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**A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
MIDDLE SCHOOLING IN NEW ZEALAND**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the introduction of middle schooling to the New Zealand education system. It is a case study of a school going through the process of introducing the middle schooling concept. It seeks to identify and explain the considerable challenges that this school faced as it sought to implement this change.

This research project began as a study of the factors which hinder and support the implementation of middle schooling structures and practices. It became an analysis of the features of middle schooling that make it such a challenging and problematic innovation.

Middle schooling is a set of philosophical concepts, educational practices and structural arrangements for the education of students between the ages of approximately ten and fourteen years. These concepts and practices are based on the premise that students of this age have academic, social, emotional and physical needs which differ from students on either side of this age group. Middle schooling is generally understood to involve integrated curriculum which is delivered through team teaching. This approach to teaching and learning requires high levels of teacher collaboration, flexible workspaces and timetables and high levels of parental support and involvement.

Ideally, middle schooling provides a separate school environment for children of this age. A number of school communities in New Zealand have gained government approval to restructure as middle schools and are at various stages in implementing this new form of schooling.

The researcher began the study with the intention of developing guidelines to assist school communities to make this transition from the structures and processes of conventional schooling arrangements to those of middle schooling. To this end she initiated a programme of action research in a school that was about to introduce middle schooling arrangements for its middle years students. The innovation began to run into difficulties from an early stage and it became clear that an action research methodology

was unsustainable. Instead, the researcher chose to refocus the research problem to a more analytic study of the factors that were impeding the implementation process.

The research methodology evolved to that of case study. Observational data were collected in the school over two years. From these data, three factors seemed to be affecting the implementation of the middle schooling changes. These were the way in which leadership was being executed, the attitudes and responses of the teachers and the particularly complex and demanding nature of the middle schooling innovation itself. The data were then re-analysed with respect to these three factors. From this analysis, the researcher came to a number of conclusions about the relative importance and impact of these three factors.

In an effort to ascertain whether the experiences of the case school were typical of the difficulties and challenges schools face when implementing middle schooling change, the case findings were cross checked against the experiences of two other schools that were five years or more into the change process. The cross checking found that the experiences of these other schools were very similar to those of the case school. All three found that implementing middle schooling change had been more difficult and demanding than any other innovation they had implemented.

This study identified some aspects of leadership and teacher behaviour that may have slowed the implementation process, but these seem to have been secondary to the sheer complexity and challenges involved with this particular form of innovation. An innovation that requires such a shift in values, behaviour, structures and systems from a school community, and one that requires the sustained commitment of the entire staff over an extended period of time, will always prove to be exceptionally challenging.

The case study identified five requirements that middle school implementers need to consider in order to implement the concept successfully. Failure to consider any of these requirements is likely to threaten the success of the innovation. The five requirements are:

- The need to develop a shared understanding of the concept rationale and principles and how these will be operationalised within the school;

- The need to develop a shared understanding of the complex, multi-faceted and integrated nature of the innovation and how this will impact on and influence the implementation process;
- The need for strong, visionary, shared leadership;
- The need to gain the interest and operational commitment of the entire staff and a high level of interest and commitment from the parent community and to sustain this for the life of the innovation; and
- The need to develop supportive and appropriate infrastructure within the school to support the innovation.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a case study of a school going through the process of introducing the middle schooling concept. The study seeks to identify and explain the considerable challenges that this school faced as it sought to implement this change. Middle schooling is an approach to addressing the education needs of students in the 'middle years', from approximately ten to fourteen years of age. It embraces alternative structural arrangements for schooling, a distinctive set of educational and social values and a number of distinctive pedagogical practices.

1. Clarification of Terms

Literature from the United States, Australia and New Zealand (Chadbourn, 2001; McKay, 1995; Ward, 2001) indicates there is considerable confusion over, and contradictory use of, the terms commonly used to describe students in the middle years and educational provisions for them. 'Middle level', 'middle years', 'early' and 'young adolescents' are all terms used to describe students between the ages of 10-14 years. In New Zealand we are increasingly using the term 'emerging adolescence', a name coined by Stewart and Nolan (1992), to describe young adolescents.

The 'middle schooling concept' refers to a distinctive type of formal education that is responsive and appropriate to the developmental needs of young adolescents. The term 'middle school' is not necessarily synonymous with the middle schooling concept, although in America this has generally been the case. However, in New Zealand the term 'middle school' may refer to an organisational unit, a particular type of school, which sits between primary and secondary schooling and provides education for students in the middle years. The education in this type of school may be based on the middle schooling concept or it may be no different from traditional practices.

Conversely, other schooling types which cater for middle level students e.g. years 7-13, years 1-13 and secondary schools (years 9-13) may also use the middle schooling concept without using the name 'middle school'.

In this thesis the term 'middle schooling' is used to refer to schools which base their educational provisions predominantly on the principles and practices of the middle schooling concept and are either of a three or four year grade span (years 7-9 or 7-10, students aged approximately 10 to 14 years of age).

2. Background to the Study

This thesis had its beginnings in my interest and experience in teaching middle level students and also from being involved in leading and managing change in New Zealand schools. Fifteen years of teaching students in this age group in both intermediate and full primary schooling structures, left the impression that, while some very good things were being done for these students, many of the students were either not reaching their full potential or were becoming disengaged from their education. This observation ignited an interest in exploring ways to improve teaching and learning practices for middle level students.

This interest led to a desire to study middle schooling in more depth with a view to ascertaining its worth and possible application to the New Zealand schooling system. Information on the middle schooling concept was gathered by reading widely, talking with New Zealand, Australian and American middle schooling proponents and by visiting Australian and American middle schools. This deepened understanding of the concept helped me to form the opinion that middle schooling was based on educationally sound principles, and that it was worthy of consideration for New Zealand middle-level students. It should be said that many middle level students in New Zealand are receiving a form of education based on the middle schooling concept, but usually in a diluted form of the middle schooling principles and practices. Few, if any, New Zealand schools are basing their practices fully on middle schooling principles and practices. From this point my interest moved to considering implementation theories and processes and, in particular, how the concept could best be implemented into New Zealand schools. My impetus for this direction was the notion that at a later date I might wish to lead a school which was adopting the middle schooling concept.

3. Nature of the Study

3.1. The Research Problem

The objective of this study was to investigate the thinking and actions that the staff of one school engaged in when adopting the middle schooling concept. The purpose of the study was not to test hypotheses, but rather to explore the process of middle schooling change in the hope of identifying key message about how schools adopt middle schooling principles and practices.

3.2. The Research Questions

The research was guided by two main research questions:

- How did this school implement the middle schooling concept; and
- How might this experience illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling?

3.3. Justification for the Study

The main justification for this study was a lack of research and information on the subject of middle school implementation in New Zealand. Not surprisingly, given our short middle schooling history in New Zealand, there are no New Zealand formed models on how to implement the concept. However, middle schooling has been practised in the United States for over fifty years and to a lesser degree in the United Kingdom. So it might have been assumed that there would be a wealth of international literature available on this subject to inform and assist practice in New Zealand, but this is not the case.

Review of the large field of middle schooling literature showed that there is a general lack of research or guidance on the implementation of middle schooling. Furthermore, most of the models that do exist are simplistic and in some cases they are incomplete and misleading. The most notable omission is the lack of consideration of the complex, demanding nature of this innovation. Most of the existing literature on adoption of the concept speaks comprehensively about the rationale, principles and components of the definition, but it fails to provide adequate guidance on how to put the concept in place, and in particular how to integrate all aspects of this multi-faceted innovation. The

literature also fails to adequately acknowledge and discuss the challenges faced by would-be adopters of the concept.

In an effort to understand more about large-scale, whole-school change, and why it is that this innovation appears to be more difficult to implement than most other innovations, I reviewed the educational change and innovation literature. While the analysis of change in educational institutions is probably one of the most extensively researched areas in educational research, I found little to help me understand innovations of the size, scope and complexity of middle schooling. While some theories of change such as House's (1971) Perspectives Theory of Change and Fullan's (2001) Key Factors of the Implementation Process offer useful guidance, they do not go far enough. Most educational change theories are generic theories which do not take account of the nature of the innovation. Rather, they take the position that all innovations have the same requirements. This is not true; all innovations do not have the same implementation requirements. This study found that middle schooling does not have the same implementation requirements as simpler innovations such as the introduction of a new reading programme in a single school. It is the complexity, size and multi-faceted, integrated nature of this innovation which sets it apart from most other innovations.

4. Overview of Methodology Used

In order to investigate the research topic, how do schools go about becoming middle schools, it was decided that observation of and involvement with a school currently in the change process would provide the most valuable insight into the thinking and actions involved in middle schooling change. At this point the opportunity arose to be involved in an action research project with one school that was commencing the middle schooling change process.

Initially the research was conceptualised as a two-year, action research study of one school's implementation process, procedures, issues and challenges. During the first year of the study it became increasingly evident that, due to the slower than expected progress of the implementation process, a two-year action research study of this particular school was not going to be of sufficient duration or intensity to yield

adequate data. It was also becoming evident that the three main factors which were challenging the implementation process pertained to the broad categories of leadership, teacher reaction to the changes, and the nature of the innovation and unusual demands this particular innovation placed on the school members. Identification of these three factors and the difficulties being experienced with using action research as a data gathering method led to a shift in research methodology. In order to study the three factors in more depth, the research shifted to become grounded theory. Further difficulties experienced with data gathering meant that, by the end of the two-year research period, insufficient data had been gathered to support the development of a robust grounded theory. Therefore, it was decided to reinterpret all of the gathered data as a case study of how one school implemented the middle schooling concept.

The experiences of the case study school were triangulated against the experiences of two other New Zealand schools which had also adopted middle schooling. Triangulation confirmed the findings by showing there was a high level of congruence between the issues and challenges faced by the case study school and those which the other two schools had also experienced. In particular, the triangulation confirmed that the three main factors which have the most impact on the middle schooling implementation process are leadership, teacher reaction to the changes and the complex, demanding nature of this innovation.

5. The Context for the Study

5.1. Selection of the Case Study School

Early in 2001 it was brought to my notice that a New Zealand school was about to commence implementing the middle schooling concept. The school wished to have assistance with their middle schooling implementation efforts so they approached my then supervisor, Associate Professor Pat Nolan, a leading New Zealand middle schooling exponent, for help. He suggested that, as I had expressed interest in studying implementation of the middle schooling concept, they ask me to participate. I agreed and talks commenced. The initial discussions took place between the principal of the Middle School, the Head of the Full School and myself. These talks involved clarification of the school's implementation requirements and the forms of assistance they wanted in order to meet these needs. The talks also involved explanation of my

teaching background, previous research experience and current research interest. A draft Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1) was drawn up with the school and this was sent to the school’s Board of Trustees along with my official letter of application to carry out research. I also offered to attend the Board of Trustees meeting at which my letter would be discussed so that I would be available to answer any questions, but the Board declined this offer. The school and Massey University signed the Memorandum of Understanding in March 2002.

5.2. The Case Study School

The case study school is located in one of New Zealand’s larger cities. It is a full school that caters for students from years 1-13, that is students who are aged from 5 years old to approximately 17 years of age. Within the one school there are three semi-autonomous schools each with its own principal. The primary school caters for students from years 1 to 6 (students aged 5 to approximately 9 years of age). The middle school caters for students from years 7 to 10 (students aged approximately 10-14 years of age) and the secondary college caters for students from years 11 to 13 (students aged approximately 15-17 years of age). The case study was carried out in the Middle School.

The full school is managed by the Head of School. The other three principals are known as the Principal of the Primary School, the Principal of the Middle School and the Head of Senior College.

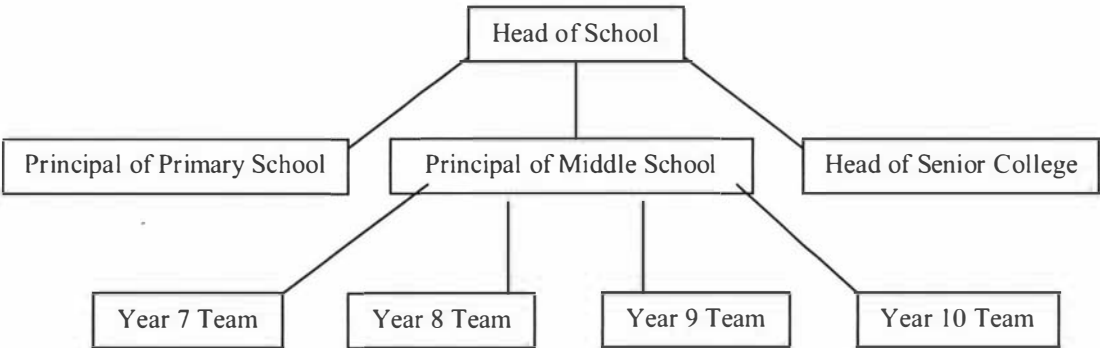


Figure 1.1: School Structure and Middle School Team Structure

The middle school caters for approximately 450 students aged 10 to approximately 14 years of age. Within the middle school the students are placed in year-group teaching teams:

- Year 7 has 3 classes;
- Year 8 has 3 classes;
- Year 9 has 5 classes; and
- Year 10 has 5 classes.

Although the school is divided into three semi-autonomous schools, the middle school has a limited form of autonomy compared to that of the primary and secondary divisions. In particular, the middle school shares staff with the senior college and the senior college controls most of the middle school's curriculum and finances.

At the beginning of the study period the majority of the year 7, 8, and 9 teachers in the middle school had teaching responsibilities in both the middle and senior schools. Throughout the research period the year 10 students and teachers operated between the middle and senior schools, although officially they were part of the middle school. This sharing of teachers meant that the middle school was dictated to by senior college timetables which the senior college had full responsibility for setting. The heads of each curriculum area were also senior college staff members. These people had jurisdiction over the curriculum in the middle school. During the course of the study some of these conditions changed as the Principal of the Middle School worked to have more say in the management of his school and as he strove to gain a larger degree of autonomy for the middle school.

6. Research Conditions and Responsibilities

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) gave me free access to the school, staff meetings, classrooms and selected documents. It also granted me permission, in consultation with the principal of the Middle School, to ask any staff members to participate in the research on the understanding that they were under no obligation to take part if they did not wish to do so. It was also agreed between the Principal of the Middle School and myself that the selection of participants would be a collaborative process between him, staff members and myself, and that selection would be based on

the direction and needs of the action research. Participant selection would also take into account the time participants had already given to the project so that no participants would be overly burdened or unnecessarily removed or detained from classroom duties.

Pseudonyms have been used in the study in an attempt to protect the identity of the case study school and its participants. For the purposes of this study the case study school has been renamed 'Matai School', the Principal of the Middle School is called 'Jim', and the Deputy Principal of the Middle school has been renamed 'Pam'. The previous Head of School has been renamed 'Bill' and the previous Principal of the Middle School is called 'Peter'.

7. Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured in the following manner:

Chapter One

Chapter one presents an introduction and overview of the study. This introduction includes background and justification for the study. It also presents the main research questions and explains the methodology used. It provides explanation of the case study school, details of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the case study school and concludes with a discussion of research considerations.

Chapter Two

Chapter two offers a review of the literature on educational change and innovation and middle schooling. The literature review is presented in two separate phases. Phase I, presented in chapter two, took place at the beginning of the research and prior to data gathering. This phase examines the middle schooling literature, and in particular it looks at the historical development and growth of middle schooling in the United States and New Zealand.

Chapter 3

Contains the second review (Phase II) of the literature and focuses on educational change and innovation and the middle schooling concept. This review took place some nine months later, during the data gathering, when I returned to the literature in an effort

to help my understanding and theorising of the problematic aspects of the unfolding case. In particular, this phase returned to the educational change and innovation literature to look in depth at the literature on leadership for change, teacher subcultures and teacher reaction to change, and the nature of innovations and the possible impact this might have on the implementation process.

Chapter Four

Chapter four presents and justifies the research methodology used in this study. It explains action research, grounded theory and case study research design and how they were used in this study. It also explains the reasons and the justification for the shift in methodology from action research to grounded theory and then finally to case study methodology.

Chapter Five

Chapter five presents the findings of the two phases of data gathering in the case study. The findings of the first data gathering phase are presented and discussed in journal form. They report the most significant school staff thinking, actions and experiences which occurred during the first nine months of the case study school's middle schooling implementation process. The second phase of the findings reports on the final fourteen months of the study when the research moved to an in depth study of the three factors which appeared to be most affecting the implementation process. They were leadership, teacher reaction to the changes, and the unusually demanding nature of the middle schooling concept

Chapter Six

Chapter six presents and discusses the findings of triangulating the experiences of the case school with the experiences of two other schools which had commenced implementing the middle schooling concept at least five years earlier than the case school. This chapter shows how there was a high level of congruence between the experiences of all three schools. In particular, this chapter explains how the factors which had the greatest impact on the middle school implementation process were leadership, teacher reaction to the changes and the nature of the middle schooling concept.

Chapter Seven

The primary purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss the findings from the case study in relation to the main research questions. The discussion also brings together the case findings and the relevant literature on middle schooling, education change leadership and theories of educational change and innovation in order to examine the level of support and guidance the literature provides to school leaders who are implementing the middle schooling concept.

Chapter Eight

Chapter eight concludes the thesis by drawing on the case findings and discussion of the previous chapters in order to identify the key lessons that this study has identified about the middle schooling implementation process. It also discusses the implications these key lessons have for other schools which may wish to implement the middle schooling concept. This final chapter also comments on the contribution this study makes to the current body of middle schooling literature, reviews the research methodology used and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW – PHASE I

1. Introduction

The purpose of the literature review was to examine the literature on educational change and innovation and the middle schooling concept in an effort to identify key points about how best to implement large innovations such as the middle schooling concept. These key points were used in turn to guide the direction and scope of the research, which sought to understand and make sense of the case study school's experiences of implementing the middle schooling concept.

The literature review was carried out in two separate phases in response to the direction of the research. Phase I, which is reported in this chapter, took place both before the data gathering commenced and during the first phase of the data gathering. Phase II, which is reported in chapter three, took place some nine months later, during the data gathering, when I returned to the literature in an effort to help my understanding and theorising of the problematic aspects of the unfolding case.

Phase I established an understanding of the middle schooling concept by examining the birth and growth of the middle schooling movement in the United States. This was followed by an examination of the development of middle level education in New Zealand from early attempts to establish middle schools along the lines of US middle schools to the establishment of two-year intermediates, and then more recently to renewed efforts to establish schools based on the middle schooling concept. Phase I also reviewed the literature on educational change and innovation and, in particular, theories of education change, theories of implementation and theories of cultural change. This review identified further key points about how best to implement large, complex innovations like the middle schooling concept.

Phase II of the review returned to the literature in response to the identification of three main problematic aspects of the case. In particular, the review returns to the educational change and innovation literature to look in depth at leadership for change, teacher subcultures and change and the nature of innovations and how this might impact on the

implementation process. The second phase of the literature review also includes an in depth examination of the middle schooling concept itself in an effort to identify further key messages about the nature of the innovation that might impact on the implementation process.

In summary, the literature review takes the following form:

Table 2.1: Literature Review Structure

<p>PHASE I</p> <p>(Took place prior to and during the action research data gathering)</p> <p>It involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the middle schooling and middle years literature.• Review of the educational change and innovation literature. <p>PHASE II</p> <p>(Took place during the grounded theory and case study data gathering in an effort to understand the problematic aspects of the unfolding case)</p> <p>It involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the educational leadership, teacher subculture and resistance Literature.• Review of the literature on the nature of educational innovations.• Review of the middle schooling concept literature.

2. PHASE I: Review of the Middle Schooling and Middle Years Literature

2.1. The Middle Schooling Movement

‘Middle schooling’ is a composite concept referring to the application of a particular set of philosophical concepts and educational practices to the education of students within a particular age band within the schooling system (students from approximately 10-14 years of age).

The ‘middle schooling concept’ is based on research from the fields of developmental psychology and effective schools. It provides programmes, instruction and school

organisation that are tailored to fit the unique academic, social, emotional and physical needs of each individual emerging, adolescent students aged approximately 10-14 years old (National Middle School Association [NMSA], 1995). The concept is also based on the belief that education for students in the middle should not be just more of what they had at the primary level or a watered-down version of secondary programmes. Jackson and Davis (2000) write that developmental psychology research tells us that early adolescence, or 'emerging adolescence' as the period is sometimes termed, is a stage of development in which students exhibit developmental characteristics and needs which are markedly different from both those of adults and those of children. Clark and Clark (1993) and Barratt (1998) write that students aged 10 to 14 years experience rates of growth and development second only to infancy in their importance for on-going learning and development.

Educational and child development researchers McKay (1995) and Lipsitz, Mizell, Jackson and Austin (1997) write that the core developmental needs that distinguish emerging adolescent needs from those of adults and children are:

1. A sense of competency and achievement;
2. Self exploration and definition;
3. Supportive social interaction with peers and adults;
4. Challenging and rewarding physical activity;
5. Meaningful participation in school and community;
6. Routine, limits and structure; and
7. Diversity of experience.

Leading middle schooling proponents Jackson and Davis (2000) and the National Middle School Association (1995) state that developmentally responsive schools for emerging adolescents should be characterised by:

1. Educators committed to young adolescents;
2. A shared vision;
3. High expectations for all;
4. An adult advocate for every student;
5. Family and community partnerships; and
6. A positive school climate.

Chadbourn (2001) states that in practice, developmentally responsive middle level schools should provide:

1. Higher order thinking, holistic student centred learning and life long learning;
2. Students taking charge of their own learning;
3. Integrated and interdisciplinary curricula that are negotiated, relevant and challenging;
4. Co-operative learning and collaborative teaching;
5. Authentic assessment;
6. Heterogeneous and flexible student groupings; and
7. Success for every student.

According to the National Middle School Association (1995), Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand and Flowers (1997), Lipsitz *et al.* (1997), Raebeck (1998), Galleti (2000) and others who support the middle schooling concept, new school structures are required to support this vision. These structures include small learning communities, teaming, advisory programmes, and flexible block scheduling. Proponents of middle schooling maintain that these requirements are difficult to satisfy within the normal primary or secondary school, and that a new kind of school, one that is dedicated to the needs of students in the middle years, is required.

2.2. The US Middle Schooling Movement

The US middle schooling movement came into existence in the 1950s. It grew out of the junior high school system of education which in turn had its origins at the beginning of the twentieth century. The junior high school grew out of the desire for some sort of 'intermediate' education for children in the middle years. According to Oakes, Quartz, Hunter, Guiton and Lipton (1993), the junior high schooling concept was based on the developmental psychology work of G. Stanley Hall who, writing in the early 1900s, defined adolescence as a distinct period of development, separate from both childhood and adulthood, which required an education system that catered for these particular characteristics and needs.

From several studies (Lounsbury, 1960a; Oakes *et al.*, 1993; Wiles & Bondi, 1993; McKay, 1995) we can conclude that the junior high school aimed to be responsive to

the unique cognitive, social/emotional and physical needs of students in the middle years by providing active, exploratory learning strategies and integrated curricula that would engage the student in the learning process, and provide opportunities for close, supportive relationships with adults and peers.

From 1909 until 1930, the junior high school movement underwent amazing growth until criticism began to be levelled at them in the 1940s. In the main, this criticism claimed that they were failures because they had not succeeded in creating a programme to match the rhetoric of providing a developmentally responsive transition education for young adolescents. In other words, many of the junior high schools were little more than senior high schools for junior pupils (Wiles & Bondi, 1993). During the 1940s various attempts were made to resuscitate the failing junior high school but by 1950 serious calls were being heard for the reform of the junior high school. From these calls grew the foundations of the middle school movement. Wiles and Bondi (1993) argue that the middle school was not envisioned as a new education system. Rather, it was a renaissance, or rebirth, of the junior high school. Alexander coined the term 'middle school' in 1966 to describe innovative junior high schools.

