirm suggestions (Robinson, 1987c) that rural disadvantage is likely to be confined to particular groups. Consideration of the role of low SES was clearly apparent in one policy. A particular concern, in terms of the policies developed in each school, centres on the lack of recognition given to the interests of Maori students in the schools. In both schools there was community resistance to the idea of incorporating Maori language in the curriculum. Although the teachers at one school decided that they would proceed with some Maori language, the decision at the other school to conform to community pressure would seem to legitimate the monocultural attitudes expressed by parents.

Within the research it was only at these schools that parents were included in policy development, and both teachers and parents commented on the importance of the close

links between the school and community. There is evidence to suggest that this involvement has advantages for both school and community (Archer, 1972; Department of Education, 1975; Nash, 1983) and these were particularly apparent in terms of parental support for the school and teachers, close relationships between children, and good rapport between teachers and children. However, the principals also said that the close knit nature of the communities was sometimes likely to highlight conflict and this could make resolution of problems difficult. As discussed in the section on 'Te Reo and Taha Maori', this was particularly evident in the handling of Maori language issues.

6.6   Mainstreaming

Only one school made reference to mainstreaming within the LPAC. Although this school had no mainstreamed students at the time of the research, they were aware that policy changes meant that they could be required to accept mainstreamed students in the future. 'Mainstreaming' was included within the broad part of the policy which dealt with "issues of access". Teachers at this school identified mainstreamed students as likely to be a group with specific difficulties of access to the curriculum which might be mediated through particular language problems. However, discussion on how the needs of these students might best be addressed was limited and the policy really only laid the foundation for further work in the area.

The fact that only one school considered the particular needs of students with disabilities within LPAC may reflect the marginalisation of this group in discussions of equity in education. It may also have reflected the fact that at the time of the research, mainstreaming of students with severe disabilities was limited: certainly the policy which did address this issue was deliberately forward-looking. Finally, it may be that schools did not see LPAC as the most appropriate way of responding to children with special teaching needs. The need for individualised programmes for these students (Chapman, 1988) may be better catered for in other ways, though conceivably an LPAC might appropriately provide the guidelines for developing and implementing such programmes.

6.7   Home background (class) issues in education

Only one LPAC specifically acknowledged the relationship between SES and language, and in this case it was in terms of the advantage that the congruence between the home and school conferred upon students. However, in two schools the relatively low SES of the school community was clearly seen as interrelated with other dimensions of disadvantage, though it was these other factors rather than SES that teachers identified as the focus for policy.

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In one school ethnic minority membership and low SES were linked and teachers indicated that it was these two issues together which constituted the particular disadvantages faced by the children at the school. So, poor access to medical care, and subsequent problems such as glue ear, for example, reflected a combination of lack of financial resources, lack of familiarity with the health system and poor English skills. Similarly, lack of a literacy based environment at home reflected a combination of cultural factors and economic restraints. In the other school low SES combined with rural location meant that there were specific ways in which access to certain experiences was limited. For example, most children had little experience of money transactions. Much of the family shopping was done on the slate at the local shop, and few families were well off enough to go shopping in town.

In referring to issues associated with SES, teachers tended to talk about "home background" rather than "class", and disadvantage associated with low SES was linked specifically with financial issues, rather than being discussed in broader socio-economic terms. In both these schools disadvantage was primarily discussed in terms of factors other than low SES (i.e. ethnic minority and rural issues). This approach appears to support the belief that education in New Zealand is not class-based (OECD, 1983), at least in terms of educational disadvantage. However, this contrasts with the school which had identified students as coming from advantaged homes. In this case teachers acknowledged the importance of social and cultural capital as well as income in terms of the success that these students were likely to experience at school, and clearly identified the importance of SES in securing educational advantage.

Failure to openly acknowledge the importance of cultural capital, particularly in as much as it is reflected in home literacy practices (Wells, 1985; Nash and Harker, 1992), is likely to obscure rather than clarify the ways in which class-based inequalities in education are perpetuated. However, to be able to acknowledge the different experiences that children have in terms of language and literacy without implying a generalised or individual deficit is challenging. It may be that teachers' reluctance to interpret low SES in terms of cultural or social 'disadvantage' was one way of avoiding this pitfall.