Alexander (1969) proposed that the new middle school build its programmes on the positive contributions of the junior high school which included the core curriculum, exploratory teaching and learning approaches, option subjects and guidance programmes. Alexander (1969) recommended that schools use interdisciplinary learning, team teaching, block scheduling, heterogeneous groupings, and advisory programmes to achieve these ends. Alexander also recommended that the middle school be either a four-year school (grades 5-8) or a three-year school (grades 6-8) (Alexander *et al.*, 1968). It is interesting to note the suggestion of two possible grade structures when Alexander (1969) clearly supported a four-year grade span. The literature (Barratt, 1998; Clark & Clark, 1993; Lipsitz *et al.*, 1997) also strongly supports the notion that students from the age of approximately ten to fourteen years of age (covering a four-year age span) have similar developmental needs. Alexander *et al.* (1968) also recommended that, ideally, middle schools be separate from both elementary and secondary schools. They argued that, if the middle school was on the same grounds as either of the other schools, resources and staffing would gradually move towards the

upper or lower systems. They suggested that it would be difficult to attain a unique identity for the school in the middle if it were attached to a high school.

While the literature on middle schooling has plenty to say on philosophy and aims, it provides very little guidance on implementation. In fact, no literature from the 1960 to 1980 period could be found on this subject. During the 1990s, implementation literature appeared which discussed the relative merits of an incremental approach as opposed to whole-school approaches to implementation. Current literature (Erb, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Norton, 2000) indicates there is still little agreement on how best to implement the middle schooling concept.

Rapid uptake of middle schooling as an organisational form took place during the 1960s and by the late 1970s, in the space of only 20 years, the middle school had replaced 80 percent of the 9,500 junior high schools in the US (George, Stevenson, Thomasen & Beane, 1992). During this period of rapid expansion and development, the purposes and aims of middle schooling were revisited and modified as new knowledge and research became available. However, the original aims and functions live on in various definitions of the concept. The most recent definitions are to be found in the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's *Turning points* (1989), the National Middle School Association's *This we believe: Developmentally responsive middle levels schools* (1995) and most recently in Jackson and Davis's *Turning points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century* (2000). Jackson and Davis state that the concept has seven main aims which all impact on ensuring success for every student. The seven components are:

- A curriculum which is relevant to the concerns of adolescents and is grounded in public academic standards;
- Use of instructional methods that enable all students to achieve high standards;
- Schools organised into smaller learning communities to create a climate of intellectual development and a caring community of shared educational purpose;
- Democratically governed schools involving all staff members;
- Schools staffed by teachers who are expert at teaching middle level students;
- Safe, healthy school environments; and
- Involvement of parents and communities to support student learning.

Since the middle 1990s, US middle schools have been under increasing attack as to their effectiveness. The main criticism has been directed towards the curriculum with claims that there is still no general agreement on middle schooling curriculum (Toepfer, 1969). Some critics have argued that the middle school, like the junior high school before it, has been preoccupied with school structure to the detriment of curriculum definition (George, 2001; Mizell, 1999). It has also been claimed (Bradley, 1998; Killion & Hirsh, 1998; Lipsitz, 2000; Manzo, 2000) that the middle school curriculum is shallow, fragmented, unchallenging and lacks academic rigour.

Other criticisms made of middle schools are that they lack specially trained middle school principals and teachers (McEwin & Dickinson, 1997; McKay, 1995) and that there is a lack of information about implementing middle schooling (Raebeck, 1998). In contrast to most of the other criticisms, this one, that middle schools lack specially trained middle school principals and teachers, usually comes from middle school educators themselves. Despite much having been written on educational change and school reform, there is a dearth of information available on how middle schools are best formed (Dickinson, 2001).

This information on the foundations of the middle schooling movement informed this study by alerting me, in particular, to the difficulties that have been experienced in establishing a clear definition of the purpose and content of middle schooling. It also highlighted the lack of studies on implementation processes, the need for separate middle schools and the need for appropriately trained teachers.

2.3. The Intermediate Schooling Movement in New Zealand

New Zealand has developed a unique form of middle schooling, the intermediate school. This is based on the two final years of primary education (years 7 and 8). The development of this model reflected the needs of a previous era and it has been, and continues to be, controversial. The Education Review Office (ERO) recently termed these middle years the ‘forgotten years’ (ERO, 2001) and Ruth Sutton called them ‘the muddle in the middle’ (Sutton, 2000).

New Zealand's education system was originally modelled on the English two-tier system. The Education Act of 1877 introduced a two-tier system of free, secular and compulsory primary education up to the age of fourteen years. The purpose of primary schooling at this time was to provide a generalist education, and the purpose of the secondary school was to provide a specialist education with either an academic or a technical orientation.

There is evidence (Watson, 1964; Strachan, McGee, Oliver, Ramsay, Ward & Winstone, 1996) to show that not all were happy with the two-tier system. The challenge of linking the two tiers together to provide continuity in schooling was reported in the Minister of Education's 1878 report. Largely as a consequence of this report, a commission was established to consider ways to bridge the gap between primary and secondary education. The main concerns of the commission were the best age to transfer, the type of curriculum that should be taught and the kind of staffing provisions to provide. These are the same issues that have been grappled with over the intervening years and for which there is still little resolution.

The 1922 Report of the Minister of Education contains the first explicit reference to the possible introduction of a new type of school, 'junior high schools', as intermediates were called until 1932, which would be situated between and link the primary and secondary schools. The curriculum for the junior high schools was to be neither primary, which was focused on learning the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic), nor secondary, which was for educating the future leaders of society. Junior high schools were to develop their own curriculum to meet the needs of students who, according to Lee and Lee (1996), were unsuited to the demands of traditional secondary education or who did not intend staying at school beyond the minimum leaving age. This is another example of the ambiguity and confusion that has surrounded the purpose and practice of our middle level education system.

In October 1922, the first three-year junior high school was established in Auckland with some 650 students in Standards V and VI (approximately eleven and twelve year olds). Importantly for later debate on the function of intermediate schools and middle schools, Parr, the Minister of Education, stated that junior high schools should provide a

general education while avoiding “any danger of too early specialization” (Beeby, 1938, p. 16).

By the end of 1932 there were ten junior high schools in New Zealand. Nine of these were attached to other schools (secondary, primary, district high and technical schools), and only one was a stand-alone school. Most of the junior high schools offered a three-year course spanning standards V and VI and the first year of secondary school (form 3). Beeby (1938) argued that, as the majority of these schools were attached to other schools, the length of the junior high school course had not been an issue of any importance. However, as soon as the idea of establishing further, separate junior high schools was mooted, the length of course for junior high schools became a burning issue for several interested groups. The battle for students in the middle had commenced.

In 1932 the Regulations for middle level schools suddenly changed to state that the “period of instruction be reduced from three years to two except that in special cases the Director may approve an extension of the period” (Beeby, 1938, p. 31), and the name of these schools changed to “intermediate” schools. It is difficult to find reasons for this change. It has been conjectured that the change was due to pressure from secondary schools that were afraid that separate junior high schools would result in them losing their third form pupils (Watson, 1964). It seems reasonable to surmise that the change had to do with a combination of waning interest, pressure from interest groups and national economic retrenchment. The result of the 1932 regulations was that junior high schools were reduced to a two-year course, they were renamed ‘intermediates’, and less liberal staffing ratios and salary scales were introduced.

Following the introduction of the 1932 regulations for intermediate schools, two year intermediate schools became the accepted education system for students in the middle years. These schools were under the control of Education Boards and they were staffed almost entirely by primary teachers (Watson, 1964). Many new, autonomous intermediates were built over the next thirty years until by the 1960s intermediates were the most common form of education for students in the middle years. Since the 1960s alternative schooling structures such as the recapitulated year 1-8, year 7-13, urban area schools and middle schools have started to gain favour at the expense of the intermediate school. A change of government policy in 1988 gave parents the

opportunity to have more say in the type of education they wanted their children to receive, opening the way for communities and parents to push for and attain three or four-year middle schools modelled on the North American system.

This overview of the history of the New Zealand intermediate school provided guidance to the case study by highlighting the ambiguity and confusion that have dogged the development of education provisions for New Zealand middle years students. In particular, it has highlighted the tension that has existed between primary and secondary school over the most appropriate educational provisions for students in the middle years.

2.4. Middle Schooling in New Zealand

2.4.1. The Education Reforms of 1988 and 1989

In 1988 the New Zealand Government introduced the Tomorrow's Schools policy. In 1989 the Education Act was amended to implement this policy. The key purpose of Tomorrow's Schools was to devolve the system of school administration from regional Education Boards to parent-elected Boards of Trustees for each school. The reforms abolished the Department of Education and replaced it with a smaller Ministry of Education.

The reforms opened the way for the development of new schooling configurations. The changes which had most relevance and impact on the development of new types of schools were that:

- Education was to be subjected to choice and competition;
- Boards of Trustees were to have complete control over budgets;
- School zoning was abolished; and
- Community forums, Education Development Initiatives (EDIs) were established.

Under the reforms the state was to continue to largely fund and provide services to schools, but the new reforms aimed to make the education system subject to choice and competition. Education was to be guided by market-led forces rather than by a centralised bureaucracy. Newly elected Boards of Trustees were to have complete

control over their own budgets with the exception of teacher salaries and some deferred maintenance, which were to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The new reforms also abolished the old system of school zoning under which students were required to attend a school in a particular zone. The abolition of zoning meant that pupils could attend the school of their choice and that schools could draw and attract students from much larger areas, therefore increasing their rolls if they so desired. The abolition of zoning resulted in competition between schools for student numbers. A fourth change, which had a significant impact on opening the way for new schooling structures, was the establishment of Education Development Initiatives (EDIs). EDIs aimed to improve educational opportunities for pupils by having the Ministry of Education work with local communities to consider and, if necessary, reorganise educational provisions in an area. According to Lee and Lee (1999), it was these four changes in particular that supported and encouraged the development of middle schooling in New Zealand.

Choice of schooling was a prominent aspect of the new reforms. Phil Goff, the Minister of Education, declared that the new education reforms aimed to give parents much wider choice regarding the type of education they wished their children to have (Lee & Lee, 1999). In short, the reforms opened the way for parents to consider middle schools as a choice of education for their children in the middle years.

For a school to become an official middle school it had to apply to change its class or classification to that of a 'composite' school. Under the 1989 Education Act a middle schools were classified as a type of composite school, a restricted composite, because it contained both primary and secondary students. However, there are several schools, such as the case study school in this thesis, which for various reasons are able to call themselves middle schools without having to go through the change of class process. The experiences of schools that have applied for a change of class to that of a restricted composite show that the process can be very time consuming and also stressful, It can also be very challenging and divisive of communities. Information supplied by the Ministry of Education (personal communication, October 12, 2004) shows that the majority of applications made by schools wishing to become either three or four-year middle schools (restricted composites) are either declined or deferred. It is reasonable to argue that it is not easy to become an official middle school in New Zealand and that

only the most committed and determined Boards of Trustees do, or should contemplate doing the middle schooling option.

2.4.2. The Years Following the Reforms

The new policy of competition, choice and institutional diversity led to a flurry of debate, discussion and writing on educational provisions and schooling structures. Nolan, Brown, Stewart and Beane wrote that a “turbulent environment” (1999, p. 3) developed following the reforms, and that during this period many communities, parents and schools began to question the value and the quality of education provided by intermediate schools.

During this time the Post Primary Teachers’ Association (PPTA), the union for secondary teachers, argued that rather than growing intermediate schools into three or four year middle schools what was needed was the inclusion of years 7 and 8 in the secondary system. Middle schooling proponents argued that a student-centred form of generalist, semi-specialist education was most suitable to meet the developmental needs of middle level students. The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), the union for primary school teachers, remained quiet on the subject although a number of their member primary schools recapitulated their schools. That is, they added year 7 and 8 pupils to their rolls under the argument that students of this age had their educational and social needs best met in the primary school system.

In response to criticism of the intermediate school, the New Zealand Intermediate and Middle Schools Association (NZAIMS) commissioned Massey University’s Educational Research and Development Centre to produce a report on middle schooling. The main aim of the study was to review best ways to meet the educational and developmental needs of middle level students (Stewart & Nolan, 1992). Stewart and Nolan’s report, which was based mainly on a review of middle schooling literature from the US and the UK, suggested that the middle schooling model be adopted as “the preferred form of schooling for emerging adolescents in New Zealand” (Stewart & Nolan, 1992, p. ii). The report made three recommendations regarding the form of middle schooling in New Zealand. It recommended that three or four-year middle schools be considered seriously as a more appropriate form of schooling for middle level students than the existing schooling arrangements. It recommended that, wherever

practical, middle schools be established as independent entities and not attached to other schools. The third recommendation was that whenever a community was considering a change of schooling structure, the community, parents, pupils and teachers be made fully aware of the middle schooling option (Stewart & Nolan, 1992, pp. iii-iv).

2.4.3. The Current Situation

In this new climate of parental choice of schooling, but against a background of interschool rivalry, competition and in some cases hostility, only a few communities have managed to establish either three or four-year middle schools. The first official middle school, Cloverpark Middle School, was opened in Auckland in 1995. Since then, seven other official middle schools have been established, but of these only six remain in 2006. They are Cloverpark Middle School (Auckland), Berkeley Normal Middle School (Hamilton), St. Andrew's Middle School (Hamilton), Cambridge Middle School (Cambridge), Sunset Junior High School (Rotorua), and Albany Junior High School (Auckland).

It is now sixteen years since the Tomorrow's Schools policy opened the way for communities to decide on the type of schooling they want for their own localities, and yet, despite the availability of considerable research which demonstrates the benefits of using the middle schooling concept and much debate on the type of schooling structures needed to accommodate the middle schooling concept, there are still only six official and a handful of unofficial middle schools in New Zealand. This small number could be partly due, as Lee and Lee suggest, to competition "as most educators have long appreciated, [this] serves to reaffirm traditional schooling determinants rather than encourage bold departures from familiar practices" (1999, p. 219). The small number may also be due to the demanding nature of the Ministry's process for a change of school class. The cost of financing new buildings and equipment may also be an inhibiting factor for some schools. Parent resistance to the new system, or parent endorsement of a system which has served them well, and teacher resistance to change may also be hampering the development process. The teachers' unions and the lack of endorsement of the concept by the Ministry of Education also appear to hinder middle school development in New Zealand.

The review of the development of the middle schooling movement in New Zealand highlighted several important points which were important to this study. In particular, it alerted me to the importance of parental support and participation in schooling when they have the choice to choose and change schooling systems. It also highlighted the difficulties many school communities have faced when they make the decision to become a middle school.

2.5. Conclusion

Middle level education has a long history of being contested ground in the US and New Zealand education systems. While the purpose of primary and secondary education has been clearly articulated and interpreted into practice over the years, best practice for middle level students has been argued and fought over for a long time. Its proponents see middle schooling as a way to provide developmentally appropriate education for students in the middle years. However, adoption of the concept into the New Zealand education system has proved problematic, mainly because teachers' unions have resisted the change and successive Ministries of Education have neither endorsed nor mandated middle schooling. A change in government policy gave communities the right to choice of schooling. In theory this move opened the way for communities to adopt middle schooling if they so wish. To date only eight schools have done this. Those that have adopted the concept have found gaining permission, to become a middle school and then implementation of the middle schooling principles and practices, to be fraught with difficulties.

3. PHASE I: Review of the Educational Change and Innovation Literature

The purpose of this section of the literature review was to review the literature on educational change and innovation in an effort to identify messages that may help to understand and make sense of the case study school's experiences with implementing the middle schooling concept.

The review was guided by the following question:

What do theory and research tell us about the development of new types of schools, and in particular the development of middle schools?

This section addresses this question in its review of the educational change and innovation literature and the middle schooling literature.

The size and complexity of middle schooling sets it apart from many other educational innovations. Middle schooling implementation is whole-school change because it requires changes to school structure, organisation and culture. Middle schooling also requires all the teachers in the school to make major changes to most aspects of their practice. Therefore, the adoption of middle schooling can be categorised as the development of a new type of school. This review was limited to examining the literature that pertained directly to the establishment of new types of schools which have been developed out of already established conventional styles of schools, because this is the way the case study school and most New Zealand middle schools are established. This limitation therefore excluded examination of the literature on purpose-built new types of schools because it has little relevance to this study where a middle school was developed from, around and through the day-to-day running of a conventional full school. The sheer size of the literature on change and innovation called for further limitations to be placed on the review. The main areas of the change literature which directly addressed the focus question were theories of change, theories of action and cultural change theories.

3.1. Theories of Change

Whether it is the teacher in the classroom who is planning to make changes in their teaching strategies, the principal who is thinking about large scale organisational change such as the adoption of the middle schooling concept, the Ministry of Education which is thinking of system-wide changes, or the politician who is contemplating educational reform, all are faced with the same basic question: how can change best be brought about in schools? Analytic and prescriptive theories of change have been formulated to answer this question.

The range of educational change theories is extensive. In 1998, Hargreaves wrote that we now have a “truly powerful knowledge base” (1998, p. 4) about processes, practices and consequences of educational change. In short, we know what does and does not work. But he also goes on to say that while this knowledge is impressive, it is no longer

sufficient to address the unique change problems and challenges that educators face today. It is his contention that there are few existing theories and strategies of educational change that actually equip educators to deal with the complex, chaotic environments in which they now work. According to Hargreaves, this lack of knowledge is evident in the continuing failure of many educational changes.

Sarason (1990, p. 1) wrote about “the predictable failure of educational reform”. The literature offers a host of reasons why so many educational innovations fail to achieve the hoped-for improvements. The main reasons given are that: there is much more to educational change than most people realise (Fullan, 1993); change strategies fail because they do not focus on the things that really make a difference, that is the culture of the school (Hargreaves, 2002); most theories of change overlook the human side of reform (Evans, 1996; Sarason, 1990; Stanford, 1998); and most change efforts fail to acknowledge teachers’ practicality ethic (Fink, 2000). By this final point, Fink was referring to the natural conservatism of teachers, a conservatism which means that they often have difficulty adjusting to new innovations. Dalin (1998) adds that, while many change efforts fail despite the change literature abounding with theories of change, there is a dearth of literature on theories of action, or implementation, which explain how to put the change theory into practice.

A search of the change and innovation literature for theories of change that pertain specifically to the development of new types of schools failed to identify any such theories. Rather, theories of change tend to focus on the process of innovation rather than on the nature of the innovation itself. Similarly, a review of the middle schooling concept also showed that no theories have been specifically developed to explain the introduction and development of middle schools. This means that developers of new types of schools, and middle schools in particular, have to use generic change theories to guide and inform their change efforts. While these provide some guidance, they do not acknowledge that the development of a new type of school is a very specific type of change requiring different considerations from a single, simple innovation such as the introduction of a new reading programme.

Given that adopters of the middle schooling concept are forced to use generic change theories, there is one particular theory of change which offers developers of middle

schools a functional, comprehensive interpretive framework for understanding change and innovation in schools. It is Ernest House's perspectives theory of educational change. In 1979 Ernest House wrote a state-of-the-art paper (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1993) on curriculum innovation and educational change. In this paper, House contends that there are three main perspectives or ways of thinking about change. They are the technological, the political and the cultural perspectives (House, 1981).

According to House, the technical perspective of change focuses primarily on how the change is carried out. In particular, it focuses on the setting of goals and actions for achieving these goals. Under this perspective, change is seen as a relatively mechanical and linear process. The political perspective sees educational change as a process in which power, authority and competing interests are the focus. House was one of the first to point out the political dimensions of educational change. Using this perspective, House acknowledges that educational change will inevitably involve conflicts of interest and that teachers may well resist and even sabotage the change. This perspective acknowledges that people do not necessarily share common values and that compromises will have to be sought through negotiation. It also acknowledges that influence is achieved by persuasion and coercion and that co-operation is problematic. The cultural perspective, as defined by House, considers the values and norms that evolve in a school as a very critical part of the change process. This perspective is concerned with the social setting and the context in which the innovation takes place. This perspective views participants in terms of cultures and sub-cultures with differing values that often conflict. In short, the technological perspective is concerned with the technical aspects of the innovation, the political perspective is concerned with the innovation in the larger context of the educational system, and the cultural perspective is concerned with the context of the school into which the innovation is being implemented.

House argues that the perspective we hold on change will influence what we see, what we emphasise, how we prioritise actions, how we manage problems and how we explain what happens. House contends that, historically, most people have used the technological perspective for understanding change efforts. Using this perspective, people are primarily concerned with the end product and greater efficiency. Change is viewed as a systematic, rational process where people believe that schools will find solutions to their problems through 'technologies', that is, products such as a new

teaching method or a new teaching aid (such as computers). This perspective also presumes that school members have common interests and values, and that they are passive consumers who will willingly change. In Hopkins *et al.*'s (1993) opinion, this approach has been used extensively by those concerned with centralised approaches to curriculum and educational change.

House's model is useful as a framework for thinking about middle schooling change because each perspective identifies certain factors and processes that are responsible for change in schools. Each perspective also points to the types of broad questions a school might ask itself about the change process. Under the technological perspective it might ask, what does the job consist of and how does it get done? Under the political perspective it might ask, what factions support and oppose the change? Under the cultural perspective it might ask, does it involve people in collaborative efforts that lead to common norms? House (1981) argues that each of these perspectives is important in its own right and that we need an understanding of all three when considering school change. When looking at a specific problem at a particular point in time, one perspective may be emphasised at the expense of the others, but when viewing the whole change process, he stresses they are all equally important. House argues that school change efforts frequently fail because educators typically have an incomplete understanding of school change processes and problems, and also because some innovations are presented to schools in very simplistic terms in order to generate broad appeal.

House cautions that this model does not, and cannot possibly, take account of all the factors likely to be encountered during change efforts. Change processes are very complex and each school brings a unique context to the process, making it impossible to integrate all these factors into one conceptual model. Hopkins *et al.* (1993) add that a strength of this theory is that it has a high degree of universal applicability which is an important consideration when selecting an American theory of change for use in a New Zealand situation.

While the model provides a useful framework for thinking about factors that may help or hinder a change process, it is not without its limitations. The way educators and researchers have used the model has limited its usefulness. House (1981) intended that

all three perspectives be used. He argued that a truly comprehensive strategy would be to view each situation from all three perspectives because use of all three perspectives produces different explanations and provides the richest picture. Dalin (1998) claims that educators and researchers in the past have tended to adopt one perspective or another but have seldom used all three, thus not attaining the depth of understanding that is possible when all three perspectives are utilised.

A second limitation of the model is that at times it is not possible to fit some aspects of the change process clearly into a single category as they may fit equally well into two, or possibly all three categories. House (1981) contends that this is not a problem, but rather that the divisions between the perspectives should be viewed as blurred rather than rigid divisions to allow for multiple interpretations of change events.

A final criticism, and perhaps the most significant one, is that House's theory of change does not take into consideration the nature of the innovation. His theory takes no account of whether the innovation itself has been carefully conceptualised, whether it is research-based, and whether its intentions are clearly identified and defined. Despite these limitations, House's theory of change offers developers of middle schools a workable conceptual framework to guide change thinking and actions.

House's theory was used in this study to alert me to the broad change process issues and questions I needed to think about, observe and question during the course of the adoption and implementation processes. It alerted me to the need to watch for all three groups of factors and, in particular, the political and cultural factors that may have been influencing and impacting on the case school's implementation process.

3.2. Theories of Action/Implementation Theories

Implementation consists of putting into practice an idea, programme or set of structures which are new to the people who are implementing them (Fullan, 2001). Fullan argues that it is the translation of rhetoric into reality which is the most difficult part of any change process. This is because translation of theory into action depends on all those affected by the change understanding the innovation, helping in the development of the implementation plan and being committed to their roles in the process.

Unfortunately, the history of educational implementation research is not always a positive one. On the contrary, research suggests that few innovations are implemented as intended (Sarason, 1990). Fullan (2001) writes that it is only really in the past thirty years that educators have come to realise the importance of the implementation process. Educators now realise that, to a large extent, the success of an innovation is dependent on the way the change is put into practice. As Fullan phrases it, the proof is not in the pudding but, rather, the “proof is in the putting” (2001, p. 10). Evidence shows us that implementation is often a neglected part of the whole planning process and that action plans, guidelines and models for this important stage of educational change are often not available.

Datnow and Stringfield (2000) claim that we now have much greater clarity about implementation factors and how to address them. Sarason (1995) counterclaims that if we do indeed have greater clarity about implementation factors and processes, then why is it that many educational reforms are still failing to impact positively on student learning? The literature identifies a small number of key variables for successful implementation, but the question of what to do in the school and the classroom, and how to actually implement change, remains exceedingly complex.

The change literature contains much information on the technical aspects of the implementation process, but most of it is generic to any kind of educational change. Very little of it pertains to the development of new types of schools. Similarly, the change literature provides little guidance on the implementation of multiple innovations. The majority of the implementation research focuses on the implementation of discrete innovations, such as the introduction of a new reading strategy, rather than multiple and complex innovations such as the development of new types of schools.

This lack of change information on the development of new types of schools and multiple innovations means that developers of middle schools have to rely on generic theories of change to guide their implementation efforts. Of the generic implementation theories available, Fullan’s (2001) typology of the ‘Key Factors in the Implementation Process’ offers a useful model for guiding the development of new schools and, in particular, the development of middle schools. Fullan lists nine key implementation

factors grouped into three main categories: (A) characteristics of change, (B) local characteristics, and (C) external factors (see Figure 2.1).

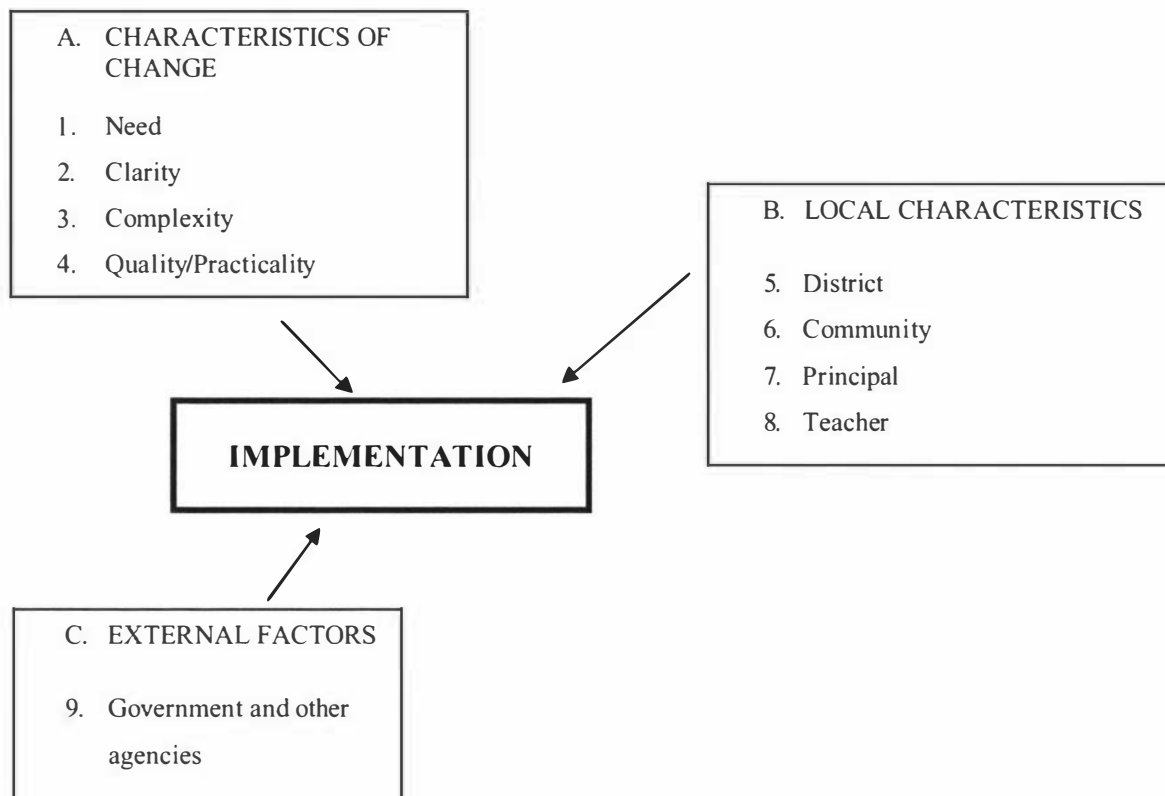


Figure 2.1: Fullan's (2001) Typology of the Key Factors in the Implementation (Fullan, 2001, p. 57)

(A) Factors related to Characteristics of the Change

Fullan argues that the first four factors: need, clarity, complexity, quality and practicality, cannot be resolved during the initiation stage of change. Rather, he argues, they carry over into implementation and often become more visible at this stage. Although school leaders may hope that they have convinced teachers of the need for change, studies show that teachers will often vote for the change even when they are not entirely convinced or when their decision has been based on insufficient critical thinking about the innovation (Datnow, 2000a). Therefore, it is only by doing things during the implementation stage that many people become clearer about their own personal needs and the needs of the school and its community.

Clarity about goals and the means for attaining these goals is a perennial problem in the change process. Even when teachers agree that some kind of change is needed, they

may not be clear as to what it is they have to do differently, and the more complex the reform, the greater the problem of clarity. Fullan cautions against the false clarity which occurs when change is interpreted in an over-simplified way and teachers fail to realise the full extent of what is involved.

‘Complexity’ the third factor in Fullan’s model refers to the level of difficulty and the extent of change required of individuals during the implementation process. Some changes, such as the introduction of a new reading resource, will not require teachers to change many of their beliefs or to learn a great number of new skills. Others, such as implementation of the middle schooling concept, require teachers to learn a whole array of new skills, teaching approaches, use of new materials, and new structures, and it also requires teachers to change their beliefs and understandings about teaching.

Interestingly, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that ambitious projects were less successful in the percentage of goals they achieved but found that they typically stimulated more teacher change than projects that were less ambitious. Fullan cautions, however, that the high demands, effort and energy needed to implement major changes also means that failure takes a greater toll.

The fourth factor associated with the nature of the change is the ‘quality and practicality’ of the programme. By this Fullan is referring to the provision of high quality professional development and resources to support the change process. Fullan makes this point because he argues that too often the quality of professional development and supporting resources are overlooked in the rush to develop goals and action plans and to get on with putting the new practices into action.

(B) Local Characteristics

Fullan’s second category of key implementation factors, ‘local characteristics’, has to do with the social conditions of the change and the context within which the change takes place. The first of these factors is the school district and its history of managing change. Of importance to this thesis is Fullan’s point that individual teachers and schools can bring about change on their own, but that district change requires the support of central administrators.

The second key implementation factor is characteristics of the school board and community. For successful school change to take place, the school board and the school staff have to be in agreement about the purpose, direction and expected outcomes of the change before implementation takes place. Fullan notes that schools that have undertaken successful change have had strong parent-school relationships, and that these relationships have not happened by accident. Rather, these schools have actively developed and consistently nurtured their relationships with the parent community. A founding tenet of middle schooling is the need for strong parent-school relationships and participation. Fullan suggests that schools need to work on relationships and participation before they commence the implementation phase of their change process. But relationship building and encouraging community participation do not happen overnight. Both activities take considerable time to develop. Fullan's suggestion that schools refrain from commencing implementation until they have worked on relationships and participation raised several important questions for the case study. Does Fullan mean that schools should stay at the initiation stage of change until they have developed strong relationships, and if so, what exactly does a relationship that is strong enough to meet and sustain the demands of middle schooling implementation look like?

The seventh and eighth key factors for successful implementation, according to Fullan's model, are the principal and the teachers. The literature clearly indicates that successful change requires the active support and participation of the school principal and that the main role of the principal during implementation is to develop and foster collaborative cultures, build relationships, to provide and share knowledge, and to develop coherence in the change process. He does add, however, that the literature also indicates that most principals do not play well informed instructional or change leadership roles. Perhaps it is more appropriate to argue that most principals play both instructional and change leadership roles to the degree that their knowledge of change processes allows. The problem lies with the complex natures of schools, the complexities of educational change, especially multiple initiatives, and the lack of preparation that principals have to deal with these complexities.

Fullan (2001) argues that the quality of teacher relationships is strongly related to successful implementation of change. He states that the personalities of the teachers,

their previous experience and stages of career, all impact on implementation. Some teachers are more disposed towards considering and carrying out change and some schools have higher proportions of these change-orientated teachers than other schools. No doubt some schools deliberately select staff who are open to challenge, risk taking and change but the culture of the school will also affect a teacher's disposition towards change.

(C) External Factors

The last set of key implementation factors in Fullan's framework are external factors. This category refers to government agencies and the larger society. In particular, Fullan is referring to national policies, priorities and the political forces that all impact on the implementation of innovations. Fullan states that schools may accomplish small-scale change on their own but for successful large-scale, lasting change to take place across many schools, it needs the support and resourcing of state or national educational agencies.

In short, Fullan is not attempting to tell implementers how to implement an innovation in his model. Rather, he is listing the factors they will need to attend to and the choices they are likely to face in the course of the implementation process. In this regard, Fullan's theory of implementation was useful to the study because it complemented House's theory of change whilst identifying important additional points that needed to be taken into account during the course of the research. In particular, Fullan's theory alerted me to the importance of clarity and focus in an implementation process. The theory also alerted me to the issue of the complexity of an innovation and how this impacts on the extent of change required of the involved individuals during the implementation process. This was a very important point when attempting to understand the middle schooling implementation process.

There are several other areas of implementation which also need to be considered to give a fuller view of the implementation process. They are: implementation plans; reflective practice, review and monitoring systems; and the pace and sequencing of implementation strategies. For implementation to take place, a school needs some form of action plan (Stoll & Fink, 1996). There is considerable debate over the form and extent of detail this plan must have. Stoll and Fink (1996) say that there are no hard and

fast rules about the design of implementation plans. Rather, they argue that implementation plans should be a reflection of the nature of the change, the context, the culture of the school, and the skills and expertise of the particular people involved.

Despite the debate, there are some important questions which developers of middle schools should ask themselves before commencing implementation. In particular, all staff affected by the change need to consider the form, extent of detail, anticipated timeframe, sequence of change events, and strategies they will use to implement the change. They also need to consider whether they wish to have, or even if it is possible to have, a highly detailed prescribed change plan, or if they would rather live with some uncertainty and have an evolving plan. With some types of change it is neither desirable nor possible to prescribe from the outset everything that will happen. A more moderate approach to this issue would suggest that to accommodate current school environments, schools should move from rigidly prescribed implementation plans towards more flexible, participatory, evolving plans.

The quality of implementation relies heavily on on-going reflective practice, discussion, review and monitoring of the change process. Good ideas, good intentions and carefully constructed action plans are not sufficient to bring about change but, according to Louis and Miles (1990), too few people realise this. Sarason (1990) also argues that a great many educational innovations fail to impact on student learning because reformers overlook the importance of on-going review. Sarason goes as far as to suggest that many school leaders and teachers do not monitor the change process because of their inability to face up to the reality of whether the change has achieved the intended outcomes.

Three important issues that school leaders need to consider before commencing the implementation process is the order, the amount, and the pace of implementation. Some of the literature (Senge *et al.*, 1999) suggests that the adoption process should commence with one or just a small number of less demanding changes so that staff members get an early sense of success and achievement. This suggestion makes no mention of whether these first changes should be structural or cultural. Perhaps it is not a case of either/or, but rather that the two go together. Maybe structural change cannot be put in place without it involving some form of change to beliefs, values and

assumptions. Conversely, maybe it is not possible to have cultural change in isolation either.

The work of Senge *et al.* (1999) informed the research by alerting me to observe and question how the case study school dealt with the issues of order, pace and amount of change within a large innovation such as middle schooling.

With so many factors to consider in the implementation process, it is hardly surprising that educational change, and particularly complex, multifaceted change such as middle schooling implementation, proves to be difficult and demanding. Like Fullan (2001), Hall and Hord (2006) stress the importance of clarifying the change, but they go a step further and introduce the concept of 'Innovation Configurations' as a way to address both the idealised images of the change efforts as well as the operational forms of the change that can be observed in the classrooms. This concept is based on the notion that, during the process of implementing educational change, aspects of the innovation tend to be adapted, modified and even mutated. They stress that this is a natural part of the change process and that it may be neither intentional nor malicious but, rather, that it happens usually because of a lack of clarity and focus. They argue that most teachers want to do the right thing but that problems arise when the details of how to do it are not made clear.

The purpose of the Innovation Configurations is not to make judgements, good or bad, about the implementation process. Instead, the aim is to chart the inevitable adaptations that occur because these adaptations have direct and indirect implications for leadership and facilitation of the change process. In short, the process of innovation mapping helps to identify different ways of implementing the innovation so that decisions can be made about both the most desirable process and outcomes. Innovation mapping was useful to this study because it alerted me to another way of thinking about what the school was experiencing and what they might have done differently.

3.3. Cultural Change Theories: The Human Side of Educational Change

3.3.1. School Culture and Reculturing Theory

Cultural change theories identify several considerations which pertain directly to the development of new types of schools and, in particular, middle schools. Middle schooling change involves changing the way people think and act. Therefore, it is important that cultural change theories are considered when trying to understand middle schooling change.

Deal and Kennedy (1983, p. 4) define culture simply as “the way we do things around here” and Hargreaves (1995) says that culture defines reality for those within a social organisation. No innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of people and place (Evans, 1996). Changing school structures is easy; changing the beliefs and behaviours of teachers and the school culture is more difficult. But changing school structures, rules, roles and responsibilities cannot be achieved without attention to a school’s culture, its system of meanings, norms and beliefs. As Deal and Kennedy bluntly put it, “when culture works against you, it’s nearly impossible to get anything done” (1983, p. 4). Middleton and Hill (1996) state that those who introduce educational innovations, typically pay scant attention to the social organisations and contexts in which the changes are introduced, with the result that many innovations are doomed from the outset.

‘Reculturing’ refers to the building of new values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour. It is the process individuals go through to grow, develop and construct new knowledge and then new behaviours (Short & Greer, 2002). Changing a school’s culture to one that fosters and nurtures change, innovation and risk taking, is not an easy or a straightforward process. For a host of reasons, schools differ in their ability to change. According to Short and Greer (2002), the factor which has the greatest influence in determining whether a school has the ability to make lasting change, is its level of change capability. They list the characteristics of change capability as being communities that are open to change, encourage risk taking and constructive dissent, and that have a climate of experimentation. Schools that have a history of successful innovation should also be added to this list.

These characteristics of change cultures are similar to those of collaborative school cultures. As Rosenholtz (1989) comments, collaboration in effective schools is linked with norms of continuous learning for all, change and continuous improvement. Collaboration in effective schools is also linked with the assumption that teaching is a collective rather than individual enterprise. As a result, teachers are more likely to trust, value, seek advice, take risks and share expertise thereby becoming better teachers. Roseholtz argues that schools which have collaborative cultures are those schools which are best able to take on and sustain major change.

Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989) provide accounts of what collaborative cultures look like in practice. They found that collaborative cultures are not characterised by formal organisations, procedures or meetings and that they are not set up for specific project or events. Rather, they found, they consist of “pervasive qualities, attitudes and behaviours that run through staff relationships on a moment-by-moment, day-by-day basis” (1989, p. 51). Collaborative cultures acknowledge that, while teaching is a personal affair, it is not a private one, so staff members have to be willing to share their expertise and vulnerabilities in collaborative cultures.

The literature on educational change and innovation tells us repeatedly that quality leadership is the key to successfully changing schools (Sergiovanni, 2001; Stoll & Fink, 1996). While research on ‘school improvement’ is now into its third decade, systematic, in-depth research on what the principal actually does to initiate, implement and sustain change is quite recent. It is only since the 1980s that research and practice have resulted in greater clarity and appreciation of the complex role principals play in educational change.

While the middle schooling literature provides a wide array of information on leadership of established middle schools, it provides very little information on how to lead and manage the establishment of new middle schools. In particular, it was not possible to source any information on leading and managing cultural change within the middle schooling implementation process. Therefore, would-be adopters of middle schooling have to rely on generic theories of cultural change leadership to guide and assist them in implementing this innovation. This finding alerted me to an important difficulty schools like the case school face when implementing middle schooling.

Current cultural change theory (Fullan, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2001) tends to favour the use of transformational, empowering leadership styles to effect and sustain educational change. These styles of leadership are concerned with the culture of the school and how it can change, or may, need to be changed, to be in a position to accept and sustain change and innovation. Transformational leadership recognises that effective leadership means giving up tight control in favour of moving towards a more decentralised, inclusive, entrepreneurial form of leadership. It means recognising that dependence on the school leader alone for inspiration and direction is severely constraining as no one person can readily supply the degree of intellectual, emotional and physical energy needed for leading and sustaining school change.

Fullan's (2002) five core components of empowered leadership summarise current thinking on the essential elements of transformational leadership. He lists the core components as:

- Moral purposing, which he broadly defines as the overarching intent that change should make a positive difference to both the lives of teachers and the students in the school;
- Understanding the change process, which includes understanding that change includes both structural and cultural elements;
- Building relationships and making connections between disconnected teachers, because change relies on disconnected teachers working together;
- Knowledge creation and sharing, because change requires teachers to be continuously adding to their knowledge base and sharing this new knowledge with other people; and
- Connectedness and coherence making. This final component is very important because change in complex social organisations such as schools can generate overload and exacerbate fragmentation, which is a natural tendency in complex systems.

Fullan's model provided some useful points for making sense of the experiences of the principal of the case study school. Middle schooling proponents claim that middle schooling makes a difference to both the lives of teachers and students because teachers work in supportive, collegial, team environments in which they are required to work and

to share their knowledge with other teachers. Middle schooling also claims to improve the lives of students by providing them with an education that is tailored to meet all of their developmental needs (NMSA, 1995). Middle schooling change involves both structural and cultural change, including the formation of new relationships and connections between teachers. Furthermore, middle schooling is a multi-faceted concept where all of the elements of the concept must be integrated, and where school staff are required to work in multi-disciplinary teaching teams. Therefore, Fullan's notion of connectedness and coherence-making has direct application to this innovation.

Fullan (2002) argues that the principal must play a major role in implementing these core components but he does not advocate that the transformational leader has to take sole responsibility for establishing and sustaining change. Rather, he supports the use of shared leadership to manage the demands of educational change. Research by Clark and Clark (1994), Dickinson (2001), and the National Middle School Association (2001), supports Fullan's contention that schools which are best able to take on and sustain change are those which conceive leadership to be a shared, inclusive, democratic activity. According to these writers, innovative change leaders take the stance that there should be many leaders in educational change and, therefore, they encourage and invite their teachers to become leaders of some aspects of the change process. But inclusive, collaborative leadership raises several important issues for schools, given that they are already busy and demanding places. If all teachers are to be given leadership opportunities and responsibilities there is a high likelihood that they will require professional development to enable them to be effective leaders. They will also need additional time to be able to carry out their leadership duties. Schools with many leaders will have to think carefully about what they are doing, what is most important to them, and how they can work smarter, not harder, if they value and wish to make quality time available for shared leadership opportunities. Schools will also need to consider whether shared leadership means that all teachers must take on leadership roles and, if so, what will happen if some teachers do not wish, or refuse, to take on these responsibilities.

Shared leadership is an important tenet of middle schooling but there is little in the literature that explains what this might look like in practice. The literature (George & Grebing, 1992; Valentine, Maher, Quinne & Irvin, 1999) provides useful advice on how students might take active roles in school leadership but, apart from

talking about leading teaching teams it offers few suggestions as to what shared teacher leadership in middle schooling might involve.

The list of what leaders need to do to manage change is somewhat formidable, given that most school leaders are untrained for leading change. Evans (1996) argues that school leaders are socialised to be maintainers rather than the risk takers which educational change requires. One implication of this is that leaders of middle school development need to have some knowledge of innovation and change theory to be informed and prepared and to understand what it is they are facing. Not only do they need to be informed about general theories of cultural change and change leadership, but they also need to be informed about how change impacts on the sub-cultures in their schools- the teachers, students, parents and community.

3.3.2. School Sub-Cultures

As already argued, for educational change to be successful it must take account of all the groups of people involved in and affected by the change (Evans, 1996). Most models of school culture assume school culture is made up of a set of subcultures. The main subcultures typically present in schools are teachers, students, parents and community. The way each sub-culture is involved and treated during change efforts impacts greatly on the success of the innovation.

3.3.2.1. Teachers

Recent literature on educational change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002; Ward, 2001) frequently claims that one reason for the failure of many reform initiatives is that they overlook the human side of educational change; that is the teachers, students and school community. Evans (1996) claims that, while implementation is often seen as the central problem of change, the reality is that implementation is a generative process that must be accomplished by people. He argues that we frequently focus on attaining goals at the expense of the people involved in the process. This approach results in initiatives failing because we did not change the behaviour, norms and beliefs of the practitioners. Evans (1996) also notes that, while we frequently overlook the place of teachers in educational change, we are quick to blame them when innovations fail.

The school improvement work of Fink (2000), Hargreaves (1998), and Sarason (1990), shows that, for educational change to be successful, school change must start with staff participating in the decision-making on whether to adopt the innovation. They contend that it is this shared decision-making which serves to give teachers ownership of an innovation and which must continue throughout the full change process. The school improvement literature also indicates that teachers expect to be involved in the important decisions which affect their school and the way they work within them and that this involvement is positively correlated with high teacher morale and commitment (Hargreaves, 1998). Shared decision-making can be a two-edged sword, however. While most teachers like being part of the process, they also find it can be very time consuming, leaving them less time for their core business of teaching and learning.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) also argue that shared vision building is an important aspect of successful school change. They maintain that collaboration should include the creation of a shared vision, not just implementation of the principal's vision. They add that teachers should play an important role in the development of the vision. But shared vision discussions are demanding and can take considerable time. Vision building discussions are not just one-off discussions. They should take place not only at the beginning of the change process, but also they should be a built-in, on-going aspect of the change process so that the progress of the change is reviewed regularly and the next development steps are based on the outcomes of the review (Sarason, 1990). Principals who wish to involve teachers in shared vision building have to consider how they will make time for vision building. They also need to consider whether all staff need to be involved in these discussions and what to do if some staff indicate they do not wish to take part.

Teachers are conservative by nature, they like the status quo and they subscribe to the 'practical ethic', which asks: is the change relevant to my class and me? (Stoll & Fink, 1996). According to House (1974), survival takes precedence over innovation for teachers. The burden of innovation inevitably falls on teachers, and teaching is already a complex, emotional, demanding practice even without the extra requirements, stress and pressures of additional innovation. Teachers are making continual changes in their everyday practice, whether they are small changes in timetables or larger curriculum changes. Furthermore, there are few rewards for teachers who change. Teachers need

tangible rewards such as release time to encourage them to engage in innovative teaching practices (Fullan, 2002).

House (1998) argues that many innovations actually strip teachers of privileges. For example, much current educational change requires a move towards more student-centred approaches to learning. House claims that this threatens teachers because they have traditionally been at the centre of the teaching process and that this status has been a reward in itself in an occupation which otherwise has low status and is relatively poorly rewarded monetarily.

Moreover, teachers often see innovations as acts of faith where the cost is very high. What one teacher sees as an innovation might not necessarily be an innovation to another teacher. Change for teachers can involve loss, conflict, confusion and challenges to competence; it is hardly surprising that resistance or even sabotage by teachers often accompanies educational change. Senge *et al.* argue that people “do not resist change, they resist being changed” (1999, p. 14). Openness to change depends on a combination of factors including personality, life experience and career experience. Some of these factors, for example personality, are not open to change. An examination of teacher demographics (Evans, 1996) shows that teaching has an ageing workforce, one which may bring with it teachers who are tired and want less change both in their school and personal lives. These same teachers are usually also late career, where there is a tendency towards diminished motivation, enthusiasm and job interest (Evans, 1996). These factors may limit teachers’ readiness to innovate.