6.8   Specific concerns

In the process of LPAC development, and in the LPAC's themselves, there were differences of approach between groups. Although policies covered a range of equity issues, there were some points at which it appeared that the particular interests of some groups were not acknowledged. These particular concerns were raised in the foregoing discussion, and are highlighted in the following points:

- Curriculum initiatives such as Taha Maori and including Maori language in the curriculum may not be successful in addressing Maori interests if they attempt to cover provision for Maori and Pakeha simultaneously.

- It may not be appropriate to regard all students in rural schools as disadvantaged, as this may obscure other dimensions of disadvantage. However, living in a rural area may compound other aspects of disadvantage, such as low SES.

- The interests of Maori students may be ignored in rural areas. This may be in part due to community attitudes and racism. (It should be noted that there were few Maori students in either of the rural schools included in the research, and this may not be the case in situations in which the percentage of Maori students is higher).

- The need to address equity considerations as they relate to girls may not be acknowledged or recognised. In some cases this issue may be deliberately avoided because of the level of hostility and defensiveness which it aroused.

Chapter seven
Possibilities and limitations

7.1 Emergent themes

In developing the LPAC's, teachers specifically focussed on those areas of concern discussed in the previous chapter. However, there are themes which cut across these areas. The following points elaborate these themes, highlighting the possibilities and limitations evident in the approaches taken in the schools studied. This provides a broader picture of the potential of LAC to address equity concerns.

i) **For most teachers, involvement in LPAC provided a positive basis for discussing ways in which they could improve their practice and the quality of education that their students' received.**

The majority of the teachers involved in policy development said that they believed the process had been useful: the policies provided the basis for a more coherent approach to the role of language in learning within schools or across curriculum areas; and most teachers said that the opportunity to discuss their own and others' approaches to teaching and learning had been important in clarifying, challenging, extending and developing their own ideas.

There was some initial reluctance on the part of some teachers to becoming involved in LPAC development. Some said that they felt worried that it would become an essentially negative process, in which they would be told that what they were doing was "not good enough". Some teachers indicated that they felt that LPAC threatened their autonomy as teachers, and that it would require them to adopt practices that were not congruent with their own beliefs about teaching. A minority of teachers continued to resist becoming involved in LPAC development through the project. They said that they saw little relevance in LAC: one teacher summed this up: "Language policy across the curriculum. What will they think of next!".

For the most part, however, the process of policy development was collaborative and teachers said that they had enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to policy development. While teachers did challenge each others' ideas, the majority said that this had been positive rather than confrontational and that they had enjoyed the opportunity to critically examine their attitudes and teaching practices. Most teachers said that part of the success of LPAC as a vehicle for staff development lay in the fact that it had raised issues which "mattered" and were right at the heart of teaching and learning. Most teachers felt that in developing policy they had focussed on 'real' issues and practical concerns which were clearly relevant to their own classroom practices.

The role of the contact people for the original research was important in contributing to the success of LAC, and encouraging reflective and critical deliberation among those involved in policy development. An important feature was that, because of their involvement in the course at Massey, they were readily able to draw on a range of relevant literature and ideas and make them accessible to staff.

ii) The majority of teachers were committed to providing the best possible education for all students.

The majority of teachers who participated in the research indicated that they felt considerable personal and professional commitment to the education of the children that they taught. This commitment was evident in a number of ways. Teachers indicated that their motivation for becoming involved in a curriculum development initiative such as LPAC was to improve the quality of education that they could provide for students. The level of commitment was also evident in teachers' practice and in the way they spoke about the students that they taught. In both primary and secondary schools, the majority of teachers made a consistent effort to ensure that all their students were fully involved in classroom activities, learning successfully, and enjoying the process of learning. The majority of teachers spoke about their classes and individual students and children with what appeared to be real concern and care, and particularly in primary schools, teachers appeared to know all the children in their classes very well.