Teacher resistance can take many forms. It may include: open hostility to the change efforts and those advocating them; superficial compliance where teachers make small changes in structures and practices but not in their own beliefs and behaviours; closing one’s door and changing nothing or very little in classroom; or actual sabotage of the change process. Teacher resistance raises the very difficult issue for school leaders of what to do with teachers who resist change.

3.3.2.2. Students

Innovation and change in schools also affects pupils but seldom are they considered as partners in the process. Research by Stoll and Fink (1996) shows that many teachers

believe students should not be involved in any kind of school decision-making. Work by Fullan (1999) also shows that teachers rarely think of students as participants in the process of change, rather thinking of them as beneficiaries of the change. Yet pupils are the very reason for teachers' existence and educational change is a people-related phenomenon. This situation, of students having little say in educational change, seems ironic when the teaching profession is increasingly interested in building student self esteem and self confidence and recognises the importance of student-centred approaches to learning, yet we fail to include the students in the decisions that will directly affect them.

Current work being done by sociologists on how to engage all learners is showing that students learn best when they are active partners in their own education. In the past teachers often believed that students were unable to make worthwhile decisions about their own learning. However, research (Jackson & Davis, 2000) demonstrates clearly that students not only want to be involved in decision-making about themselves and their schools but they can offer very valuable insights into how they feel about their school and their own learning. According to Fink (2000), there is some evidence that students do resist and inhibit innovation but he says we know little about this side of change because "no one ever asks the students" (2000, p. 36). It appears that students are a vastly under-utilised resource in educational change. Fullan (2001) claims that this situation is changing slowly and that some progress is being made towards students becoming partners in educational change.

3.3.2.3. Parents and School Community

There is a strong case made in the research literature to show that successful school change requires strong parent-school partnerships (Dickinson, 2001; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1995; Hopkins *et al.* 1993; Jackson & Davis, 2000). Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) argue that the school community should have involvement in the total vision of how the innovation might look and affect the teaching and learning in their school. Dickinson (2001) and Jackson and Davis (2000) advocate that middle schooling parents not only be involved in vision building, but also be involved in significant decision-making. But involving parents in school change is not easy. It raises the perennial issue of how to determine the level, scope and nature of parental involvement. It also raises the issue of the inherent tensions between the middle level student's desire for

autonomy and the degree of involvement parents wish to have in their children's education. There is a growing field of literature on parental involvement in middle schooling (Baker, 2000; Billig, 2001; Newman, 1997), but most of it pertains to parental involvement in established middle schools. Only limited literature (McGee, 1987; Mizell, 2002; Ward, 2001) could be sourced which pertained directly to parental involvement in the establishment of new middle schools.

This review of the school culture literature informed the case study in several important ways. It alerted me to the importance of paying attention to school culture in whole-school change. It highlighted how complex and difficult it is to change cultures, and emphasised the challenges schools may face if they fail to acknowledge culture as a key factor in school change. The review also highlighted the important role school principals' play in school change, the challenges and demands of their role, and how it is often beneficial to approach these challenges and demands from a inclusive shared form of leadership.

3.4. Conclusion

The opening question asked what theory and research tell us about the development of new types of schools and, in particular, the development of middle schools. The review of the literature on educational change and innovation showed that there are some generic, analytic theories of change that provide information that can be used to inform middle schooling change. It also found that the change literature tends to focus on the process of innovation rather than on the nature of the innovation itself, disregarding the differing nature of innovations and how this might impact on implementation processes. These theories provide some useful guidance but fail to acknowledge that different innovations have different implementation requirements. The sheer size and complexity of the middle schooling concept means it presents challenges and issues that differ from those experienced with single innovations.

The action research phase of the data gathering was informed by this first stage of the literature review. When it was found that there was growing evidence that three problematics appeared to be having a significant impact on the case study school's ability to implement middle schooling, a second review of the literature was carried out.

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW – PHASE II

1. Introduction

A return to the literature on education change and innovation took place nine months into the data gathering in the case study. The return to the literature was in response to a growing bank of evidence gathered at the school which showed that there were three main problematics that were having significant impact of the case study school's implementation process. The problematics centred on the areas of leadership, teacher sub-cultures and teacher resistance, and the difficult, demanding nature of the middle schooling concept.

In order to understand the school's experiences and to help with theorising the problematics of the unfolding case, it was necessary to return to the literature at this point to source additional information on these three topics. This review of the literature is presented in three sections which represent the three main problematics of the case.

2. Change Leadership

The review of the literature during Phase I identified four key points about change leadership. They were that:

- Quality leadership is the key to successful educational change.
- Current theory tends to favour the use of transformational, empowering leadership styles to effect and sustain change.
- Transformational leadership styles frequently include shared leadership.
- There is little information available on leadership styles and strategies for the establishment of new types of schools such as middle schools.

This second review aimed to look more closely at these key points in an effort to identify additional information that might help explain the difficulties the case school was experiencing with change leadership. The particular difficulties that had emerged in the case centred on two main problematics. They were the principal's on-going struggle

with clarity, focus and the direction and pace of the implementation process, and his struggle to move towards a more inclusive, shared and democratic form of leadership. In response to these issues, the literature review was guided by the following broad focus questions:

1. What do transformational leaders do to effect change?
2. What does shared leadership look like in practice and how can it be achieved?

Fullan (2002) and Sergiovanni (2001) argue that transformational leaders are concerned with the culture of a school and how it can be modified to be in a position to accept and sustain change. Part of effective transformational leadership involves giving up control in favour of more inclusive forms of leadership.

In the first phase of the literature review, Fullan's (2002) key components of transformational leadership were identified as moral purposing, understanding the change process, building relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and connectedness and coherence making.

The return to the literature identified a number of additional aspects of transformational leadership worthy of consideration because they provide useful insight into the experiences of the school staff in the case. The case study school's experiences in the early phase of the study highlighted three other important considerations transformational leaders have to make when implementing whole-school change: leadership, teacher sub-cultures and reaction to change and the nature of the innovation. Therefore, to Fullan's list of the core components of transformational leadership should be added 'vision building', 'clarity and focus', and time and 'pace of change'. These were all factors which challenged the principal's thinking in the case school.

Brower and Balch (2005) speak of the importance of vision building and vision maintenance in transformational leadership. The main function of a vision is to inspire people and to direct and concentrate their efforts in pursuit of shared goals. Brower and Balch argue that, despite the hundreds of staff hours spent in developing vision statements, there is little evidence to show teacher buy-in to these visions. It is possible to find many teachers who do not even know what the vision statement of their school is, let alone be able to say how their practices relate to achieving this vision. The short

lesson here for change leaders is that they must take time and care to develop a collective vision statement which all teachers, parents and possibly students understand and know how it will be translated into practice in their school and classrooms. While developing and maintaining a shared vision sounds logical and well founded, it is not an easy task. Vision building and maintenance is very time consuming, requiring many meetings. In the case of the middle schooling concept, vision building is particularly demanding because of the multi-faceted nature of the concept. The reality of schools is that they are very busy places and teachers are already required to attend a multitude of meetings. Similarly, parents are very busy and have only a limited amount of time to give to school business.

Evans (1996) argues that the practice of effective transformational leaders is marked by a predisposition towards clarity and focus in everything they do. Evans describes clarity and focus in this context as change leaders knowing what they want and how things should be and having the ability to concentrate directly on a few key goals and model their convictions and commitment in everything they do. Transformational leaders must not only have clarity and focus but they must be able to communicate this to the people they work with. For lasting change to take place, teachers and parents must have a very clear view of why they are making the changes, what they are changing to, and what they have to do to accomplish the change. But establishing clarity and focus about the middle schooling concept is not easy. As the case study school found in the first phase of the data gathering, parts of the middle schooling concept are poorly articulated and, as will be argued, important information about the nature of this innovation and how this impacts on the implementation process is not available. While clarity and focus might be the goals of transformational leaders, the reality of schools (that is, the non-rational, erratic ways that schools operate) meant that it was difficult for staff members to be clear about and stay focused on change when dealing with the demanding requirements of teaching and learning and life outside of the school.

In line with the theme of clarity and focus in educational change, Sergiovanni (2001) advises leaders to focus their efforts on a few important areas at a time. Effective transformational leaders focus their energies, their time and effort on a short list of key goals, even if it means ignoring others. By actively focusing on only a few major goals, they are more easily able to engage and focus staff commitment and behaviour. Too

many goals and demands means that teachers are likely to lose focus, commitment and energy. Middle schooling change requires multiple changes to most aspects of teacher practice. Therefore, Sergiovanni's (2001) recommendation is that middle school change leaders choose a limited number of goals to work on at any one time. This approach is likely to result in greater teacher commitment and enthusiasm.

The importance the impact that timing and the pace of educational change can have on the success of sustained change are factors of which transformational leaders need to be aware. Sergiovanni (2001) argues that transformational leaders look for balance in whatever they do. Transformational leaders know that it is unrealistic to expect too much too soon because it overwhelms people, creates disappointments, and reinforces resistance and burnout. However, there is a balance in the change process between going too fast and guaranteeing disappointment and resistance, and going too slow and risking apathy and stagnation. Senge *et al.* (1999) argue that all organisations, from ecosystems to animals, have optimal rates of growth. To exceed these optimal rates of growth will force the system to compensate by slowing down and possibly putting the organisation's survival at risk. Schools do change but it takes time. Few schools, no matter how desperate their weaknesses and shortcomings are capable of rapid, radical change (Hall & Hord, 2006). Transformational leaders need to be aware of their teachers' needs, skills and energy levels if they wish to implement sustained change. Middle schooling implementation requires all teachers to make significant changes to their thinking and to many of their practices during which the challenge is to sustain teachers' interest and commitment. Middle schools leader must be aware that this will take considerable time, maybe several years. They must, therefore, learn to balance the timing and pace of the change requirements to the needs and abilities of their staff.

This thesis appears to be building up a case for transformational leadership that asks an almost superhuman amount of school leaders. However, school leaders do not have to take sole responsibility for establishing and sustaining change. The literature and evidence supports the use of shared leadership to manage the demands of educational change.

2.1. Shared Leadership

In the first review of the literature, (Phase I) we considered Fullan's (2001) contention that schools which are best able to take on and sustain change are those which conceive leadership to be a shared, inclusive, democratic activity. Shared leadership in this context does not refer to equality or parity among leaders such as deputy and assistant principals. It means that those who occupy positions of authority share with their subordinates the responsibility for decision-making at both the strategic and classroom levels. Shared leadership recognises the notions of shared fate and shared accountability and it requires high levels of trust between all parties that participate in the shared leadership. Most of all, shared leadership requires flexibility and fluidity in determining who shall lead at any time (Schlechty, 2001). Shared leadership relates to Nias, Southworth and Yeomans' (1989) concept of collaborative school cultures. But, while it is possible to have a collaborative culture with little or no shared leadership, it is not possible to have authentic shared leadership outside of a collaborative culture.

There are several different conceptions of shared leadership. King and Kerchner (1991) describe shared leadership in the following way. They state that principals who share leadership:

- Redistribute resources and encourage others to do so.
- Realise that one leads best by developing the talent and commitment of others rather than by gaining their compliance through rules.
- View themselves as empowered because of better communication and shared responsibility.
- Admit that they do not have all the answers.
- Are comfortable enough to allow the staff to win on issues.
- Provide gestures of support, awards and rewards to develop and sustain a culture of collaboration.
- Provide a role model of principled, moral leadership to the rest of the staff.
- Rely on personal leadership rather than on positional authority to work collaborative and share authority.

Neufeld and Freeman (1992) noted the following principal behaviours as ones that significantly encourage and enhance teachers' sense of empowerment and shared leadership:

- Trusting and treating teachers as professionals.
- Creating a non-restrictive work environment in which teachers feel comfortable to take risks.
- Exhibiting a leadership style that is neither dogmatic nor autocratic.
- Inviting divergent points of view.
- Giving teachers a clear voice in decision-making.

These behaviours emphasise the main points made by King and Kerchner (1991).

Shared leadership requires leaders to redefine their beliefs, attitudes, roles and responsibilities. The literature (Blasé & Blasé, 1997; Rallis & Goldring, 2000; Short & Greer, 2002) suggests that shared leadership requires principals to support and affirm teacher leadership. Blasé and Blasé call this “backing off and letting go” (1997, p. 31). Shared leadership also requires principals to extract themselves from decision-making processes to a great extent and to avoid monitoring teachers and contradicting their decisions. Principals who share leadership make few unilateral decisions. They have to feel comfortable with the perception, of some, that leaders who back off are weak.

While there appears to be a wealth of information on what shared leadership is and how it should be operationalised in schools, Blasé and Blasé (1997) caution that sharing leadership can be challenging and stressful for both the school principal and the teachers. However, they argue that principals who share power do more than just that, “they multiply it” (1997, p. 2).

Rallis and Goldring (2000) take the notion of shared leadership further when they describe teachers who are empowered to share leadership as ‘teacher-leaders’. They say that teacher-leaders view themselves as knowledgeable professionals committed to improving their own practice and feeling empowered to work together to improve the school as a whole. They argue that teacher-leaders also take responsibility and credit for

the school's focus and progress even though they may not hold formally identified leadership roles.

Implementing shared leadership is challenging and stressful, and it can take considerable time to develop fully functioning systems of shared leadership. One school principal likened the process to "changing the tyre on a moving bus" (Blasé & Blasé, 1997, p. 53). Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) concur when they say that shared leadership is more complex and difficult than often assumed. According to Short and Greer (2002), the process of moving to shared leadership, where teachers trust the principal, can be a very long, slow process, taking at least three years but more likely five years. They also claim that the move to shared leadership can be divisive rather than unifying. Occasionally, the process of open discussion uncovers value conflicts regarding professional issues that have never had the opportunity to surface before. If it takes considerable time to move towards a shared leadership style. This raises the question of whether it is better to adopt a shared leadership style before commencing the introduction of an innovation, or whether it is better to move towards shared leadership while simultaneously putting in place changes to schooling aspects such as curriculum and teaching style. This question has major implications for implementing the middle schooling concept because this innovation requires teachers to make major changes to curriculum, class arrangements and teaching style.

Collaborative and shared school organisation and structures may promote teacher participation in decision-making but it does not guarantee that teachers will take a meaningful role in decision-making. Blasé and Blasé (1997) argue that one of the greatest barriers and challenges to shared leadership is the autocratic tendencies of school principals who think that they are being participatory, but who in fact are blocking authentic involvement. Brown (1994) identified several further barriers to shared leadership. These include fear of change amongst teachers, lack of trust amongst teachers and between teachers and principals, confusion concerning the roles of teachers in vision setting and decision-making, concerns about possible management hidden agendas, apathy on the part of teachers who do not wish to put energy into improving themselves or the school, and lack of support for teachers.

A further barrier to effective shared leadership is lack of time. Shared leadership requires time for consultation and collaborative decision-making, and review and evaluation of outcomes. Finding time for these activities is a constant challenge for a school's staff but one that they must address and find innovative ways to overcome if they wish to use shared leadership to improve themselves and their school.

If all teachers are to be offered leadership opportunities and responsibilities, there is a high likelihood that they will require professional development to enable them to be effective leaders. To encourage teachers to take an active role in shared decision-making, school leaders need to provide training in creative problem solving, and in particular, in the skills of problem framing, solution development and evaluation. The training should concentrate not only on the required skills, but also on the process itself, and it should promote the value of problem-solving teams. Short and Greer (2002) maintain that, once the training has taken place, it is very important to develop structures within the school which involve and support teachers in problem-solving activities so that they are involved in issues of importance to them and their work life.

One of the dangers of shared leadership can be that teacher empowerment brings heightened levels of enthusiasm and this can lead to overload. Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) caution that shared leadership may improve a school but the more apparent the improvement becomes the more apparent it becomes that there is more to improve. This realisation may serve to lower teacher enthusiasm and participation as they feel there is too much to do and the work will never be complete.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) also point out that the increased talk and discussion that is required with shared leadership has the potential to lead to conflict. As the level of information exchange increases, and people become more informed about the intricacies and fine details of issues, and begin to discuss tough issues which have not been discussed before, conflicts can arise. Some people are uncomfortable with conflict and wish to withdraw from discussions of this nature. Similarly, some people are uncomfortable with critique and feedback and may wish to withdraw from discussions in which they may feel exposed and vulnerable.

Principals also need to consider whether shared leadership means that all teachers must take on leadership roles, and, if so, what will happen if some teachers do not wish, or refuse to take on these responsibilities. Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) claim that a 100 per cent adoption rate is not realistic because some teachers prefer to work alone. They add that these teachers should not be punished in pursuit of the collegial norm. Teacher resistance to change and innovation will be discussed more fully in the following section on teacher sub-cultures because teacher resistance was a major, on-going issue in the case study.

Shared leadership in schools may also involve parents as well as students since middle schooling, like many other education reform movements, tends to place the school and its community in close contact. Traditionally, parents have had little real part in decision-making. Usually their role has been confined to roles as classroom volunteers, helpers in out of classroom activities, raisers of funds for the school, and audiences at school events. Parents and teachers often have different and sometimes conflicting perspectives on parental involvement. Teachers often make the assumption that parents do not want to have any substantial involvement in the school. Parents, on the other hand, often say that they get the feeling that schools and, teachers in particular, do not want them to have any serious involvement in school activities. It is hardly surprising that these tensions exist, given the fact that parents have long been separated from teachers and the real work of schools. However, research (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1995; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Stoll & Fink, 1996) is now showing that active and meaningful parental involvement and influence in schools has the potential to promote significant social and academic change in school. Effective school reform often emphasises the positive effects of parental influence in decision-making. Blasé and Blasé (1997) describe the levels of parental empowerment and involvement in shared leadership as being on a continuum ranging from passive to active, with passive being when parents have a choice of school and only have access to their children's information. They describe active as being when parents have substantial influence in decision-making at school.

Rallis and Goldring (2000) identify three factors which, they argue, support the involvement of parents in school decision-making:

- The assertion that schools are part of and interconnected with their environment.

- Research which demonstrates that parent participation is an important aspect of being an effective school.
- A growing literature base on the relative superiority of schools with high parent involvement (e.g. private schools).

But empowering parents and finding ways to accord them more than ritualistic involvement in school life is challenging and complex. Firstly, it is necessary to expand parental expectations beyond concerns with their own children and such matters as fund raising and social events that do not involve consideration of the core educational activities of the school. Blasé and Blasé (1997) argue that it is also necessary to go beyond parental input to parental influence in order to involve parents in decision-making and true shared leadership. To do this it may be necessary to provide them with training in decision-making skills and processes and team building and sustaining strategies.

Research (Evans, 1996; Jackson & Davis, 2000; O'Callaghan, 2004) shows that, even after several years of involvement in shared school decision-making, principals who are eager to include parents continue to confront barriers to authentic involvement. These barriers are mainly in the form of teacher reluctance and parent apathy. According to Evans (1996), the rules that apply to teacher involvement in shared leadership also apply to parental involvement in school leadership. He argues that schools must: listen carefully to the issues and concerns of parents; demonstrate respect for parental involvement and contributions; build and foster relationships with parents which eliminate hierarchical structures that could hinder shared decision-making; involve parents in vision building; and encourage, welcome and respect multiple views.

Students are seldom involved in school reform or shared leadership, other than those few who may be elected members of school councils and Boards of Trustees. Some principals find innovative ways, such as student groups, governments and councils to include students in discussions on vision, values, curriculum and monitoring and evaluation. Other schools only include students in decision-making when the issue pertains directly to students.

The middle schooling literature (George & Grebing, 1992; Valentine, Maher, Quinne & Irvin, 1999) provides useful advice on how students might take active roles in school leadership, but apart from discussing leading teaching teams it offers few suggestions as to what shared teacher leadership in middle schooling might involve. It can only be assumed from this that shared leadership in the middle schooling context is the same as that in any other type of school.

This return to the literature on change leadership identified several additional key points which helped to inform the analysis of the case study. In particular, the review highlighted the key tasks that change leaders need to pay attention to, for example the need to seek clarity, focus and balance in all change efforts. The review also alerted me to the possible consequences if school leaders fail to address these key tasks. The review also brought attention to the importance of sharing leadership in large-scale change efforts. It identified the characteristics of shared leadership and also identified the challenges and demands of attempting to enact this type of leadership. These findings helped to guide the development of the Phase II data gathering, and the interpretation and analysis of the experiences of the case school staff.

3. Teacher Sub-Cultures and Teacher Resistance

The initial review of the literature argued that teachers, the very people who have to actually do it, are frequently overlooked in educational change. In particular, this review identified four key points about teacher subcultures. They were that:

- Teachers should be involved in all stages and facets of educational change.
- Educational change has high costs and few rewards for teachers.
- Teachers resist change for many reasons.
- Teacher resistance to change can take many forms.

The second review of the change and innovation literature aimed to look more closely at these key points in an effort to identify additional information that might help explain the difficulties the case school was experiencing with regard to teacher behaviour during the implementation process. Teacher resistance during the change process appeared to have two main causes. These were, a lack of teacher understanding of the middle

schooling concept by and how it would be operationalised in their classrooms, and the demanding nature of the change process.

In response to these issues, this section of the literature review was guided by the following focus questions:

1. Why do teachers resist change?
2. What forms can teacher resistance to change take?
3. How should transformational leaders deal with teacher resistance to change?

Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) contend that, while we are now aware of the importance of teachers' role in bringing about educational change many of the strategies we use to encourage teacher change are limited, misguided, and non-involving and oblivious to the real needs and concerns of teachers. They feel that, in many cases, the change strategies used are part of the change problem rather than a solution to it because many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is "done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1995, p. 27).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) also argue that many change initiatives are top-down and imposed on teachers. These change approaches commonly treat teachers as passive learners and seriously underestimate what teachers already know, think and can do. These approaches also overlook teachers' needs related to gender, years of experience and stage in career and life. Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) also argue that top-down, imposed change strategies frequently only address teachers' technical skills, overlooking who the teachers are as people, their purpose, and the context and culture in which they work. It is their contention that, for successful school change to take place, change must begin with consideration of the teacher as a total person. Teachers do not develop and change in isolation, but rather, they change through relationships, interaction and working and learning together with significant others in an environment that encourages and supports collaborative and shared approaches to school change.

There are a number of other factors which impact on how teachers react to educational change. According to the literature (Brower & Balch, 2005; Schlechty, 2001), school leaders usually promote change and innovation, as being better for everyone in the school but the reality can be quite different. These factors include school culture, the

personality and attitude of the teacher, teacher life and career stage, power relations and gender politics. Schein (1992) writes of the role organisational cultures play in peoples' reaction to new ideas and change. Schein maintains that organisations which have what are usually perceived to be 'strong' cultures are in fact inflexible and are typically resistant to change. He argues that there is considerable evidence that organisations that have strong cultures, those that have achieved high levels of performance, have done so because of their members' unswerving commitment to the goals of the organisation. Unfortunately, these strong cultures, where members believe they have achieved high performance through creating and using approaches that work, are often very resistant to change because teachers believe they have no reason to change. Evans (1996) reinforces this argument by stating that success which is bred by stability and strong commitment grows to be more conservative with age, just as the people within the organisation do. In short, strong cultures can suffer from a rigidity which is very difficult to change. Evans (1996) adds that schools with weak, ineffective cultures can resist change too because, much as teachers might dislike their school, they are not usually hungry for change, such is the conservative nature of most teachers. Schein (1992) adds that the more ineffective the organisation, the tighter its hold on the culture and its way of doing things. So even weak cultures can be very tough to change. These points by Schein and Evans bring into question the optimism of the cultural change enthusiasts who hold that educational change can be brought about by simply changing the culture of the school. It is my contention that school culture is a very strong force working against change in most instances and that to expect staff to embrace change and quickly change their values, attitudes and actions is to court frustration and disappointment.

Teacher attitude to change has a major impact on the success of the change effort. There are many factors which influence the way teachers react to change. The first review of the literature found some of these factors to be the conservative nature of teachers, the perceived high demands and costs of change, lack of rewards for changing, and the loss, conflict, confusion and challenges to competence that change often brings. Brower and Balch (2005) speak of the 'me first' orientation of many teachers as being a further major stumbling block to how teachers view and react to change and innovation. This self-interest trait can thwart decision-making based on the common good of the school community. Brower and Balch suggest that the 'me first' orientation might be the most

important law of human nature, one which school leaders need to understand if they want teachers to change their behaviour. Brower and Balch also contend that teachers may, in some cases, resist change because they believe that they are doing the right thing for the right reasons and that they are already doing a good job that cannot be, or does not need to be improved. If this is the case, school leaders need to realise and understand that people often approach decision-making from this basis. Brower and Balch (2005) suggest that school leaders approach this potential barrier to change by attempting to move teachers from a 'right thing' orientation and towards a 'best thing' for the whole-school orientation. They suggest school leaders do this by getting teachers to reflect objectively and gather objective data and evidence in order to answer the question "What is in the best interest of the whole school?"

Chapman (1988) identified six factors which can affect teacher interest and participation in school change decision-making, but he hastened to add that all of these factors can be overcome with good leadership and facilitation. The six factors are:

- The teachers' background (personal, professional or both) may hinder them being able to openly express an opinion or point of view.
- The issues discussed are not of interest to the teachers.
- The invitation to participate is not interpreted as sincere.
- Information about the issue is inadequate or incomplete.
- The other participants are intimidating.
- The setting and/or general structure of the workday is not considered conducive to expressing one's thoughts.

Teachers can also sometimes feel that they have no real influence in change decision-making even when the school encourages and invites them to participate. Rather, they can feel that they are just being given the opportunity to view their opinions when they feel the reality is that the principal and/or school management have already made up their minds as to what they wish to do. This perception can lead to teachers feeling that they are participating in the illusion of influence and that they are wasting their valuable time. This situation can be overcome by formally delegating authority to teachers so that teachers know their views will be considered important and will contribute to the final outcome.

Sikes (1992) contends that frequently insufficient consideration is given to the life stage of teachers when asking them to change aspects of their behaviour and that this oversight can impact on how teachers react to school improvement efforts. She argues that there is a definite teacher life cycle and that teachers of a similar age and sex tend to share similar experiences, attitudes and concerns, motivation and commitment characteristics and that as teachers grow older there is a predictable pattern to these factors. Sikes (1992) argues that aspects of the professional life-cycle of teachers are common to all teachers working in different schools, different education systems, and different countries. She maintains that school leaders should take close notice of the stages of life cycles their teachers are in when contemplating change. Failure to take cognisance of this can mean that change efforts may question teachers' aims and purposes and their underlying educational ideologies and philosophies in such ways as to make them feel their reasons for being a teacher no longer apply and perhaps that what they have been doing has been wrong and that they may have even been disadvantaging their pupils in some way.

Proposed change, or even the possibility of change, can bring gender politics to the foreground. Datnow (2000b) suggests that teacher resistance arises in many change efforts because the change leaders overlook gender politics and the important part they play in schools and particularly in educational change efforts. Datnow argues that gender is a very important feature of social differentiation among teachers, with male teachers often holding more power than their female counterparts, and that this differentiation can impact on the process and politics of school change. In particular, she argues that most school change efforts never consider the micro-politics of gender and power issues, instead treating schools as being politically neutral, which they rarely are.

In the study of one school contemplating whole-school reform, Datnow noted that the male teachers perceived that they would stand to lose power or status if the changes were implemented and the females felt that they would gain power from the planned innovation. This situation resulted in the male teachers resisting the change efforts very vocally, even with acts of sabotage, while the female teachers supported the change efforts very strongly. In another study, Datnow noted that the female teachers strongly

resisted a planned change because they perceived that they would be even further marginalized.

Power can be a very strong motivating force both for reformist and resistant teacher groups in educational reform. Therefore, we cannot afford to ignore micro-politics in school change as they can have such a significant impact on the outcome of the reforms. Change leaders need to equip themselves with knowledge about how teachers with competing interests and ideologies can gain consensus on the means and substance of school change.

Evans (1996) argues that while change means different things to different people, people react to change in different ways according to such factors as attitude, life stage and school culture. He maintains that there are four key feelings which teachers are likely to experience as part of the change process. They are feelings of loss and grief, loss of competence, confusion and conflict. Significant change almost always means loss of some sort and this causes grief. In the case of whole-school change, teachers may feel loss when the assumptions and ideologies they have previously lived by are challenged, taken for granted or devalued. The longer teachers have been teaching, the more profound and intense their sense of loss as they are asked to question and revise their habits and behaviour of many years. Evans (1996) argues that the meaning we construct of teaching is rooted in feelings and experiences that have great emotional significance and that to give up the familiar and accept the unknown is very difficult and emotionally demanding. Teachers have to discover their own meaning in the changes before they can accept and adopt them. This can take some time as teachers move through a stage of loss and grief which can be interpreted as resistance, to acceptance and adoption. Significant change also threatens teachers' sense of competence leaving them questioning their personal worth and value to the organisation. Change challenges teachers' ability to perform their jobs confidently and this in turn can make teachers doubt their abilities and especially their ability to adapt to the new requirements.

Middle schooling implementation requires teachers to move from a single cell-teaching mode to a multi-disciplinary, co-operative approach that is based on an integrative curriculum. For many teachers this is an immense change from the teaching style they

have been used to. Few teachers, in my experience, are willing to improve their practice by 'experimenting' on students, and it would be unethical to do so, yet the leap to a middle schooling teaching and learning approach could constitute experimenting to many, possibly older teachers.

Whatever improvements the changes might promise, the change process used to effect these improvements is likely to cause confusion. During the change process, teachers can become uncertain about their duties about how they relate to others and who has the authority to make decisions. Bolman and Deal (2002) contend that schools rely on clarity, predictability and rationality to run effectively. However, when change is introduced, these three key factors of organisational stability are questioned and challenged, with the result that they are replaced by confusion, a sense of loss of control and often distress for the teachers. The stress of uncertainty brought on by the change process may be interpreted by the change leaders as teacher negativity and resistance.

Schein (1992) also argues that educational change, and especially large whole-school change, is not easy and almost always generates friction between individuals and between groups as change invariably produces winners and losers, especially at the beginning of the change process. Schein also argues that new sources of friction, such as those associated with the adoption of an innovation, often rekindle and open old wounds and resentments which add to the new conflicts. Evans (1996) also claims that innovation inevitably increases friction and that this in turn can be interpreted as teacher resistance to change.

Just as the reasons for how and why teachers react to change and innovation are many and varied, teachers also display many different forms of behaviour during school change efforts. While the most productive forms include openness to new ideas, commitment to goals, willingness to try new challenges, and willingness to share and support others, much teacher behaviour will take the form of indifference or resistance to the change. As has already been argued, teacher resistance is an inevitable factor of school change, and the larger and more complex the innovation, the more likelihood there is for differing degrees of teacher resistance. This resistance can range from indifference or incompetence right through to wilful sabotage, can be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional. It may include: open hostility to the change efforts and

those advocating them; superficial compliance where teachers make small changes in structures and practices but not in their own beliefs and behaviours; closing one's door and changing nothing or very little in the classroom; or actual sabotage of the change process. Datnow (2000b) describes a further form of potentially damaging teacher resistance which she terms 'exceptional resistance'. She says that this is characterised by teacher behaviour that violates the school's essential purpose and core values and beliefs. It is usually accompanied by boundary breaking violation of school priorities or chronic misunderstanding and non-fulfilment of these priorities.

Evans (1996) has developed a useful Innovation Responsiveness Scale which identifies typical teacher resistance behaviour and forms, from positioned on a continuum of hard-to-change to easy-to-change behaviour. At one extreme of the continuum are those teachers who are deeply committed to the innovation and their actions in the classroom and around the school show that they are implementing the required changes. In the middle of the continuum are the teachers whom Evans terms the 'unfreezables'. He says that their resistance is unintentional and sometimes even unconscious. They think they are implementing the change but they are not. These teachers actually believe they are the innovators but they do not really understand what is required. While they are termed 'unfreezable', and they are currently stuck in both their thinking and their actions, their form of resistance is responsive to better information, support and guidance from the committed members of their school. At the other extreme of the continuum is the group of teachers which Evans terms the 'cryogenics'. Not only is this group of teachers not accomplishing the changes, they couldn't care and are not even trying. Often these teachers are perceived by school leaders and other teachers to be lazy or apathetic, sometimes even malicious. This last group of teachers is the hardest to change and usually causes the school leaders the most grief. This model informed the study by providing possible explanations for some of the teacher behaviour seen in the case study.

The literature suggests that the ideal school culture for encouraging and supporting is a collaborative one. However, collaborative efforts are hard to start and hard to sustain because the entrenched norms that prevail amongst teachers are those of privacy and autonomy. Evans (1996) maintains that efforts to move towards and/or enhance collaboration and collegiality often provoke apathy rather than resistance. He claims

that most schools are characterised by congeniality where people are pleasant to each other, rather than collaboration which requires teachers to engage in serious professional interaction. He maintains that generally teachers are not fundamentally opposed to collaboration but, rather, that they are disinterested. He says this form of teacher resistance generally manifests itself in people not volunteering for new or additional duties and complaining about the amount of time taken out of their teaching for shared discussions and decision-making. Many of these teachers passively engage in collaboration, that is, they attend meetings but essentially just go through the motions.

Collaboration, shared leadership and shared decision-making all mean more work and more working with adults rather than with students. They also require high levels of adult interaction which many teachers do not welcome. Nias and her colleagues (1989) go as far as to claim that many teachers actually prefer to work and interact with students rather than with adults. Generally, shared leadership and collaboration come as additional to a teacher's already very busy schedule. Most teachers do not welcome the burden of more work at school even if they know the outcome will be beneficial to their students. Nias suggests that teachers tend to choose teaching as a career because of the student-centred focus of the profession not for an adult focus.

While collaborative change cultures may be the ideal environment for school change to take place in, having a collaborative culture does not necessarily mean that it is a productive change culture. Some forms of collaboration are counter-productive and best avoided. In particular, Nias *et al.* (1989) refer to three main forms of counter-productive collaboration which they term 'balkanisation', 'comfortable collaboration' and 'contrived congeniality'.

According to Nias *et al.* (1989) and Fullan and Hargreaves (1995), balkanised cultures are usually made up of separate and sometimes competing groups of teachers. These cultures are usually seen in schools that have moved somewhat from being cultures of individualism, but they are still operating in groups rather than as a school as a whole. It is not only the conservative teachers who form into these groups, innovative teachers who may see themselves ahead of their colleagues, or leading the way, are also just as likely to separate themselves in ways that are detrimental to whole-school development. Balkanisation can lead to poor communication, indifference, conflict and groups going

their own way, doing their own thing, factors which all impede change and improvement efforts.

Comfortable collaboration, also called 'bounded collaboration' (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1995), focuses on the short term and the immediate and rarely reaches deep down to the values, beliefs and principles of teaching. Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) contend that comfortable collaboration is characterised by camaraderie, much talk about sharing, exchanging, celebrating and supporting, but very little talk about inquiring, reflecting and critique.

The third type of counter-productive collaborative culture is contrived collegiality. Nias *et al.* (1989) associate this with school cultures in which school leaders have a high level of control to regulate and tame teacher behaviour. According to Nias *et al.* (1989), these cultures are characterised by a high level of rules and procedures which are used to increase the amount of teacher joint planning, consultation and other forms of working together. These rules and procedures are often used to get teacher co-operation in schools where little has existed before. Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) argue that this is a useful strategy to put teachers in touch with each other and to start them working with each other. But the danger with this approach is that often the culture remains one where collegiality and partnership are mandated rather than seen as an inherently useful means to school improvement.

A further barrier to change is teacher factions which may develop within either collaborative or individualistic school cultures. When changes are introduced, schools frequently become split into factions. Frequently the opposition groups are made up of the older, more experienced teachers (Sikes, 1992). Experienced teachers who have been teaching for many years will have developed ways of doing things which they have found to work for them. Change challenges their professional experience, judgement and expertise. Consequently they may be reluctant to abandon what they see as tried and tested methods for new ones, which they may be afraid could fail.

Huberman (1988) found that older teachers were not only more resistant to change but also less likely to believe that it would work. Unfortunately, given the relative privacy of their classrooms, teachers can resist most changes if they wish.

For school leaders, this raises the very difficult issue of what to do with teachers who resist change. Evans (1996) argues that the measures school leaders use to overcome teacher resistance should depend on the reasons for the resistance, the form of the resistance, the number and strength of the resisters and whether the resisters are few or many, weak or strong, vocal or quiet. He argues that a few quiet teachers who do not implement a new priority pose a different threat to the success of the innovation than a larger, influential group which openly and publicly challenges the changes. Therefore, the first step to overcoming teacher resistance is to clearly identify the extent of the resistance, who the resisters are, the mode of their resistance, and the impact their actions are having on other people, the students, and the change process efforts.

However, when faced with the difficult question of what to do with teachers that resist change efforts, Rallis and Goldring (2000) claim that the typical reaction is to avoid potentially serious conflict. They contend that school leadership has a culture of avoidance in which leaders prefer to minimise friction because to tackle it can lead to potentially messy conflict situations. They also claim that the culture of avoidance prevalent in most schools means that staff members do not openly criticise or question another person's thoughts or actions. Blasé and Blasé (1997) suggest that the type of person who is attracted to teaching tends to be a nurturer who likes people and who in turn, wants to be liked by others.

Furthermore, most school leaders are trained to be maintainers rather than innovators. School leaders are not usually trained in how to implement major change and, in particular, how to deal with teacher reaction to change. Unfortunately, there appear to be few answers to the problem of how to convert the cryogenics to the cause of an innovation, or how to move the unfreezables to being committed and practising. Instead, school leaders have to cobble together their own methods for how to deal with teacher resistance. They do so from a variety of sources, including trial and error, the experience of other change leaders, and the school and organisational management literature.

According to Hall and Hord (2006), the main steps needed to deal with teacher resistance are: to determine the reason for the apparent resistance; to consider whether the teachers have sufficient, good quality information about the innovation on which to

make decisions about the proposed change; to consider the age and career stages of the teachers; and to consider workload issues and issues to do with the rate and pace of the change.

As part of considering the reasons for teacher resistance to change, Datnow (2000b) recommends that change leaders look carefully at power relations and gender politics in their school. She recommends that change leaders identify the power groups in the school to ensure that they are not pressurising or intimidating other teachers in any way. She recommends that change leaders ensure that the stronger individuals or groups of teachers are not dominating the decision-making processes.

Having identified the reasons for teacher resistance to change, Fullan (2005) recommends that effective leaders in a culture of change appreciate resistance and learn to work with it, not against it. He argues that dissent should be viewed as being a potential source of new and alternative ideas. He goes as far as to suggest that an absence of conflict in a culture of change may be a sign of decay. While recommending that schools view dissent as a potential source of new ideas, he also recommends that school leaders simultaneously seek out dissent while establishing mechanisms and strategies for sorting out and reconciling the differences. Diverse people in an organisation can provide valuable information about how things currently work, the impact suggested changes might have, and likely sources of resistance. In particular, Fullan (2004) recommends change leaders work with teacher resistance by:

- Acknowledging that anxiety, fear and resistance are all natural parts of the change process.
- Soliciting and listening to the concerns and ideas of the people whose lives are going to be changed.
- Incorporating the concerns and ideas of the dissenters into the discussions about the change.
- Creating the expectation that change is a given, but that direction is needed for all concerned.

Fullan (2005) argues that school leaders must attempt to build good relationships with doubters, even if at first these teachers do not trust the school leaders because, he

maintains, resisters may have good reasons to resist. Resisters sometimes have ideas or see alternatives that the rest of the staff have missed, and may understand problems about the implementation of the innovation which other staff members have overlooked.

Hall (1979) identified a number of stages of concern in which teachers may find themselves when undertaking an innovation. Hall points out that teachers vary in their attitudes and anxieties towards new ideas. He argues that understanding where they are at in their level of concern can allow for the creation of strategies to help them move to an acceptance stage. His Concerns-Based Adoption Model provides some useful insight into the types of issues teachers face when undertaking an innovation. Hall and Hord (2006) have also developed a Concerns Based Model which is very similar to the Hall model described above, in that it too highlights issues teachers face when implementing innovations. But Hall and Hord's (2006) model goes a little further and is more useful because it provides school staffs with techniques for assessing the stage of concern teachers are at. Hall and Hord (2006) also provide a ready-made Stage of Concern Questionnaire which can be used to construct concerns profiles.

Having identified the reasons for teacher hesitancy and resistance to change by considering such factors as teacher concerns, demographics, and school politics, school leaders have to decide how best to manage and change the situation to create a school culture that better supports teachers to accept and make change. As argued earlier, it appears to be widely accepted that successful school change will be most successful within a supportive, collaborative school culture. Such school cultures are characterised by strong leadership, often shared leadership, shared vision building and decision-making, trust and respect for all school stakeholders, caring and sharing supportive relationships, and teacher commitment to continuous learning and school improvement. To these characteristics Schein (1992) would add a further very important aspect of a school culture, the acknowledgment that all people, including teachers, make mistakes. Many teachers will have unpleasant memories of previous change processes in which they made mistakes that resulted in reprimand or ridiculed. It is important for school leaders to understand the point that all people make mistakes in order to allow others to make mistakes and, likewise, to move forward when the leader makes a mistake. Acknowledging responsibility for a mistake and learning from it is important and

should be encouraged among all staff members so that teachers feel comfortable with taking calculated risks.

While effective collaborative change cultures can be established, it takes considerable time to make them happen. Collaborative cultures cannot be established simply by structuring interactive opportunities and work arrangements. These may help such a culture to develop, but may also lead to counterproductive forms of collegiality in which teachers are put through collaborative paces that have little impact and usually slowly wither away. Effective collaborative cultures are strong and focused. In these cultures teachers question and investigate their core values, principles and practices, and work together to change these where necessary in the interests of improved outcomes for both staff and students.

Teachers need training and professional development as they move towards collaborative practices. They may require training in team management skills, meeting and time management procedures, and collaborative decision-making processes. Many change leaders also find that teacher training in conflict management is a very valuable factor in the change process.

Talk of how to establish collaborative change cultures raises the difficult question of the timing of stages in the change process, particular when implementing whole-school change such as the introduction of the middle schooling concept into a school that previous had a culture of isolation. Should principals try to change the school culture before introducing the innovation, or should they use implementation of the innovation to drive the adoption of collaborative practices?

Schlechty (2001) speaks of the importance of having supportive organisational structures like collaboration, and teacher-peer relationships to support change, but he also stresses the importance of adequate resourcing in terms of time, money and materials, to support the change efforts. He argues that, if resources of this nature are limited, teachers may fight over those that are available with the result that conflicts and bitterness may arise between teachers. This will not be conducive to making lasting change

Short and Greer (2002) argue that only when innovation is rewarded is it seen as valued in an organisation. When teachers see innovation efforts being acknowledged and having a positive impact on the organisation they are more likely to engage in risk-taking, innovative behaviour. Rallis and Goldring (2000) note that to get teachers to redefine their roles, take risks and change their practices, they must believe that their efforts will lead to rewards, even if these are mainly intrinsic. They stress that principals must realise the importance of rewards and incentives in the change process. Change rewards can take either the form of intrinsic rewards (such as a heightened sense of efficacy, a sense of personal growth, social interaction, and autonomy), or extrinsic rewards (such as additional planning time, increased peer contact, relief from administrative duties and increased professional development time). Interestingly, the work of O'Callaghan (2004) showed that increasing teachers' salaries did not work as a successful incentive to get teachers to change their behaviour.

The return to the literature on teacher sub-culture and resistance served to inform the study in two important ways. Firstly, it helped to focus the second phase of the data gathering and, secondly, it helped to interpret the teacher behaviour observed in the case study. Because teacher resistance to the change proved to be a significant issue in the case study, the information of particular importance in the review was that on why teachers resist and how leaders can and should deal with this. The review highlighted the fact that resistance is a natural part of change and that leaders need to work with it rather than against it, or to ignore it. The review also highlighted the point that not all teachers want to or know how to collaborate and that they may need training and support to move to this kind of culture.

4. The Nature of Innovation and the Nature of the Middle Schooling Concept

The purpose of this final section of the Phase II literature review was to return to the literature in an effort to find out more about the third problematic that had challenged the case study school's implementation process. That was, the unusual nature of the middle schooling concept. In order to examine this issue the return to the literature had three specific purposes. The first of these was to re-examine the literature on educational change and innovation in an effort to source information about how the different nature of innovations might impact on implementation processes. The second

purpose was to ascertain whether the middle schooling literature considers the nature of this innovation and whether it acknowledges how the size and complexity of this particular innovation may present implementers with challenges not experienced with small, less complex innovations. Thirdly, this return to the middle schooling literature aimed to examine the literature on the middle schooling concept itself. This in-depth examination of the concept itself aimed to ascertain whether there was anything about the definition and explanation of the concept that might have hampered the case school's ability to make sense of the requirements of the concept and to translate these into action. In particular, this investigation wished to: ascertain whether the intentions of the middle schooling concept are clearly articulated; to see if adequate, clearly defined explanation is provided on what the principles of the concept should look like in practice; and to see if adequate explanation is provided on how best to translate the concept into action.

4.1. Re-examination of the Literature on Educational Change and Innovation

Phase I of the literature review identified five key points regarding the implementation of large, complex, whole-school innovations.

- For successful change to take place, all people involved in the change must clearly understand the intentions of the innovation, how they will look when implemented and how they are to be implemented.
- The implementation of large, whole-school innovations presents special challenges because the size of the innovations raises additional issues about the timing and pace of implementation and how to sustain participant interest and commitment over the implementation period which can be many years.
- The larger and more complex the innovation, the more likelihood there is for differing degrees of teacher resistance.
- The longer it takes to implement an innovation, the more likelihood there is of differing degrees of teacher resistance.
- The longer it takes to implement an innovation, the more difficult it is to sustain and maintain interest, with the danger that the innovation may atrophy and die.

Extensive searches of the educational change and innovation literature found very little further acknowledgement that different innovations may have different implementation

requirements. It was not possible to find a source that spoke specifically about the differing nature of innovations and the implications this might have for the implementation processes. Rather, the literature tends to treat all innovations as having the same implementation requirements, even when it would seem apparent that they do not. It would appear reasonable to conjecture that a syndicate or team-level change, such as the implementation of a new physical education curriculum requirement, is not going to pose the same challenges as an innovation that requires all teachers in a school to question their values and beliefs and to make significant changes to most aspects of their practice over a long period of time.

The return to the educational change and innovation literature also found that the change literature tends to focus on the process of innovation rather than on the nature of the innovation itself, disregarding the differing natures of innovations and how these might impact on implementation processes

4.2. Re-examination of the Literature on Middle Schooling

Review of the middle schooling literature also found a notable lack of reference to the atypical nature of this innovation. While the literature acknowledges the whole-school nature of the innovation, little reference is made to the complex, multi-faceted, interconnected, integrated nature of middle schooling. There is also little mention of how all aspects should be present, how they fit together to form a coherent whole, and how, if one aspect is changed, this change necessitates changes in several other practices. Rarely do educational innovations contain so many different, interrelated elements that have to be implemented by all members of the school. This innovation requires all staff members of a school to have high levels of interest, energy and commitment for a prolonged period of time, for the life of the innovation. This innovation also requires the on-going support and involvement of parents to maintain and sustain it.

As stated above, Jackson and Davies (2000) do discuss the scope of the concept and how the lists of principles are not a list of options from which schools may pick and choose. Instead, they argue that, for the concept to improve education for middle level students, all of the components must be implemented.

The only direct reference that could be found to the complex nature of the innovation itself was in Brown and Saltman (2005). In this book Nancy Lesko makes brief reference to the “unusual demands of this innovation” (2005, p. 269). In this passage she is referring to the concurrent implementation of multiple innovations that is required when implementing the middle schooling concept. Unfortunately, she does explain how the complexity might influence the change strategy.

It was possible to find references to factors that might impact on the implementation of individual components of the concept, such as parental resistance to the establishment of homogeneous classes (Dickinson, 2001; Hallinan, 1992) and parent and teacher resistance to multi-disciplinary teaming (Flowers, Mertens & Mulhall, 2000). The literature does provide some suggestions for how to attend to these matters.