Teachers spoke about their classes in terms of the group as a whole but also as individuals. A particular concern appeared to be that all students in the class should get a 'fair go' and that each child should have optimum opportunities for learning. This concern for fairness was sometimes reflected in statements along the lines of "I don't have girls/boys/Maori/Pakeha in my class; I have children". Statements of this kind have been criticised (Simon, 1986) as likely to indicate that teachers are failing to take cultural and/or gender issues into account. While this may be a danger, it was apparent that in talking about children "as individuals" teachers clearly acknowledged cultural and gender factors. The intention behind the statement seemed to be that teachers wished to emphasise that they cared equally about all students regardless of ethnicity or gender, rather than an intention to ignore these factors. In addition to this concern, teachers indicated that they did not wish to restrict children's learning opportunities by 'stereotyping' them on the grounds of ethnicity or gender. However, this may still present a problem. In criticising ideologies of liberal individualism, such as that reflected in these teachers' approach, Sharp (1990) suggests that Maori are treated "not as members of an irreducibly real *ethnie*, but as individuals in need who happen to be Maori".

Teachers involved in this project appear to have faced a dilemma in reconciling their individual relationships with children, with the need to bear in mind wider issues associated

with gender and culture (in as much as they affected individuals), while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls of stereotyping. For most teachers, however, equity issues were considered in relation to achieving change for the particular individual students or groups of students that they taught, rather than seeing these issues in relation to broader notions of social changes.

iii)   **A common concern among teachers was that some students did not appear to be getting "a fair go' in education.**

While getting a 'fair go' in education appeared to be held as an undisputed standard of education, the "cloudy rhetoric of equity" (Sharp, 1990) evidenced in public documents such as the Curriculum Review, the Picot Report and Tomorrow's Schools was apparent in the ways in which teachers talked about equity related issues. Terms associated with fairness tended to be used inconsistently by teachers. "Equity" appeared to have some status as the most politically 'correct' word in current usage, but in interviews with teachers it sometimes appeared to be used interchangeabley with "equality" and "equal opportunities". Whilst the literature indicates that these terms signify different approaches to interpreting what 'fairness' might mean (Secada, 1989), the terms in themselves were not useful in identifying whether teachers held fairness to entail 'equality of opportunity', 'equality of outcome' or 'equity/diversity'. The vague and shifting meanings attached to terms seemed to exacerbate the confusion about equity issues. It was apparent that teachers held inconsistent and often unresolved views of what fairness might entail.

While there was considerable confusion over what fairness might imply, there was general agreement that students were not being treated fairly in education. In approaching policy development, then, equity issues tended to be defined in terms of **lack** of fairness, or unfair treatment, and in the main, policy concerns regarding unfair treatment were expressed in terms of particular groups, that were in turn often described as "disadvantaged". Finally, although teachers acknowledged that some groups were 'disadvantaged' in education, they did not, within policy discussions or research interviews relate this to any broader picture of the distribution of social, cultural, political and economic power, or concepts such as domination and oppression.

iv)   **In considering the ways in which language might contribute to disadvantage, teachers acknowledged a discrepancy between the expectations and standards of the school, and the language practices of the students.**

Many teachers expressed the concern that access to school learning was limited for some children, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups. They suggested that these children were often unable to participate fully in educational activities because they did not

have the adequate communication and language 'skills'. However, although teachers, and the policies, often referred to language in terms of particular skills as if language were an independent and static entity, they also talked about language in a much broader sense, in terms of the ways in which children actively use language. This broader sense of language as a form of social practice comes closer to the notion of 'discourse' (Kress, 1985). In all schools, one aspect of LPAC development was to attempt to identify both the language practices or discourses of the school and the language practices of students. This was important in helping teachers become more aware of some of the specific ways in which children's opportunities for learning might be limited because of the lack of a shared context, or communicative framework (Edwards and Mercer, 1987). Following from this, much of the discussion associated with LPAC development focussed on ways in which teachers could change classroom processes so that they were more sensitive and accessible to children from disadvantaged groups.

v)   Students from disadvantaged groups were identified as having particular learning 'needs'.