Reference is also made in passing to considerations such as the pace of the implementation process (Brown & Saltman, 2005), but these references tend to be made in general terms about what we know about change in general, and not in terms of middle school change in particular. These references make no mention of critical matters such as the possible duration of the middle schooling change process (maybe as long as ten years), and how it will be necessary to foster and sustain teacher and parent interest in the innovation for many years.

So while the literature does identify some of the challenges middle school implementers will face, it provides little guidance in the way of research on the experience of how other people have dealt with the bigger issues of the management of the introduction of multiple innovations across a whole school. The literature gives the impression that the middle schooling concept does not present any challenges over and above those you would expect in any change process, whether the change was the introduction of a new reading programme into a four-teacher syndicate, or whether it was whole-school, multi-faceted change.

The lack of reference to the demanding nature of this particular innovation and the challenges this will present to be would-be-adopters is perplexing given the number of years schools have been adopting the concept. Perhaps, as House (1981) argues, some

innovations are presented to schools in simplistic terms to generate broad appeal. Perhaps the proponents of middle schooling deliberately chose not to inform prospective adopters of the complex nature of the innovation, because they were afraid that revealing the issues associated with adopting and sustaining middle schooling might be off-putting and potentially damaging to their cause.

4.3. Re-examination of the Literature on the Middle Schooling Concept

Since the birth of the middle schooling movement, the concept has been written and rewritten several times. My investigation of the different versions of the concept, involved the examination of three versions of the concept. The three versions were those of Alexander *et al.* (1968), the National Middle School Association (1995) and Jackson and Davis (2000). These definitions were chosen because they cover the period from the movement's inception in the 1950s until today, and also because they are the most well-known definitions of the concept. Examination of the three definitions showed that all three are founded on the same philosophy and principles, and that all three advocate the use of similar practices for putting the principles into action. Therefore, it was not necessary to examine and report each definition separately. Rather, the combined findings were summarised and explained.

The examination looked at the clarity, coherence and completeness of the middle schooling concept. To ascertain this, the following questions were asked:

- Is the concept clearly articulated and able to readily be understood by teachers?
- Is the concept coherent, complete and able to be easily translated into practice?
- Does the literature acknowledge the atypical nature of the concept and the implications this has for implementation?

4.3.1. Articulation of the Concept

Middle schooling is founded on the belief that education for middle level students should focus on the unique cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs of early adolescents. The aims of middle schooling can be summarised as being to:

- Provide a programme of challenging, exploratory, integrative experiences relevant to the concerns of adolescents and based on how students learn best.
- Provide varied teaching and learning approaches.

- Provide optimum individualisation of curriculum and instruction.
- Provide flexible learning organisations.
- Provide comprehensive guidance and support services.
- Provide a safe and healthy school environment as part of improving academic performance and developing caring and ethical citizens.
- Involve parents and communities in supporting student learning (Alexander *et al.*, 1968; NMSA, 1995).

It could be argued that while these are well-recognised and fairly uncontroversial educational principles, there is nothing about them that is unique to the middle schooling movement. These principles represent what we know to be best teaching practice for students of all levels and, on their own, provide little insight into an innovation which claims to provide a different, unique form of education for students in the middle years.

Middle schooling recommends the use of interdisciplinary learning, team teaching, block scheduling, heterogeneous groupings and advisory programmes focused on the individual needs of students to achieve their stated aims (Jackson & Davis, 2000). These brief statements, on their own, supply information on the essentials of middle schooling philosophy and practice, but provide little guidance on how to translate this theory into practice. It is interesting to note that the principles cited here and the accompanying explanations are all termed 'recommendations'. Citing central aspects of the concept as recommendations gives the impression that the concept is unclear and unresolved. This uncertainty gives the impression that schools can choose which of the principles they wish to implement and that they can discard the others. Citing the main tenets as recommendations also puts schools in the position of having to make value judgements about each principle and every explanation offered. It could be conjectured that the principles are stated as recommendations because the developers of middle schooling were unsure of the exact intent, direction and articulation of the concept.

In order to test the clarity of the principles underlying the concept, I chose the curriculum principle to examine in depth. The curriculum was chosen because it is the core element of education and the one element that educators often have difficulty articulating clearly. Middle schooling proponents contend that middle level curriculum

should be 'challenging', 'integrative' and 'exploratory', but what do these three terms actually mean and what would they look like in practice for middle level students?

The middle schooling literature defines challenging, integrative and integrated curriculum as being curriculum which is based on the needs and interests of the students, where students play an active part in planning and assessing, and in which every student receives an individualised plan (NMSA, 1995). An integrative curriculum is described as "curriculum which helps students make sense of their life experience" by helping "students connect school experiences to their daily lives outside the school" (NMSA, 1995, p. 22). The definition states that integrative curriculum may be accomplished by offering courses and units taught by individual teachers or by teams of teachers and that "all teachers can identify the connections among ideas and fields of knowledge, as well as how their teaching relates to the courses and students' activities conducted by other school personnel" (1995, p. 23). This definition talks about courses, units and connections but fails to provide detail on what these things are and what they might look like in practice. Similarly, explanation of exploratory curriculum provides further general, vague statements about exploratory curriculum "[enabling] students to discover their particular abilities, talents, interests, values and preferences", and that exploratory courses and activities "acquaint students with enriching, healthy leisure-time pursuits, such as lifetime physical activities, involvement in the arts, and social service" (NMSA, 1995, p. 23). These explanations give some indication as to what 'challenging', 'integrative', 'exploratory' curriculum might be. The descriptions give only brief, vague detail on practice and fail to explain clearly how the different aspects of curriculum fit together into an interrelated, interconnected whole, but they do not go far enough to be useful to teachers new to these concepts.

The middle schooling literature makes reference to the use of related texts for detail on how to translate curriculum theory into practice (NMSA, 1995). A review was made of several of the recommended articles and texts and it was found that these provided adequate explanation on what 'integrated', 'exploratory' curriculum is and some of the more recent articles provided detail on full units (McKay, 1995). However, no information was found about how to combine these elements of curriculum with the other aspects of middle schooling.

Overall, these articles and texts provide a useful starting place for teachers' thinking about challenging, integrated, exploratory middle level curriculum, but they do not provide the level of information and detail required by teachers who are new to the concept. This point is even more important for New Zealand educators who have, in effect, to carry out a double translation of the concept. First they have to make sense of middle schooling and its practice in American settings, and then they have to translate this into the New Zealand educational context and the reality of our schools, national policy and available resources and funding. Therefore, it is very important that the concept and its attendant practices are clearly defined so that we are able to apply their intent with fidelity in New Zealand schools.

Examination of the other middle schooling principles found that, like curriculum, they were also poorly defined and that most lacked practical explanation of how to translate them into action. Toepfer stated in 1976 that the middle schooling concept was poorly articulated and that unless this was addressed they were likely to find themselves "vulnerable to a similar fate" as the junior high schools which were replaced by a different type of school, the middle school (Toepfer, 1976, p. 93). Toepfer suggested that the middle schooling movement develop a succinct rationale and that they also operationalise it as a curriculum model which schools could readily adopt and translate into practice. This examination would suggest that this has not yet happened.

The National Middle School Association (NMSA) goes as far as to say that its prescription does not presume to be:

All-inclusive or definitive, nor does it offer a specific blueprint for the "ideal" middle level school...Thoughtful middle level educators will know best what needs to be done to apply these principles in their own communities (NMSA, 1995, p. 2).

This statement has the appearance of being an excuse or an apology. It is my contention that even 'thoughtful' teachers would have great difficulty implementing the concept, and each of the curriculum components in particular, on the information supplied.

4.3.2. Coherence and Completeness of the Concept

The review of the middle schooling literature showed that the middle schooling concept lacks clarity, coherence and completeness. One notable omission was discussion of benchmarks or indicators for each of the principles. Teachers contemplating implementing middle schooling need benchmarks or clear indicators of what each principle should look like in practice, so that they will know when they have implemented the aspects fully, what the expected outcomes are, and how to assess these. Short discussion was provided on evaluation of the overall concept, but no detail was given on measurable or observable indicators for the fully implemented principles.

Jackson and Davis (2000) introduce another variable, 'no half measures', to the discussion of middle schooling innovation. Jackson and Davis argue that many attempts to adopt middle schooling in the past have failed because schools have failed to implement all aspects of the concept. They write that many schools have made tremendous changes to educational structures, but that few have made changes to the heart of schooling, classroom practice. They argue that middle schooling is not a list of optional principles from which schools can pick and choose, but rather, for the concept to be successful, all of the underlying principles must be "implemented comprehensively and with fidelity" (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 30). Here at last, we have a definitive statement on the scope of the innovation, but what is actually meant by statements such as "implemented comprehensively and with fidelity"? As previously discussed, Jackson and Davis state that all seven principles must be implemented to "make the most impact on achievement" (2000, p. 30). It could be taken that 'comprehensively' in this context means 'all', but 'fidelity', meaning faithfully or reliably, is more difficult to understand. With no indicators or benchmarks provided to explain what the principles should look like in practice, implementing the concept comprehensively and with fidelity becomes a very difficult task.

As found in Phase I of the literature review, the middle schooling literature makes only limited mention of implementation strategies, and the points made pertain mainly to the structural and organisational aspects of the innovation. They do not address issues needed like the sequencing of changes, whether to introduce structural or cultural changes first, or how to meld all of the components into a unified whole. With an innovation that requires many different changes to practice, and with all the changes

interrelated, it seems very important to provide some guidance on best implementation practice to assist schools in their own decision-making processes. The middle schooling literature in general fails to do this. After fifty years of middle schooling research and practice there should be examples of implementation plans from school experience for would-be adopters to use. It would be reasonable to assume that someone should have identified the key factors and questions implementers need to consider at each stage of the implementation process, but this is not the case. While it is possible to source a limited number of case studies on how schools have implemented individual concept principles such as integrated curriculum (Brown & Saltman, 2005), it does not seem possible to source examples of how schools have implemented the principles either individually or concurrently.

Explanation of the concept also appears to overlook the reality of schools, that is, that today they are very busy places because of the accountability demands placed on teachers. Teachers are also likely to be putting in place other mandated changes and coping with large numbers of fellow staff members transferring in and out of schools. Adopting middle schooling means placing additional demands and pressures on teachers, some of whom are already finding teaching a challenging occupation. The literature appears to make no mention of these aspects of school life and how they might impact on the implementation of middle schooling.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, revisiting the literature on educational change and middle schooling showed that large, whole-school innovations present implementers with many major challenges. In particular, it showed that change leadership is a major factor in the success of change processes and that shared leadership is one way of empowering teachers and involving them in the change process. It also showed that teacher reaction and resistance to change is natural and that school leaders need to acknowledge and work with the resistance rather than against it.

The review also found that the educational change literature tends to focus on the process of innovation rather than on the nature of the innovation itself. Educational innovations are not all the same; they differ greatly in nature, and so, therefore, do

implementation requirements. Educational innovations cover the full spectrum from single innovations to multiple, complex innovations. Middle schooling is one of the latter, yet implementers of this innovation are expected to use the same change and implementation theory as implementers of single innovations.

Review of the literature on middle schooling also found that the literature overlooks the atypical nature of this innovation and presents the picture that this innovation has the same adoption and implementation requirements as other smaller, less complex innovations. The experiences of the case school clearly showed that a whole-school innovation that requires full staff and parental support and involvement in the implementation of multiple innovations has challenges that are not experienced with simpler innovations.

Finally, the review showed that middle schooling is a particularly difficult innovation to implement because of two key reasons: poor articulation of the middle schooling concept and the treatment of all educational innovations as the same. This review showed that adopting the middle schooling concept is complicated by the concept itself being poorly articulated and operationalised. This leaves would-be adopters to translate and connect complex notions such as integrated curriculum and teacher teaming with little guidance.

The research questions for the second phase of the case study data gathering were identified and developed from both the findings of the first stage of the data gathering and the findings of this second phase of the literature review.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to study a single case intensively to identify factors that might illuminate and gain understanding of the middle schooling implementation process. The research was guided by two main research questions:

- How did this school implement the middle schooling concept?
- How might this experience illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling?

These research questions were formulated in response to the findings of the literature reviews which showed that there is a lack of literature which adequately addresses the wide range of issues schools face when they move to become middle schools. There is an increasing need for information on this topic in New Zealand because of the growing number of school communities that are showing interest in adopting the middle schooling concept. Therefore, by focusing this study on how a school became a middle school it was hoped the findings would provide some guidance particularly for other schools that are considering becoming middle schools.

The most important consideration when choosing a research approach is that the approach fits the problem to be investigated (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Creswell, 1998). Case study was the primary methodology used in the study. However, the study was not originally conceived as case study. Rather, the study evolved through three phases: action research, grounded theory and case study. The study commenced as an action research project with the researcher working alongside a school community as it implemented the middle schooling concept. The study then moved to grounded theory in an attempt to develop a grounded theory based on the nature of the innovation. Finally, the data gathered in the action research and grounded theory phases were retrospectively analysed as a case study of how one school implemented the middle schooling concept.

The evolution of the research through the three phases was driven by a number of factors. The shift in methodology from action research to grounded theory was motivated by restrictions placed by the school on the data gathering and by my growing interest in the nature of the innovation as a key factor in the success or failure of this innovation. In particular, the data gathering at the school was restricted by my limited access to the teachers, the teachers' lack of interest in the research, the non-involvement of students and parent in the research, and my lack of sustained time at the school.

The shift in methodology from grounded theory to single case methodology was motivated by the realization that the study of a single school gave insufficient comparative data to support a challenging theory of middle school implementation. The study then moved to become a single case study of one school implementing the middle schooling concept. It was possible to make these shifts between the three phases because the three methodologies employ the same data gathering and data interpretation methods (Cohen & Manion, 1989).

2. Research Design

The research design is discussed under four main headings: perspective of the researcher, choice of research design, ethical considerations, and researcher considerations. These four broad headings are used to explain the unusual methodological history of this study.

3. Perspective of the Researcher

Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape enquiry (Creswell, 1998). It seeks answers to questions about the way social experience is created and given meaning.

Qualitative research emphasises the value-laden nature of the inquiry in order to illuminate meaning and produce rich descriptions of the social world. According to Clarke (1997), all researchers bring to their research beliefs and assumptions about the world and how it should be understood and studied. These beliefs shape the way we

design and carry out research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003a) term these sets of beliefs 'paradigms', or interpretive frameworks. Four major interpretive paradigms have been used to inform interpretive research in recent years. They are: positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical, and feminist-post-structural. Each interpretive paradigm makes different demands on the researcher, the questions asked and the interpretations the researcher brings to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a).

One of the central problems that have plagued social research is the intractable problem of meaning and its implications for how we conduct research. What we believe meaning and knowledge to be influences what we think about the research process. Like Charmaz (2000), my belief is that the primary purpose of educational research is to understand and make sense of the social world, and that to do this we construct meaning rather than assuming set truths about social reality. It is also my belief that educational knowledge can never be truly objective in the positivist sense or be free of interpretation; as Scott and Usher (1999) claim, we cannot escape our pre-understandings. We naturally bring them with us to research and it is the interplay between our pre-understandings and our interpretations which leads to new knowledge. The nature of educational research problems, and the fact that researchers are human and therefore bring partially formed theories and ways of understanding the world with them to their research, also means that knowledge, meaning and interpretation cannot be separated. As stated by Gadamer (1976, cited in Scott & Usher, 1999, p. 26), understanding is always circular because "it is always already an interpretation". If we accept this interpretive definition of the nature of meaning and knowledge, we are also acknowledging that meaning based in context, pre-understandings, beliefs and values cannot claim to be the ultimate truths.

The interpretive research paradigm does not accept the idea of there being a reality that can be objectively knowable. It sees reality as a construct of the human mind (Bassey, 1999). People perceive and construct the world in terms of their prior experience and understanding. This means they have different understandings of what is real. According to Bassey (1999), the interpretive researcher understands that human actions are based on social meanings that people who live together interpret the meanings of each other and that these meanings change through social discourse.

The interpretive research paradigm also acknowledges the importance of context to understanding. In most educational research, context is a very important aspect of understanding. It is seldom possible or desirable to divorce thinking, actions and processes from the context in which they happen. The educational context brings with it politics, relationships, beliefs and values, the understanding of which plays a significant role in the illumination of any situation.

It is my contention that it is not desirable to have educational research which ignores the values, views and opinions of the research participants and the voice, interests and politics of researchers. To do so weakens the integrity of the research. If the purpose of most educational research is to illuminate and make meaning of situations, then the views of the participants are vital. It is through their views that researchers are able to construct rich, holistic meaning. To deny the importance of participant voice not only means a loss of potential richness in understanding, it also devalues all school members as professionals with opinions, beliefs and values that are of importance to our understanding of what happens in education.

These personal perspectives led me towards an empathy with the constructivist-interpretive research paradigm, which recognises the significance of context and meaning and is concerned with understanding and illumination (Merriam, 1998). My empathy with the constructivist-interpretive research design suggested at least three options for research design: action research, grounded theory and case study.

Action research, grounded theory and case study methodology are founded on the principle of constructed, multiple realities and they seek to identify multiple understandings and interpretations as a means for understanding the complexity of the situation being investigated. These approaches do not expect to find one truth, rather, they seek to understand the multiple meanings people construct of each situation. From these multiple meanings we hope to identify patterns of meaning rather than objective reality.

Action research, grounded theory and case study design also acknowledge the importance of context in educational research. The thesis case study took particular notice of the context in which the thinking and actions took place in order to see how

context impacts on meaning. It found that context has significant impact on the way people behave.

Action research, grounded theory and case study design all acknowledge the importance of participant voice, and in particular, participant opinions, beliefs and values. It was my belief that in order to be able to fully understand and make sense of the participants middle schooling implementation experiences, I needed to observe and listen very carefully to what they were saying about their personal and educational philosophies, values and beliefs as these impacted on the meaning they make and then on how they acted.

All three methodologies also hold that multiple interpretations are important when seeking meaning, and constructed meaning changes from person to person, day to day and as the context changes. Therefore, research founded on these beliefs must be of flexible design, in order to capture the richness and nuances of each situation. Action research, grounded theory and case methodology all employ flexible questioning, strategies and flexible data gathering methods.

4. Choice of Research Design

The original choice of design for this study was determined by the nature of the research problem, the research direction and findings, the requirements and limitations set by the case school, and my own assumptions about how people learn and know. When the case study school approached me and asked if I would like to be involved in the implementation of the middle schooling concept within their school, it was agreed between the two parties that the most suitable research design to use would be action research. Action research was chosen because it fulfilled both the school's need for assistance and guidance with their implementation process, and my research desire to study a school that was implementing the middle schooling concept. For the school, action research provided a facilitator whose job was to provide literature, co-jointly design data gathering instruments, gather and analyse data in collaboration with the school staff, facilitate discussions, and feed back information to members of the school. Action research provided me with the opportunity to both study and participate in the middle schooling implementation processes used by the case school.

The initial agreement with the school was that the action research project would be for an eighteen-month period. This period was extended to two years when the pace and progress of the implementation indicated that the implementation process was protracted and that sufficient data would not be gathered by the end of eighteen months.

4.1. Action Research

4.1.1. Introduction

Patton describes action research, or participatory action research as it is also known, as a research methodology which:

Aims at solving specific problems within a program, organization, or community. Action research explicitly and purposefully becomes part of the change process by engaging the people in the program or organization in studying their own problems in order to solve those problems (Patton, 2002, p. 221).

The three attributes that distinguish action research from conventional research are: shared ownership of research projects; community-based analysis of social problems; and an orientation towards community action (Mills, 2000). Action research challenges conventional views about research. In particular, it challenges conventional views of who can be a researcher, and the relationship between research and social practice. In action research the practitioner can be the researcher with or without specialist training, and research conducted within and on practice is recognised as yielding evidence and insights that can and do assist in the transformation of practice (Patton, 2002).

4.1.2. Key Features of Action Research

There are many versions of action research. Denzin and Lincoln's (2003a) interpretation is a fair representation of most definitions. According to them the key features of action research are that:

- Action research is carried out in naturalistic settings. No attempt is made to control context variables, but rather the aim is to study the situation in-situ.
- Action research is a social process in which people, individually and collectively try to make sense of who they are, and their experiences and practices.

- Action research is practical, participatory and collaborative. It is a process which requires a group of people to work together to explore and improve their practices.
- Action research is emancipatory. It aims to help people understand their situations so that they can either learn how best to work within these constraints, or how to change them.
- Action research aims to transform both theory and practice.

4.1.3. The Action Research Process

Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) claim that the process of action research is poorly described in terms of a sequence of steps, but that it usually involves a spiral of self-reflective cycles of:

- planning a change,
- acting and observing the process and consequences of the change,
- reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then
 - replanning,
 - acting and observing,
 - reflecting, and so on... (2003b, p. 381).

Stringer (1996) suggests that the process may not be as neat as the spiral suggests. In reality the process is more likely to be more fluid, open and responsive to the context of the situation.

Educational action research typically involves mixed groups of participants, university staff, school principals and teachers, school community members and consultants. In the action research spiral, professionals and non-professionals all become co-researchers or co-investigators (Mills, 2000).

4.1.4. Criticism of Action Research Methodology

The main criticism that has been levelled against action research from its inception is that it lacks scientific rigour. Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) argue that it is necessary to sacrifice some methodological sophistication in order to gather evidence which can be used to inform and transform practices. Tomal (2003) argues that action research is a

disciplined form of inquiry because it requires researchers to state problems, formulate hypotheses, formulate action hypotheses, plan data collection, analyse results and reformulate hypotheses. The worth of action research, according to Glanz (1998), should be judged by the extent to which it contributes to helping the participants come to understand and improve themselves rather than against other conventional measures of the worth of research, such as scientific rigor and objectivity.

4.1.5. Use of Action Research in the Study

Data collection and analysis were guided by the research questions which were:

- How did the case school implement the middle schooling concept?
- How might this experience illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling?

These questions were developed in response to the finding of the literature review that there is a lack of literature and guidance on middle schooling implementation.

Data gathering involved accessing and reading school documentation, joint construction and analysis of surveys, interviews, observation and participation at meetings, feedback of information to participants, and provision of professional reading material and the leading of discussion on this. Data analysis and interpretation occurred alongside data collection in an effort to seek meaning by identifying key emerging issues. The emerging issues from the action research were compared and contrasted with the key points from the literature in an effort to ascertain whether the experiences of the school were supported by the literature.

The comparison of the key points from the literature and the emerging issues from the action research resulted in the identification of three significant factors that were having the most impact on the early stages of the implementation process. They were: leadership, teacher sub-cultures and resistance, and the nature of the middle schooling concept.

4.1.6. Shift in Methodology to Grounded Theory

While action research shaped the introduction to the study, events in the school fairly quickly demonstrated that this approach was not tenable. During the early stages, that is,

during the first nine months of the study, it became increasingly obvious that the study was not able to meet the requirements of action research. This was due to four main factors: the slow pace of the implementation; my limited role as the researcher; the increasing reluctance of staff to participate in the action research; and my lack of sustained time at the school.

The pace of the implementation was slower than anticipated because clarifying the intent of the concept principles and how they would be operationalised in the classrooms was more complicated and took much longer than expected. Also, convincing some of the teachers, particularly the year 10 teachers, that they should adopt the concept met with resistance from the very beginning. This meant that by the end of the first nine months only two of the four teams of teachers had commenced implementing the first change, team teaching.

My role as a participative researcher was limited and increasingly hampered by the teachers' inability and/or reluctance to form a shared understanding of the concept principles and their reluctance to be involved both in the change process and the action research. It also became increasingly obvious that the amount of time I was able to spend at the school was not sufficient to be a fully participative action researcher.

Grounded theory was chosen as a more suitable methodology because it allowed me to focus my attention on an emerging factor that appeared to be having significant impact on the success of the implementation process, that is, the complex and challenging nature of this particular innovation. In the course of gathering data on the nature of the innovation I also gathered data on three other issues which were emerging as influential to the case. They were leadership and teacher sub-cultures and resistance to the change.