Self-esteem

Low self-esteem was identified as a particular barrier to learning for children from disadvantaged groups. Concern with low self-esteem was common across schools, and it appeared to be assumed that raising self-esteem would automatically help students learn and perform better. However, the concept of self-esteem appeared to be undefined and very vague. In general, low self-esteem was seen as a factor in causing academic failure, rather than as likely to occur as the result of failure, and teachers in turn appeared to locate the causes of low self-esteem in families or communities rather than in the school. In this approach, 'self-esteem theory' is in essence a deficit theory.

Although most discussion related to raising self-esteem focussed on those students with low self-esteem, two policies emphasised the need for children (and teachers) to listen to each others' opinions without using ridicule, and one policy specifically linked the use of sexist and racist language by other children with low self-esteem. These approaches do not locate low self-esteem as a problem within the child, but attempt to look at the role that the institution plays in contributing to the low self-esteem of some children. This approach would seem to have greater potential in challenging attitudes that serve to perpetuate discrimination and inequality.

Language needs

Teachers tended to define language needs in relation to their ideas regarding the acquisition of language skills and ways of using language that they believed necessary if

students were to succeed in education, and in the 'real world'. There was a tendency to construe the special needs of 'disadvantaged' groups as the result of particular 'problems'. For example, it was suggested that: girls have problems with speaking in public because they lack self-confidence; NESB students have problems in communicating because English is not their first language; low SES rural children have problems because they have had limited experiences; Maori and Pacific Island children have problems because they have little exposure to literacy-based stimuli outside school. This essentially corresponds to a deficit approach.

There were two approaches which contrasted with this problem-based assessment of needs. First, a small minority of teachers used the word 'rights' to explain aspects of policy. There were references to the rights of Maori and ethnic minority to be able to use languages other than English, and their right to an education which respected their own cultures. Second, in a small number of instances, it was evident that some sense of positive value was attached to certain aspects of language as used by disadvantaged groups. Thus, a number of teachers said that they viewed bi- and multi- lingualism as being of positive value. In the girls' school two aspects of language use were recognised as having special value: the girls were described as being very good at working collaboratively, and adept at using discussion for learning; they were also seen as being good at supporting each other, so this ability was to be used in helping improve public speaking skills.

Talking in terms of students' needs does not imply a deficit approach. However, within the research, the standards against which teachers identified 'needs', tended to cast the students' language as problematic, or deficient in some way. Thus 'needs talk' tended to be associated with a deficit approach, and the policy guidelines developed in response to students' needs appeared essentially compensatory, in the sense that they attempted to 'make up' for the problems inherent in student language.

vi)   **Teachers tended to accept that the overall aim of LPAC's should be to enable disadvantaged groups to gain proficiency in the standard English of the school.**

The 'standard English of the school' was not necessarily defined in the LPAC's, but there appeared to be general consensus regarding the value placed on particular language practices. Within primary schools, for example, it appeared to be assumed that learning how to read in English was the most important goal of children's early education. This focus was so implicit in the junior school curriculum, that it was not commented on in any of the language policies, but was evident in terms of the priority given to reading in the curriculum, and in the ways in which teachers spoke about their pupils: informal assessments about "how children were doing at school" centred on how well they were doing with learning to read. In secondary schools 'academic' discourse was given special value. For example, in terms of writing, the

research indicated that: 'transactional' writing was generally valued more highly than 'expressive' and 'creative' writing; the writing activities most often mentioned were essay writing and note-taking; the importance of clarity and precision were stressed; and an emphasis was placed on "objective, analytical and expository" styles of writing (McPherson and Corson, 1989).

7.2 Discussion

In general, teachers seemed to accept that it was appropriate and right that schools should value and encourage certain language conventions. Clark et al (1987), in arguing for critical language awareness in schools (see Chapter One), suggest that by accepting rather than questioning such conventions, the conventions tend to be 'naturalised': they are taken at face value and no weight is given to the fact that they have been socially produced. A critical approach to language proposes that dominant conventions, such as those that appear to have been accepted within the notion of the 'standard English of the school', have been shaped by dominant forces, embody dominant ideologies and therefore work in dominant interests. However, there was also evidence in the research that indicated that while teachers accepted the inclusion of dominant conventions in schooling, they also questioned the exclusion of other discourses from schooling.

Lo Bianco (1990), drawing on the work of Ruiz, delineates three different ideologies underpinning national approaches to language planning, and relates these ideologies to the ways in which policy might privilege, devalue or exclude different discourse practices. Although he is specifically referring to policy regarding language minority groups, there are close parallels with the approaches taken in the schools. He suggests that there are three basic orientations in which language policy development is embedded:

> **Language-as-problem** construes the targets of language policy to be a kind of social problem to be identified, eradicated, alleviated or in some other way resolved ...
> **Language-as-right** is often a reaction to these sorts of policies ... (confronting) the assimilationist tendencies of dominant communities with arguments about legal, moral and natural right to local identity and language: it refutes the notion that minority communities are somehow made "better" through the loss of their language and culture ...
> **Language-as-resource** ... presents the view of language as a social resource, policy statements formulated in this orientation should serve as guides by which language is preserved, managed and developed (Ruiz, 1988 cited by Lo Bianco, 1990: 265-266).

Using this framework, it would seem that it is only within the language-as-resource approach that the unequal value attributed to different discourses might be challenged. It is apparent

that a 'language-as-problem' approach assumes that dominant discourse practices are the unquestioned goal of education. So, for example, the aim of minority education is competence in standard (New Zealand) English, and formal public speaking skills are assumed to be of benefit to girls. Language-as-right suggests that education for non-dominant groups might incorporate wider goals than proficiency in dominant discourse practices. It recognises, for example, the claims of Maori for an education in Maori. While this is important, it does not challenge the dominance and privileging of middle-class Pakeha culture and language.

Language-as-resource respects rights, but also claims a change in the way that language is valued. Thus, in a school in which bilingualism was valued, bilingualism would be seen as an appropriate goal for all children, not only those from minority ethnic groups. Lo Bianco warns however, that even if schools encourage bilingualism:

> when the **social** status of two languages is unequal schools sometimes merely serve to showcase the inequality and may hasten the abandonment by children of their marked minority language if the material rewards of the society are exclusively associated with the dominant language (Lo Bianco, 1990: 272).

This is highlighted in schools especially when language practices are regarded as a resource only in terms of their instrumental value in helping students achieve success in dominant discourses. As noted in Section 6.2, if Taha Maori is perceived only in terms of boosting school performance as measured in Pakeha terms, Maori knowledge is effectively demeaned. Similarly, if girls' ability to use supportive language and discussion is viewed only in instrumentalist terms, there is a danger that these practices will be trivialised, especially if they are absent from formal assessment and grading procedures.

However, while this instrumentalism characterised the rationales offered by some teachers, there was evidence that others believed that less prestigious discourse practices were valuable in other terms. Thus, there were teachers in both secondary schools who said that they particularly enjoyed working with girls because of their ability to work collaboratively rather than competitively. Similarly, as mentioned above, a number of teachers said that they valued the diversity of languages and cultures within the school. Finally, in one school the long-term goal of bilingualism in Maori and English, reflected the principal's belief that Maori was just as important a language for children to learn as English, and that bilingualism was of benefit to all children, and to society as a whole.

It would seem that this is another area in which teachers are faced with a dilemma. They may wish to support and encourage non-dominant discourse practices, but these practices may not be recognised in terms of educational qualifications, or in terms of job opportunities and economic reward when children leave school. If this is the case, it may be that, in some respects it is reasonable to assume that it is in children's interests to privilege socially prestigious discourse practices in education.

Therefore, although there was evidence that, in Bourdieu's terms, the schools did indeed both privilege and naturalise the linguistic capital of dominant groups, the hegemony of these dominant language practices was not complete, and was challenged by some teachers who were involved with the research. However, this challenge was not explicitly stated, and as with the approach taken towards equity in general, was framed in vague terms of 'unfairnness' rather than being analysed in terms of relations of power. In this respect, the LPAC's did not specifically acknowledge the tensions implicit in privileging particular discourses, and they seem to have provided little in the way of a solution to the contradictions which teachers were struggling to resolve in practice. As such, the LPAC's themselves may have effectively served to continue to legitimate and sustain the dominance of prestigious values and practices, even though this was not the overt intention of those involved in the development of the language policies.