This shift to grounded theory gave me more control over the direction of the investigation than had been possible under action research, where the direction of the investigation was directed jointly by the school and myself.

The shift in methodology required me, as the researcher, to move from an involved, facilitative stance to a generally, non-interventionist strategy intended to understand and illuminate rather than change action. It was possible to make this shift with minimal

disruption to the research because the reluctance and resistance of the teachers meant that by the end of the first nine months, very few teachers were purposefully involved in the action research cycles. While the second phase of the study was reconceptualised as grounded theory. I continued my obligations to the school, as per the Memorandum of Agreement, for the rest of the two-year research period.

4.2. Grounded Theory

4.2.1. Introduction

What is grounded theory? Dey (1999) describes it as an emergent design where the researcher attempts to reconstruct the subjects' realities. Glaser (1998) adds that grounded theory is not predicated upon the pre-existence of a well-established research base or theoretical framework. Rather, theory is allowed to emerge from the process of constant comparison of the data. According to Strauss and Corbin (1997, p. 7):

Grounded methodology and methods (procedures) are now among the most influential and widely used modes of carrying out qualitative research when generating theory is the researcher's principal aim.

4.2.2. The History of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and then further elaborated by Glaser in 1978. Glaser and Strauss formulated grounded theory as an alternative approach to the predominant modes of theorising in sociology. Their attack was against deductive forms of theorising, in which theories were first developed and then subsequently tested against evidence through research. In their opinion, this method casts the role of research as primarily one of verifying rather than generating theory. Glaser and Strauss argued that there was a need to relate theory more closely to evidence in the first place. They proposed that this be done through a more flexible research process to be known as grounded theory, in which the constant interplay between data collection and analysis provided the basis for theory generation.

Glaser and Strauss first articulated their new methodology in 1967 in a book entitled *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. They set out a different way of doing social research, one with its own distinctive goals and methodology. They wrote that the new methodology was aimed at producing grounded

theory, which was defined as the discovery of theory from data. They argued that theory should “fit the situation being researched, and work when put into use” (1967, p. 3). To achieve this outcome they suggested that theory should be generated through research which starts with unstructured methods of data collection, and as theory begins to emerge from constant comparison, coding and identification of categories and themes, more focused data collection methods be used to develop and test hypotheses about the relations between categories and their properties. Dey (1999) summarises the Glaser and Strauss (1967) model in the following simple way:

1. Find an interesting area of inquiry.
2. Select a relevant site.
3. Collect some data.
4. Generate some ideas.
5. Explore them through further comparisons.
6. Connect the emerging ideas.
7. Integrate them around a selected theme (1999, p. 12).

This inductive model counters the earlier deductive modes of investigation, which aimed to verify rather than generate theory. It sets out a simple, logical framework for this approach to research. Glaser (1994, p. 275) notes that this early model aimed to provide ‘a strong rationale’ for the use of qualitative methods of inquiry, but that this aim was to contribute to the later disputes and confusions that surrounded this methodology.

4.2.3. Key Principles of Grounded Theory

Creswell (1998) summarises the main tenets of grounded research as being:

- The aim of grounded theory is to generate or discover theory,
- The researcher has to set aside theoretical ideas to allow a ‘substantive’ theory to emerge,
- Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the phenomenon under study,
- The theory asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts,
- Theory is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations and documents,

- Data analysis proceeds through identifying categories and connecting them;
- Further data collection (or sampling) is based on emerging concepts,
- These emerging concepts are developed through constant comparison with additional data,
- Data collection can stop when new conceptualisations emerge,
- Data analysis proceeds from 'open' coding (identifying categories, properties and dimensions) through axial coding (examining conditions, strategies, and consequences) to selective coding around an emerging story line, and
- The resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions.

4.2.4. Focusing Questions for Grounded Theory

The focusing questions used to guide the data gathering were:

(A) Leadership – Focus Questions

- What model of leadership was Jim (the Principal) attempting to follow? Was it a coherent, self-conscious model? To what extent was he able to follow it? How did he operationalise the model? How did his behaviour depart from the model?
- What were the critical leadership tasks and challenges he needed to meet in order to lead this innovation? How did he address them?

(B) Teacher Sub-Cultures and Teacher Resistance – Focus Questions

- Was there ever a full-informed acceptance of the middle schooling concept by the staff?
- How and why did teacher resistance develop? How did it express itself?
- How did management, Jim and Pam (Deputy Principal) respond to the resistance?

(C) Nature of the Innovation- Focus Questions

- What were the characteristics and challenges of this innovation?
- To what extent was this innovation inherently more complex and challenging than other innovations a school or classroom might be confronted with?

4.2.5. Action Research and Grounded Theory Data Collection Methods

In an action research project data gathering tends to be informal, with the people in the situation being directly involved in gathering the information, studying themselves and then using the results to improve particular aspects of their practice (Patton, 2002).

Action research does not prescribe which data collection methods must be used. Rather, a wide range of data gathering procedures is appropriate for improving understanding and practice in action research.

Grounded theory takes a more researcher-directed approach to data gathering. Grounded theory is usually both guided and carried out by the researcher using focusing questions. As with action research, grounded theory does not tend to prescribe the data gathering methods to be used. Rather, a wide range of data gathering procedures is also appropriate for gathering grounded theory data. In this study the main data gathering methods used were: documentation, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and surveys. In the study the main documentation accessed was agendas and minutes from Board of Trustee meetings, staff meetings, teacher year level meetings, and parent meetings, school and team newsletters, Education Review Office (ERO) reports and school marketing material including media reports and the school prospectus. Yin (2003) cautions against the overuse of documentation as an information source because, he says, the validity of the documents can sometimes be hard to establish. However, the strength of using documentation as an evidence source is that it is unobtrusive, it allows for repeat review to be made, and it can cover a broad field of information over a wide span of time. The weaknesses of using documentation can be that the material can reflect author bias and access can be blocked to some documentation. These weaknesses are also shared by most of the other ways of gathering data and particularly by interviews.

Interviews are one of the most important sources of data in both action research and grounded theory. Much has been written about this data source. The interview, according to Cohen and Manion (1989), has three main purposes. They are: to gather information which has a direct bearing on the research objectives, to test or suggest new hypotheses, and/or to validate, investigate, or go deeper into other results.

The interview can take several forms of which open-ended, focused or structured are the main types. In an open-ended or unstructured interview, minimal direction is offered by the interviewer and the respondent takes control of the content and direction of the interview. In the structured interview the content and procedures are organised in advance. This means that the interviewer has little flexibility to change the structure during the interview.

The focused interview is distinctive in that it focuses on a respondents' subjective responses to a known situation in which they have been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview (see Appendix 2 for an example of focused interview field notes). The data collected from this form of interview can be used to substantiate or reject previously formulated hypotheses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b).

The advantages of using interviews as a data source are that they can produce targeted, focused, insightful information on the particular case study topic. As with documentation as a data source, however, interview data is also susceptible to bias. This can be interviewer bias due to poor questions or it may also be respondent bias. Interview data may also be incomplete due to respondent inability to remember or from the respondent withholding information or saying only what they feel the interviewer wants to hear (Yin, 1994).

Despite being time consuming, interviews were used as a major data source in the thesis research because they allowed me to investigate issues at both the individual and the group level and they allowed me to hear and tease out the personal opinions of the school members. In particular, interviews proved to be a very valuable source of rich data about school members' beliefs and educational philosophies, their hopes and aspirations, and their views on the middle schooling concept, the implementation process and their role in it.

Much has also been written about observation as an evidence source. According to Cohen and Manion (1989, p. 125), observation is "at the heart of every case study". According to these writers there are two main forms of observation, participant and non-participant. In participant observation the observer engages in the activities they set out

to observe, and in non-participant observation the observer stands aloof from the person, or group he or she is observing. The strength of using observation as a data source in a case study is that it covers real time events in context. Weaknesses can be that observation can be time consuming and it is also subject to observer bias.

In the thesis research, participant observation was used to gather data principally when I was involved in leading discussions and giving feedback on such things as surveys to school members. These meetings were a rich source of teacher and parent opinion on the matters being discussed and often also on other matters that might have been of concern. Non-participant observation was used as a means of gathering information from various school meetings at which I was purely an observer. These included full staff, team, and senior management meetings. Non-participant observation was also used to gather information from classroom visits and in teacher and parent gatherings such as morning teas and lunches in the staffroom (see Appendices 3 and 4 for examples of field notes gathered at a staff meeting and a year 9 team meeting).

According to Cohen and Manion (1989) the questionnaire is frequently the best form of survey in educational enquiry because it enables data to be gathered from large groups of participants in a time and cost effective manner. Often a postal questionnaire is the only practical means of gathering data if the respondents are scattered over large distances. Quality questionnaire development is not an easy task. Questionnaires must be carefully worded to elicit the information required; they must be of sufficient length to cover the subject completely, and they must be presented in a format that encourages a high level of response.

Questionnaires were used in the thesis research to gather information from school parents and from groups of teachers. Questionnaires were used rather than interviews because they were a time and cost-effective way of gathering data from large groups such as parents, and their use made it possible to gather information on a wide range of topics from the teachers. It could be argued that the use of questionnaires is in conflict with a constructivist research approach, because in framing a questionnaire you may be limiting the ways in which respondents can interpret or relay their view of reality. In an effort to acknowledge and lessen this possibility, careful consideration was given to the type of question used in the survey, and, where possible and practical follow-up

interviews were held with individual members of the target group and data was checked through cross-references to multiple sources.

4.2.6. Analysis and Interpretation of Action Research and Grounded Theory Data

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003a), data analysis consists of examining, testing, categorising and recombining the evidence to address the research questions of the study. The data in the action research and grounded theory stages were analysed as the data were gathered. As the data was gathered it was interpreted, coded and categorised and emerging patterns were identified.

Interpretation is a major part of all research, and Stake (1995) argues that interpretation does not begin when the data has been gathered, but, rather that the researcher is also an interpreter from the time they go out into the field to begin data collection. That is, in action research, grounded theory and case study interpretation happens simultaneously with data gathering as the researcher examines the meaning of the gathered data and redefines and redirects the observation. The aim of interpretation is to thoroughly understand whether earlier questions are working and note if new issues arise so that the design can be changed. This process is sometimes also referred to as 'progressive focusing' (Stake, 1995). The use of progressive focusing in the thesis case study research is seen in the use of 'emerging issues', which were issues that were having a significant impact on the implementation process. These issues were used to refocus the subsequent data gathering questions. Data analysis and interpretation were followed by data triangulation which involved the school participants cross-checking and commenting on my initial interpretations.

Triangulation is a data analysis method which brings together different kinds of data into some kind of relationship with each other so that they can be compared, contrasted and verified. In comparing different accounts, the points where they converge and differ illuminates insights and allows new understandings to develop. Triangulation, according to Creswell (1998), can also be a means to test saturation and hence the validity of grounded theories. In this study the use of multiple data collection methods provided cross-data validity checks. Data gathered at the case school was triangulated by including the school staff in the analysis and interpretation of data.

4.2.7. Shift in Methodology to Case Study

While the intention of the grounded theory phase of the research had been to establish a grounded theory which would identify the attributes of innovations and explain how these might affect the implementation process, this was not possible. On completion of both data gathering phases it became evident that basing the analysis and findings on just one case was insufficient to allow for the development of a comprehensive theory about the nature of the innovation. Therefore, all of the data was retrospectively reinterpreted as a single case study about how one school implemented the middle schooling concept.

4.3. Case Study Research

4.3.1. Introduction

What is case study research? Bassey (1999) claims that this is an easy question to ask, but a difficult one to answer because there are several different answers. In 1989 Cohen and Manion wrote that case study research was the examination of an instance in action where the “researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit - a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community” (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 117). They said that the purpose of such observation was to “probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs” (1989, p. 124). It should be noted that, while Cohen and Manion claim that case study should establish generalisations, not all commentators see it as an essential outcome of case study research.

Stake describes case study research as being “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstance” (1995, p. xi). In case study research we are seeking to make sense of, and to learn how things function. Stake’s definition tends towards the interpretative paradigm whereas Yin’s (2003) definition takes on a more positivist or scientific approach.

Yin (2003) writes that a case study is enquiry in a real-life context as opposed to the contrived contexts of experiment or survey. In particular he writes that case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident,
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

He also writes that case study is the preferred social science research strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being asked and when the researcher has little control over the event.

The thesis case study is based on Yin's definition of analytical case methodology. This approach was chosen because it aligned best with what had already happened in the data gathering phases in the school. In particular, I had little control over the events in the school and because I wished to intensively study the case in order to identify factors that might illuminate the process of middle schooling in other schools as well as the case school.

4.3.2. Key Features of Case Study Research

In educational case study research, the case of interest is usually people and programs. It might be the single child, it could be a classroom of children, a single teacher, or it could be a whole school. Similarly it could be a single reading program, team use of co-operative learning or school-wide implementation of single or multiple innovations. The case study can be for a period of only one day or it can be over a year or maybe several years.

Whatever the nature of the case study, the purpose of the investigation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations or key principles about the wider population to which the unit belongs (Bassey, 1999).

When considering the purpose of a case study, the question of generalisation appears with regularity in the literature. It is a frequent criticism of case studies that the results are not widely applicable to real life; that is, that they cannot be generalised for other contexts and situations. Yin (2003) refutes this claim, claiming that there are clear distinctions between analytical generalisations and statistical generalisations. In particular, Yin argues that analytical generalisation, which is the type of generalisation produced in case studies, is when previously developed theory is used as a framework against which to compare the empirical results of the case study. Yin adds that generalisations from either single or multiple case studies should be made to theory and not to populations.

Bassey (1999) advocates the use of 'fuzzy' or 'tentative' propositions to overcome the problem of generalisation. He argues that 'fuzzy propositions' suggest that something is possible, or may be in some cases, or it is unlikely. Bassey claims that fuzzy generalisations are more honest and more appropriate to much educational research because of the complexity and reality of the school situation.

Stake (1995) takes the position that the purpose of case study is particularisation, a more intuitive, grounded type of generalisation. By this he means that with a case study we primarily take the particular case and we come to know it very well. We know what it is and what it does rather than how it is different from other cases. The main emphasis is on understanding the case itself, on the uniqueness of the case, rather than producing generalizations. Stake termed these types of generalisations, 'petite' or 'naturalistic' generalisations.

The thesis case study adopts Yin's (2003) and Bassey's (1999) position that case study should be able to illuminate the experiences of others. Thus the case findings are expressed as key findings that, in line with Bassey's fuzzy generalisations, may resonate with the experiences of middle schooling implementation in other situations.

While the definition, particulars and purpose of a case study might be open to debate, there appears to be consensus on the main uses for case study research. Yin (2003) sums up current opinion by stating that the case study approach has four main applications. They are:

1. To explain causal links in real- life interventions.
2. To describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred.
3. To describe the intervention itself.
4. To explore those situations in which the intervention being examined has no clear set of outcomes.

Not only does case study research have several meanings and a variety of stated purposes, it can also take several different forms. Yin (1994) writes of there being three main forms of case study- exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Selection of which form to use will be guided by the type of research question being posed. According to Yin, exploratory case study research is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (and not necessarily case) study. In his 2003 book, Yin added that exploratory case study studies attempt to discover theory in terms of the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Explanatory case studies are used to describe and explain the case. Descriptive case study presents a complete description of the phenomenon within its context and explanatory case study presents data explaining which causes produced which effects.

Stake (1995) also speaks of three specific types of case studies: intrinsic; instrumental; and collective. Intrinsic case studies are studies in which the researcher has an interest in the case. Instrumental studies are cases which are used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer, and collective case are when a group of cases are studied.

Bassey (1999) reports that Stenhouse (1985) identified four broad forms of case study, ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research case studies. Stenhouse describes ethnographic case study as being the in depth study of a single case using primarily participant observation supported by interview. He adds that it aims to study the actors' behaviour in an attempt to offer outsider explanations of causal or structural patterns of which the participants might be unaware. He writes that evaluative case studies is the in depth study of a single case or a collection of cases with the purpose of producing information that can be used to judge the merit and worth of policies, programs and organisations. Stenhouse describes educational case study as being case study that is purely interested with understanding educational action rather than being interested in social theory or evaluative judgements. Similarly, case study in action

research is concerned with contributing to the development of the case or cases under study by providing feedback or information which can guide revision and refinement of the action.

The case study in this thesis takes the form of an explanatory analytic study. It is explanatory in Yin's (2003) sense in that its primary purpose was to explain what had happened in the case. It is also analytic because it aimed not only to describe what happened but it also attempted to make sense of the school members' experiences by looking for possible cause and effect relationships.

Case studies have a number of advantages over other research methods that make them attractive to educational researchers. Cohen and Manion (1989) claim that the advantages are that case studies:

1. Are strong in reality, down to earth and in harmony with the reader's own experiences, thus providing a 'natural' basis for generalisation.
2. Allow generalisations about the instance of the case, their strength lying in their ability to pay particular attention to the subtlety and complexity of each case in its own right.
3. Recognise the complexities of social truths, with good studies capable of offering support to alternative interpretations.
4. Are so rich in descriptive material that they can serve as a data source for other researchers whose purposes may be different from the original one for which the data was gathered.
5. Are a 'step in action' because they begin in the world of action and they contribute to it. Their insights can be directly interpreted and put back to use in such ways as staff development, teacher feedback, evaluation, school improvement strategies and educational policy.
6. Present research data in a more publicly accessible form than most other research reports. The case study report is usually capable of serving multiple audiences.

While there are many strengths in using case study methodology, there are also a number of weaknesses that should be noted. Yin (2003) writes that case study research has long been criticised as weak and lacking in sufficient objectivity or rigour, but that, despite this, it is one of the most used research methodologies in the social sciences.

A further criticism of case study methodology is its construct validity. Merriam (1998) writes that construct validity is a problem in case study research because of potential researcher subjectivity. Yin (1994) suggests the use of three strategies to counteract this. He suggests the use of multiple data sources, multiple interpreters and triangulation. Yin's three suggested strategies are used in the thesis case to enhance research rigour and validity.

Bassey (1999) notes that much educational research, and case study research in particular, is individualistic and does not contribute to the cumulative body of educational knowledge. To overcome this, he advocates the use of case study research that develops theory that can be used in educational policy and to enhance educational practice. This thesis supports Bassey's point that educational research should contribute to the cumulative body of educational knowledge, and therefore it identifies key findings that may resonate with the experiences of others.

4.3.3. The Case Study Research Process

Stake (1995) writes that there is a palette of methods for doing case study research and that case study researchers must pick and mix between the methods according to the research questions, intrinsic and instrumental interests, and their own beliefs about educational research. Whatever the mix, case study design should be based on the following four components:

1. The study questions,
2. Propositions, if any,
3. Data sources and collection methods, and
4. Data Analysis and interpretation methods.

4.3.4. Case Study Data Sources and Collection Methods

Yin (2003) identifies six primary sources of evidence for case study research. He stresses that, while it is not essential to use all sources in every case study, the use of multiple sources of data in case study is very important to ensure reliability of the study. The six sources identified by Yin are:

- Documentation.
- Archival records.

- Interviews.
- Direct/non-participant observation.
- Participant observation.
- Physical artefacts.

The use of surveys as a source of evidence appears to be a notable omission from Yin's list. While Yin lists interviews, which can be termed a type of survey, he omits to include other forms of survey such as questionnaires.

As already stated, the main sources of evidence used in the action research and grounded theory data gathering were documentation, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and surveys. These data sources align well with the recommended data sources for case study. This alignment was an important basis for making the methodological shift to case study.

4.3.5. Case Study Data Analysis and Interpretation

As stated, case study methodology was used to reinterpret and analyse all of the data gathered from the action research and grounded theory phases of the study.

Yin (2003) recommends that every case study data interpretation should employ a general analytical strategy which will define the priorities for what to analyse and why. He suggests three general strategies that might be used are:

- Relying on theoretical propositions,
- Thinking about rival explanations, and
- Developing a case description.

Relying on the theoretical propositions or questions that led to the case study is Yin's preferred analytical strategy. The propositions will help to focus attention on the data collected and how it is analysed. This focus will also swerve to define explanations and alternative explanations for the experiences seen.

The second strategy, thinking about and seeking rival explanations, aims to define and test rival explanations. This strategy can be used in the presence of propositions or when they are absent, as is often the case when doing case study evaluations. This approach

attempts to identify, analyse and reject as many rival explanations as possible in order to build up confidence in the findings (Yin, 2003).

The third suggested analytical strategy recommended by Yin is developing a case description in the form of a descriptive framework which is used to identify the appropriate casual links to be analysed. Within the analytical strategy should be listed the analytic techniques that are going to be used to sort the data into a preliminary order. These could include such approaches as coding, use of matrices and categories, pattern-matching using flow charts and other graphics, explanation building and time series analyses based on the initial research questions or theoretical propositions.

The thesis case study employed a combination of all three of Yin's analytic strategies. Data gathering had been directed by a set of flexible focus questions which were redefined in response to the data gathered and analysed. Data interpretations were gathered from and considered by school members. While not using a formal analytical structure to sort data, a data coding system and categories were employed to identify and cross-check significant emerging data patterns and messages.

Triangulation is a key feature a key feature of case study research. According to Merriam (1998), case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. In the social sciences, triangulation usually involves taking multiple sources of data and cross-checking and referencing them to test the reliability of data or interpretation from another source. Merriam asserts that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories and even methodologies, all within the one case. In the case study triangulation mainly took the form of including school members in the analysis, interpretation and cross- checking of the data.

Denzin (1989) identified four types of triangulation, data source triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data source triangulation occurs when the researcher investigates whether the data remains the same in different context. Investigator triangulation is when several researchers examine the same phenomenon. Theory triangulation is used when researchers with different viewpoints interpret the same results, and methodological triangulation is the method used to increase confidence in the interpretation when one approach is followed by another.

5. Ethical Considerations

Action research, grounded theory and case methodology all conceive data collection as a social activity. Fieldwork involves researchers in making decisions about the rights and responsibilities of both the participants and the researcher and about how they will conduct themselves in the field (Scott & Usher, 1999). In all research, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants. Any qualitative study using particularly action research and case study is likely to generate sensitive data. This was of concern in this study, because the main participants, the principal and his school staff, are highly visible in the research. In an attempt to protect the identity of the participants and the school, pseudonyms have been used for both the participants and their school. However, New Zealand is a small country, and there are very few schools in the process of adopting the middle schooling concept. Therefore, it was not possible to guarantee the anonymity of the research participants.

In order to fully inform participants and to protect their rights, the following safeguards were employed in the study.

- The research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing to all participants and they were given several opportunities to question the purpose and direction of the research.
- Written consent to proceed with the research as articulated in the participants' Information Sheets was obtained from all participants.
- All participants were made aware in the Information Sheets that they could withdraw from the research at any stage or refuse to answer any of the questions without penalty.
- Participants were informed in writing about how the data would be collected and used and they were also informed of data storage arrangements.
- Participants were informed in writing that they would receive a summarised report on completion of the study.

The non-controversial nature of the research task and the ethnic composition of the participants meant that no special ethical considerations or requirements were necessary.

Ethical approval for this study was received from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The initial ethics application made to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee was for the action research phase of the research. When the research was reconceptualised as grounded theory and then in a case study, it was found to be unnecessary to return to the ethics committee for further approval because the shift did not change in any way the data to be gathered, the methods to be used, or who would be involved in the research.

Action research, grounded theory and case study all involve interpretation. Issues can arise as to how interpretations will be made, who will make them and at what stage or for what reason the interpretative procedures will be brought to a close (Scott & Usher, 1999). In this study, agreement of interpretation was addressed by returning transcripts to participants for verification and by discussing interpretations with participants.

6. Researcher Considerations

In qualitative research the researcher “is the instrument of both data collection and data interpretation”, and these processes involve “having personal contact with and getting close to the people and situation which are under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 50). Both action and grounded theory research are interpretive research, where the biases, values and judgement of the researcher are stated explicitly in the final research report. In order to inform the school of my background and thinking about research, I paid particular attention to the methods used to gain access and to secure permission to study the school as discussed above.