Overall, the development of the LPAC's then, provides an example of the way in which the linguistic and cultural capital of dominant social groups might be confirmed in schooling. As such, the LPAC's might be construed as a form of symbolic violence, and rather than contributing to a more equitable and democratic education, may have essentially contributed to the maintenance and reproduction of the existing social order.

Critical approaches to pedagogy and the role of language in education (Clark et al, 1987; Shor and Freire, 1987; Fairclough, 1989) suggest that if the approach that teachers take to language, language learning and language practices is to avoid becoming an instrument of reproduction, then hegemonic orders of discourse need to be challenged and changed. LAC, as conceptualised by teachers within the research project, did not appear to provide the basis for recognising or understanding the relationship between language and power, and as such may have failed to establish the foundation for an emancipatory practice which could claim to address equity successfully.

However, there was evidence in the research to indicate that there are grounds for investigating the potential of LAC to overcome these problems. LAC proved relevant, meaningful and actionable in practice. It established the central role of language in learning, and highlighted gaps between the discourse practices of the school and the discourse practices of the students, providing the basis for changing and improving classroom processes. A broader conceptualisation of LAC, incorporating a more critical view of language and its relationship to the social order, rather than rejecting the insights established during the research, should ideally be able to build upon them. Within the research, teachers' willingness to look at their own practice critically, their commitment to the welfare of the students that they taught, and evidence that at least some teachers did not merely accept the dominance of established discourse practices in schooling, suggest that such a curriculum initiative might well make a valuable contribution to the democratisation of education.

Chapter eight
Conclusion

8.1   Addressing equity through LPAC

In setting out to undertake the original LPAC Research Project, equity provision through LAC was not identified as a specific focus of investigation. There were, however, good reasons to suspect that a focus on language in education would highlight disjunctures between the language and culture of the school and its curriculum, and the language and culture of children. Psychological studies of language development, and sociological studies of schooling had indicated that this mismatch in the cultural and linguistic practices between school and learner may play a crucial role in denying children from non-dominant groups opportunities to achieve success in school. It was therefore, likely that at least some of the policies might include specific reference to particular equity issues.

The political and social context within which schools developed the LPAC's also emphasised 'equity' as an issue that was high on the educational agenda. A commitment to egalitarianism had been long been held as central to education in New Zealand, and at the time of the research, 'equity' had established itself as the term used to describe principles of fairness and social justice within public debate. Educational documents current at the time of the research indicated that schools would be required to address issues of equity. However, the concept of equity within these documents was ill-defined and vague, and the implications for educational practice were unclear. A specific area of debate associated with equity concerned the place of Te Reo Maori in education, and this, in particular, highlighted the link between language and equity.

Within the research equity did emerge as a central area of concern in policy development. However, it was an area that was contentious and problematic. There was difficulty in establishing any firm notion of what equity might imply: definitions were unstated, and appeared to be unclear, shifting and contradictory. However, in general, the case studies revealed that equity considerations tended to be phrased in terms of meeting the needs of students from certain groups identified by teachers as being disadvantaged in education. Although there were a wide variety of approaches taken to addressing the needs and interests of these students, there were certain general themes that emerged. Overall, the potential of the LPAC's developed within the research to provide the basis for a more equitable and democratic education appears to have been limited. This was apparent with respect to the particular approaches taken in dealing with specific groups, and more generally in terms of the overall approach taken towards language in the policies.

In Chapter One, it was argued that language is at the heart of learning, and that it plays a key role in linking home background and school success. It is reasonable to suggest that a

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curriculum initiative, such as LAC, which focuses on language should, therefore, be fundamental to establishing equity in education. However, it was also suggested that the privileging of dominant language practices in schools contributes to the maintenance of social orders and the inequitable distribution of power and privilege. Therefore, it was argued that if LAC is to contribute to the transformation of social orders and the achievement of an emancipatory education, it is important that it explicitly incorporate an approach to language which provides the basis for challenging and changing established orders of discourse.

Within the case study examples presented here, an implicit goal of the LPAC's appears to have been competence in the discourses of dominant social groups. This effectively legitimated the privileging of those practices in schooling. As such, the policies failed to provide a basis for understanding the ways in which dominant discourses might function to exclude other discourses from schooling and oppress already disadvantaged groups. This is not to say that passing on prestigious discourse practices may not be of benefit to individual children in terms of gaining formal qualifications, and/or increasing their opportunities for access and success in later stages of education or future employment. Nor, does it imply that facility with dominant discourse may not be important in effectively challenging the dominance of those discourses.

However, the conception of LAC developed by participants did not appear to incorporate a view of language which could provide the basis for a critical analysis and understanding of the relationship between discourse and power. Despite this, it was apparent that the hegemony of dominant discourses was not complete.

In general, equity, its relationship to language, and its implications for practice were problematic for participants. There were tensions, conflicting attitudes and opinions, and uncertainty. At the same time, most teachers were prepared to participate in debate, discussion and self-reflection. Although the LPAC's themselves may have appeared to support dominant discourses practices in schooling, it was apparent that to some extent teachers were aware of the conflict between their vision of what schooling might ideally be, and their acknowledgement of the 'real' world, and the limitations and restrictions that this implied for their practice.

8.2   Implications for further research

The LPAC Research Project was essentially descriptive in intent. Each case study sought to portray an instance of language policy development, and in so doing to illuminate the complex processes of policy development and concerns of participants within the school's unique context. The aim of such case study research is not to produce generalistaions, but rather to provide documentary evidence that might be used as reference

material in the discussion of practice and as a basis for critique that may have relevance to other contexts (Stenhouse, 1985).

Although collaboration and consensual decision-making were encouraged through the Massey course, and by implication through the research, the research itself did not overtly set out to influence processes of policy development. Nor did I, as researcher, seek active involvement in the policy-making process. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, the research could not, in practice, remain entirely 'outside' the research context, and nor could I as researcher clearly adopt the role of either outsider or insider. Despite the blurring of these distinctions the research, both in purpose and design, was primarily oriented to description rather than change.

There are limitations to such an approach. The research indicates that if curriculum initiatives such as LAC are to contribute to a more equitable education, then they need to incorporate a critical approach to language. Rather than standing outside the processes of policy development, it would seem more appropriate that the research itself adopt a critical perspective, and establish itself as active, participatory and democratic. Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that

> a primary task for any research activity ... is to emancipate teachers from their dependence on habit and tradition by providing them with the skills and resources that will enable them to reflect upon and examine critically the inadequacies of different conceptions of educational practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 123).

The form of research that they advocate as appropriate to this critical enterprise is action research. The overt and primary goal of action research is the improvement of practice through critical self-reflection. In particular, they advocate *emancipatory* action research in which the practitioners as a group take responsibility for the development of practice. Within such a research approach, teacher responsibility for classroom practice is not treated as an individual matter, and school practices including traditions, control structures and routines are seen as socially constructed, and are explored in order to identify those that are irrational or unjust. Emancipatory action research engages participants "in the struggle for more rational, just, democratic and fulfilling forms of education' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 205). Carr and Kemmis warn that outside researchers may undermine the practitioner group's collaborative responsibility for the action research process, however, they suggest that it may be appropriate and useful for an outsider to adopt facilitatory role in establishing a self-reflective community. However, once formed as a self-critical community such a facilitatory role would be more appropriately held by a member of the group.

LAC clearly establishes language as an issue of concern for the school community as a whole, and asks that practitioners take joint responsibility for classroom practices. In considering LAC, particularly with respect to its potential to address issues of equity, an action research approach would seem appropriate. An action research approach may be useful in

helping teachers explicate their views and open them to critical self-reflection, thus providing a basis for changing practice. Action research seeks democratic change and but is sensitive to those issues which constrain change. Thus, an action research approach would not seek to dismiss the complexities or contradictions implicit in working on a school language policy. However, it may be useful in helping practitioners make decisions on the basis of a more self-critical awareness of their role, and the role of language in education.

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