Having gained formal access to the site, the next important step for the both the action and grounded theory researcher, is to get to know the participants well. Charmaz (2000), states that in order for the researcher to seek and make meaning, it is first necessary to develop a relationship with respondents in which they feel sufficiently comfortable to tell their stories on their own terms. Establishing this kind of relationship was achieved by my visiting the school several times at the beginning of the research primarily to be with and to get to know the research participants. The downside of this research approach is that it takes a great deal of time to get to know the participants at a level

where it is possible to discover not only facts about them, but also learn about their beliefs and values. Action research in particular requires sustained involvement. My initial research framework did not take sufficient cognisance of this point and resulted in having to lengthen and rearrange the research timetable in order to visit the school more frequently and for longer visits than first planned. During the two-year duration of the study, the school was visited on an average of two to three times per term and each visit was of two to three days duration. Despite these changes, my involvement at the school was still not sufficient to be able to carry out the full responsibilities of an action researcher. This meant that it was necessary to adopt the more analytical role of grounded theory where my purpose was to understand and illuminate rather than change.

The effects the presence of a researcher may have on qualitative research are well documented (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002) there are four main ways in which the presence of an outside researcher may affect the findings of a study. They are: reactions of the participants to the researcher; changes in the researcher during the course of the data collection or analysis; researcher perceptions and biases; and researcher incompetence. To minimise these affects, Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest that the outside researcher take time to get to know the situation and the participants in order to increase trustworthiness. This is particularly important when the research is collaborative and the researcher has to work closely with and be trusted by the participants in order to get their full co-operation. Collaborative research brings with it the added danger of the researcher/s becoming personally involved with the participants and losing their sensitivity to the events which are occurring. This can be minimised through conscious and committed researcher reflexivity which entails self-reflection, self-awareness, political and cultural consciousness, and ownership of one's perspective (Patton, 2002). It is my contention that my presence as a researcher had little impact on the case research. By the time of the shift in methodology, my direct contact and involvement with the teachers had become minimal. The cycles of action, reflection and feedback had all but ceased and I had moved to a virtual non-interventionist, observation role with the teachers. My only direct involvement in the case study was with the principal and deputy principal of the Middle School. During the grounded theory research my involvement with these two staff members took a more removed, non-interventionist

approach. In particular, I continued to provide professional reading, observe, question and encourage reflection, but I did not provide the same help, support and feedback as I had during the action research cycles.

7. Conclusion

The choice of design for this study was determined by the nature of the research problem, the research direction and findings, and my own assumptions about how people learn and know. What started as an action research project progressed to a grounded theory study and finally all of the data were retrospectively reinterpreted as a single case study. The shifts in methodology were brought about by a series of circumstances that forced the re-evaluation of the chosen research designs in view of the circumstances that were taking place in the case school. Re-evaluation of the situation enabled me to make methodological shifts that allowed me to examine how one school implemented the middle schooling concept.

Chapter 5

THE CASE FINDINGS

1. Introduction

The previous chapter described three phases to the methodology. What started as an action research project, requiring the researcher to take an interventionist stance, became an observational study. An initial attempt to generate a grounded theory gave way to an exploration of three themes arising from the case study findings. This chapter presents the findings of the case in two sections. The first section presents the findings from the introductory investigation, the action research. The second section presents the findings of the full case study which includes revisiting and re-examining the action research data from a case study perspective and a report of the findings of the final fourteen months of the case study.

The findings from the first phase of the research are reported in such a way as to tell the story of what happened during the first nine months of the data gathering, in order to set the scene for the second phase of the report. There is minimal reflection and critique in the first section. Instead, the full analysis is delayed until the second section, where data from the full duration of the study are revisited and analysed in terms of the factors that appeared to be having the most impact on the implementation process.

2. Phase I: February 2002 – October 2002

The purpose of this section is two-fold. Firstly, it tells the story of the action research phase of the project by recounting the most significant steps and processes used, and by describing the most important decisions and challenges Matai School faced as it implemented the middle schooling concept. The second purpose is to identify both the ‘emerging issues’ and ‘research method issues’ that impacted on the implementation process. ‘Emerging issues’ are the dominant factors or challenges that the school members faced during the implementation process. The ‘research method issues’ are the dominant factors that impacted in some significant way on the research process. The emerging issues formed the basis for the refocused research questions that directed the last fourteen months of the data collection. The research method issues illustrate the

problems and constraints the research methodology was experiencing. The data is reported in chronological order of my visits and experiences with the school (See table 5.1).

2.1. Phase I Data Sources

Table 5.1: Phase I Data Sources at Matai School

Visit/Date	Data Sources
2002	
5-8 February 2002	Documentation: Gathered historical school documentation – BOT minutes, prospectus etc. Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Head of Full School Visited: All teachers in classrooms (classroom observations) Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Staff meeting Informal conversations with staff members Informal conversations with parents
11-15 March 2002	Documentation: Gathered full school documentation – newsletters, ERO reports Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Head of Full School Interview: Previous principal of the Middle School Interviewed: Leaders of year 7, 8 and 9 teams Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Survey: Drafted teacher baseline survey with principal and DP Informal conversations with staff members
25-26 March 2002	Documentation: Gathered middle school documentation – newsletters, team meeting minutes Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Attended: Staff meeting – distributed staff survey, answered questions on purpose, etc. Informal conversations with staff members
April 2002	Received completed teacher surveys Collated, analysed and prepared report
14-17 May 2002	Documentation: Gathered full and middle school documentation – newsletters, BOT minutes, team meeting minutes Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Team leaders about results of report Survey: Feedback results of teacher survey to staff at staff meeting. Led discussion on results. Was available to speak with individual members about survey. Only two did so Survey: Drafted parent baseline survey with principal and deputy principal Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Informal conversations with staff members

6 June 2002	<p>Interview: Year 7 teachers individually</p> <p>Survey: Worked with principal and deputy principal to finalise parent survey</p> <p>Attended: Staff meeting, supplied readings about ability grouping</p> <p>Informal conversations with staff members</p>
June 2002	<p>Received completed parent surveys</p> <p>Collated, analysed and prepared report</p>
24-27 June 2002	<p>Documentation: Gathered newsletters, team meeting minutes</p> <p>Interview: Principal (x2)</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of Full School</p> <p>Interview: Year 8 teachers individually</p> <p>Interview: Team leaders on results of parent survey</p> <p>Parent Evening: Reported on results of parent survey and led discussion on results</p> <p>Informal conversations with staff members</p> <p>Informal conversation with parents</p>
23-26 July 2002	<p>Principal and I attended International Middle School Conference in Adelaide</p>
2 August 2002	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of Full School</p> <p>Interview: Head of Junior School</p> <p>Professional Development: Reported back on trip to Middle School conference</p> <p>Informal conversations with staff members</p>
21-23 August 2002	<p>Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team meeting minutes</p> <p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Heads of year 7 & 9 teams</p> <p>Interview: HODs Senior College</p> <p>Attended: Staff meeting</p> <p>Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings</p> <p>Professional Development: Gave presentation on MS concept to full staff</p> <p>Informal conversations with staff members</p>
4-6 September 2002	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Principal and Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of year 10 team</p> <p>Interview: Year 8 teacher</p> <p>Interview: Year 9 teachers (2)</p> <p>Interview: Full staff</p> <p>Survey: Conducted teacher survey at staff meeting</p> <p>Attended: Years 7, 8, 9 team meetings</p> <p>Professional Development: Led staff discussion on MS change</p> <p>Informal conversations with year 10 staff members</p> <p>Informal conversations with parents</p>
20 September 2002	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Teachers of year 9 team</p> <p>Informal conversations with staff members</p>

21-25 October 2002	Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team meeting minutes Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Head of Full School Interview: Head of Senior College Interview: Year 9 teachers (x2) Attended: Staff meeting Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Informal conversations with staff members
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2.2. February-March 2002

The research period formally commenced in March 2002 after the research participants had signed the Memorandum of Understanding. Prior to this date, during Term Three and Term Four of 2001, the middle school staff had been involved in several professional development sessions with Associate Professor Pat Nolan from Massey University. I had attended these sessions. The sessions covered discussion of middle schooling philosophy, examination of definitions and the principles of the concept, based mainly on the writing of Jackson and Davis (2000). They had also discussed what these principles might look like in practice at Matai Middle School. During the fourth term of 2001, I made several trips to the school, both to attend some of the professional development and also to discuss the details of the research project. I also used these visits to familiarise myself with the school's systems and to get to know the staff.

In February 2002 I visited the school to outline and discuss the details of the research project with staff and students. I did this by attending the four team meetings (years 7, 8, 9 and 10). At each meeting I explained the purpose of the research, the research methodology to be used, my role and responsibilities in the project, the school's obligations, and the possible roles and involvement the teachers might have in the action research project. I also explained ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and anonymity, and the right to withdraw or refuse to participate in the project. I concluded each session by inviting teacher questions. The most frequently asked question concerned time and effort, and in particular, whether their involvement in the research would require much extra time. Jim, the principal of the middle school, answered this question by saying that all change requires extra time and effort, but that he was very conscious of this and that his intention was that "they will work smarter

and not longer” (Jim, JN003A). He also said that he would do his best to make time available for the research. Although expressing some concerns about the amount of time the research might take, the teachers appeared to be enthusiastic about the use of action research cycles, their involvement in them and the benefits they perceived would be gained from their involvement. The following research method issue and subsequent identified issues were identified as markers to my thinking about the progress of the research process.

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUE:

- i) Teacher concern about the time and effort the research activities might take.**

On this trip I also visited all the middle school students in their separate classrooms and was introduced to them by Jim. I outlined the purpose of the research and explained the sorts of things I might do in their classrooms, such as observe or talk to students. I also outlined ethical considerations and gave the students the opportunity to ask questions about the research. No students asked questions at this point.

In early March I held the first formal interview with Jim. The purpose of this interview was to collect baseline information on his vision and beliefs about the middle schooling concept, his leadership philosophy, and also to ascertain what he hoped the concept would look like in practice. I also wanted to discuss his planning and proposed timeframe for the implementation. Jim said that his vision of middle schooling at Matai was based on no particular model of the concept. Rather, he had read and summarised the literature, and from that had pulled together ideas. Once he had formed a bigger picture of the concept, he said, “We started looking at what could be applied in the Matai context” (Jim, JN0045). He described the main ideas that were to drive the developments as revolving around:

- Interdisciplinary teaming of teachers;
- Teachers who were well qualified in their subjects and in the needs of emerging adolescents;
- Content and subject study that was based on the interests of students (student involvement in what is taught);

- Enquiry based, interactive teaching techniques;
- Advisory programmes to support the needs of emerging adolescents;
- Flexible timetabling to allow blocking of subjects;
- Heterogeneous student groupings;
- Community consultation and parent involvement in the school; and
- Careful consideration of student grouping for learning.

Jim said:

Each aspect has been looked at in terms of how it fits at Matai and how it benefits learning and teaching. Needless to say we are developing our own flavour (Jim, JN0056).

From these beliefs he said he had formulated three main goals for the first two years of the middle school development. His first goal was to foster and build up a culture of collaboration in the middle school. He said that he was going to do this by ensuring all staff members were fully informed about the implementation process, by keeping them involved in discussions and decision-making about the implementation process, and by clarifying roles and encouraging more shared leadership. When asked what leadership style or approach he would use to lead the implementation process, Jim said that he wanted to use a “collaborative, inclusive shared approach” (Jim, JN0056). He said he wanted to use an shared process not only because the middle schooling concept is founded on the principle of a shared approach to education, but also because he said that his own leadership beliefs were founded on “sharing, ownership and mentoring and encouraging everyone to be leaders in some way” (Jim, JN0056). On a pragmatic level, Jim commented that:

If we are going to make this thing [the middle schooling concept] work we need everyone helping, pulling their weight. There is much to do, lots to think about, we need everyone taking a share in what has to be done. I can't do it all myself (Jim, JN0061).

He said he would try to encourage shared inclusive leadership by attempting to model openness, honesty and respect in all his dealings with the staff. He was going to do this by being more available to teachers, by being visible around and in the classrooms, and

by being more honest and open with his own comments to teachers both in private and in public. He hoped that this openness would induce staff to be more honest in return and also to be keener to be involved, to willingly take on more duties, and to show commitment to the whole project. He felt that my role as provider of information and facilitator of discussions would also help encourage a culture of collaboration and openness.

Jim's second main goal was to establish a strong partnership between the school and home, through: increased parent consultation, parent evenings and parent education; more direct and positive contact with parents such as teachers ringing parents to report student success rather than only to report student behaviour problems; the establishment of a middle school newsletter; and a more open, welcoming attitude and presence for parents.

If we are going to make this thing [the middle schooling concept] work we have to get the parents behind us. We need their support and participation though I am not sure what that will look like yet (Jim, JN0064).

His third main goal for the next two years was to improve teaching and learning, through: more emphasis on the whole child and, in particular, the pastoral care of the child; recruitment of staff who had an interest in and/or experience with the middle schooling concept; and more student involvement in planning, goal setting and students taking responsibility for their own education.

When asked what these goals would look like in practice, and the plan or sequence for putting these changes into action, Jim replied that he had no precise actions or practices in mind yet, and that beyond the team teaching which he had instigated at the beginning of the year, he had no overall implementation plan. Rather, he said that, in consultation with the teachers, they would develop the sequence and practices as they went along. He did say that he had concerns about the principle of heterogeneous grouping and he asked me to supply him with information on this topic.

I think this [heterogeneous grouping] might be the thing that causes most debate, contention. We have always had streaming here, forever I think. Many of the teachers have been here for ages too and that is all they know.

I suspect they think it is the best way to go, [they] probably don't even know much or maybe anything about heterogeneous grouping and what it offers (Jim, JN0075).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) Jim's desire for shared leadership, which would involve collaboration and shared decision-making.**
- ii) Jim's lack of vision and definition of what each component of the concept might look like in practice.**
- iii) The lack of an overall plan or sequence for the implementation process.**
- iv) Jim's awareness of the importance of getting and maintaining the support of all stakeholders to make the changes successful.**

These and the following emerging issues were identified as markers for my thinking about possible focus questions and subsequent lines of investigation.

It should be noted that Jim had made the decision to commence the implementation process with a structural change: teaming and home-rooming. He said he had chosen teaming as the first change because it provided “a vehicle for the other changes” (Jim, JN1002).

We needed momentum, and in a high school structure, departments were the place where people met to talk about their subjects. By teaming teachers first we set up a situation where there was the opportunity for collegial support, regular chat time on middle schooling issues with others who were in the same boat...interdependence was built (Jim, JN10024).

When teaming was introduced at the beginning of 2002, provision was made for each team to have one free period a week in which to hold team meetings.

During these February and March 2002, the teachers were involved in extra meetings to discuss implementation matters. Their required attendance at these meetings led teachers to question the extra time and involvement implementation might require. While stating that they wished to be fully informed and involved in the decision-making process, six of the teachers said they wished Jim would make some of the decisions himself and just tell them the outcome, rather than taking up their time in “lots of unnecessary meetings and discussions” (Year 9 Teacher, Y941101).

It is okay having the extra meetings now, at the beginning [of the changes]. We've got lots of things to discuss, but hopefully it will settle down. I hope they [the extra meetings] don't go on for too long, there's just so much to do (Year 9 Teacher, Y93120).

Pat Nolan said that the changes could take years, I hope he [principal] doesn't think we are going to go on having all these meetings for years. That's ridiculous, a waste of good teaching time (Year 9 Teacher, Y94141).

This issue of attempting to share decision-making but finding that some teachers saw it as wasting their time, raised for Jim the need to clarify what a collaborative culture and shared leadership would involve. Would it include shared decision-making? If so, which issues should he consult the staff about and which should he make the decisions on himself, bearing in mind the growing concern about the time being taken up on meetings? It also signalled to Jim that some of the teachers were already anticipating that the implementation process was going to be time consuming and onerous. He wondered if this attitude stemmed from a lack of understanding about the concept and whether the teachers were truly committed to adopting the concept.

I really want them to be part of the decision-making so that they feel part of the changes, feel they own them, but some of them feel they are wasting their time, don't want to be part of the process. Mind you they are the ones who will grizzle if I just tell them what I want them to do. It is going to be really difficult finding the balance, trying to get it just right (Jim, JN1096).

Finding time to do all that he said he would do while running a 450 pupil school, and carrying a teaching component in both the middle school and the senior college, presented Jim with challenges at the early stages of the implementation. Principals of schools of this size would not usually have teaching responsibilities. But for historical reasons, and because of the year 1-13 nature of Matai School, Jim was attempting to implement a major innovation requiring multiple, concurrent changes, while leading and managing a 450 pupil school and carrying a sizeable teaching component.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) **The lack of a shared understanding of the notion of collaboration and shared leadership.**
- ii) **The tension between the desire for shared decision-making and the time this can involve.**
- iii) **The time and effort required for the implementation of an innovation of this nature.**
- iv) **The amount of time Jim had to lead and drive the innovation.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUE:

- i) **The tension between the level of staff commitment and involvement and the teaching duties of all staff members in a participatory action research project.**

Following the interview with Jim, I attended the year 7, 8 and 9 team meetings and asked each group of teachers for their feelings about the concept of middle schooling, teaming, and where the implementation process was going. The year 7 team reported that they were comfortable with all three aspects of the concept and change process. The year 8 team voiced concern that they did not fully understand the concept and what it would look like in practice. This group of three older teachers also said they felt “insecure” because they did not know where they were going or what was expected of them.

I don't actually know where we are going, or why for that matter. Why do we need all this change? Things have been going pretty well in the past, kids are happy, parents seem happy enough, so why change...why fix it if it ain't broke? (Year 8 Teacher, Y82045).

The year 9 team said that they would like more information and education on the concept and, in particular, what each of the components would look like in practice.

It all seems like a good idea, the concept I mean. I think I understand what it is about but I don't know enough about some of the things we are supposed to be doing like integrated curriculum. How is that going to work? (Year 9 Teacher, Y95131).

I did not interview the year 10 team because, at this stage, because their role in the middle school development was still undecided.

It should be noted that by March 2002, year 8 and 9 teaming involved little more than home-rooming for core subjects and homeroom meetings. Home-rooming involved students remaining with the same group of students for core subjects. At Matai School the subjects the year groups were home-roomed for were:

- Year 7: English, Maths, Social Studies, Scripture, PE and Science.
- Year 8: English, Maths, Social Studies and Scripture.
- Year 9: English, Social Studies and Scripture.
- Year 10: Scripture and one core subject, either Maths, Science or Social Studies.

For the other subjects the students had a mixture of subject specialist teachers. At this stage there was little evidence of team planning or teaching, but they did use the team meetings to discuss issues that concerned the students they taught collectively. The year 7 team were doing some team planning and assessment, but little team teaching.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) Teacher lack of understanding of parts of the concept.**
- ii) Teacher lack of clarity as to what some of the components would look like in action.**
- iii) Teacher lack of a ‘big picture’ vision of the complete concept.**
- iv) Teacher concern over the level of time being given to meetings/shared decision-making.**
- v) Lack of clarity as to year 10’s role in middle school.**

During the March visit to the school I also interviewed the Head of the Full School (HoS) and the ex-principal of the middle school. I asked the HoS what his understanding of the middle schooling concept was, and what developments he would like to see take place in the next two years. He replied that he did not know a lot about the middle schooling concept, but that his beliefs for middle level education were based mainly “on instinct...what is best for the children, rather than what the literature says” (SE3113). He said that during the next two years he would like to see each student having one teacher who knew them well; students being respected and appreciated by the staff so that they wanted to come to school; staff individualising their programmes to meet each child’s needs; a “smorgasbord of leadership opportunities for the students” (SE3112); students making links between the subjects; and a full staff professional development programme so that the teachers were able to implement and make all of the changes work.

Peter, the previous principal of the Middle School, was working at a separate institution on the school grounds so I was able to ask him why Matai had decided to adopt the middle schooling concept. He told me that in 1993, the then Head of School had read Stewart and Nolan's book *The middle school: Essential education for emerging adolescents* (1992) and become very interested in the concept. So interested that despite the concern of many of his staff, he established the middle school. "Bill was a man who got what he wanted...he didn't let anything or anyone stand in his way" (CS1014A). But according to Peter, this school was a middle school in name only. "Bill was a control man. He gave me a heavy teaching load and no time to develop the middle school" (CS1013). Peter said that it was only when a new Head of School was appointed in 1999 that the middle school development began in earnest. Peter said that the new Head was aware that the middle school had been an area of concern to staff and parents, and he wished to "do what was best for the students" (CS1015). In consultation with the school board, it was decided to appoint a new principal of the middle school whose mandate would be to "create a true middle school" (CS1104). Peter said that he did not apply for the job as he wished to move into educational research. It was at this point that Jim was appointed from an outside school to be the new principal of the middle school. Peter concluded the interview by saying "I am very much in support of the middle schooling concept and what Jim is doing. I think everything is in place this time to make it happen" (CS1105).

On this visit I collected historical data about the establishment of the full school and the decision to move to the middle schooling concept. Jim, Pam (the deputy principal of the Middle School), and I jointly drafted a teacher survey (Appendix 5). Jim and Pam asked that we not include the teachers in the drafting process because the teachers were complaining about the amount of time they were having to take out of teaching to put into the meetings and discussions, and Jim and Pam felt that they could help this situation by not asking for their assistance with this particular task.

The purpose of this baseline survey was to ascertain the teachers' key values for the middle school, their level of understanding of the middle schooling concept, and what they hoped their team would achieve in the next two years. It was decided to use a survey rather than individual interviews because Jim and Pam felt that the teachers

would be more likely to be honest in their written replies than in face to face interviews. They also felt that a written survey was less demanding on teacher time than interviews. The desire to protect the teachers from additional work could be taken as a signal from both the teachers and Jim that the teachers were not very enthusiastic about being involved in the action research and that my efforts to gather data may have been seen as an unwelcome imposition.

My next visit to the school was late March 2002. The main purposes of this visit were to conduct an update interview with Jim, plan Term Two research activities, and be available to teachers should they wish to discuss the teacher survey, which they had received since my previous visit. No teachers asked to discuss the survey. The only comment I received was over a cup of tea when a teacher said:

It [the survey] was useful. Made me think about the concept. It made me aware of what it is all about, made me think about what it is we are trying to do. I don't know that I am ready...it is exciting, but I think this thing might be bigger than any of us realise (Year 9 Teacher, Y94237).

In our update interview Jim told me that one of his priorities of the moment was to raise the identity of the middle school through newspaper comment and advertising so that “kids want to come here...teachers want to teach here” (JN1257). He also spoke of his wish to foster more teacher collaboration, collective planning, and shared decision-making in line with the principles of the concept. But he was also aware that some teachers had already voiced concern about the number of discussions and meetings. He said he felt that in order to clarify this issue he would need to talk to them about the level of shared decision-making they wished to be involved in, to see if they could clarify the issues they wished to discuss and those which they wanted him to make decisions on.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) **The need to clarify and define shared leadership, what it would entail and the level of teacher involvement in the decision-making.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:

- i) **Jim and Pam's decision to not ask for teacher involvement in interviews in an effort to save them time.**

- ii) **My difficulties with attempting to put in place full action research cycles.**
- iii) **The growing reluctance of some teachers to be involved in the research.**
- iv) **The need to secure the interest and commitment of all staff members to the action research cycles.**

Jim talked about the need to obtain autonomy from the senior college because he felt they could never achieve a full middle school without it. He said that ideally autonomy from the senior college would involve freedom from the strictures of a senior college timetable, freedom from the sharing of teachers with the senior college, and freedom from control of the middle school curriculum by the senior college Heads of Departments. To achieve the flexibility he desired for integrated curriculum and flexible scheduling, he felt he needed to have his teachers teach only in the middle school and not be shared with the senior college. While he saw most of these requirements as attainable in the long term, he was not so sure he would ever be able to free the middle school from the domination of the senior college timetable. This raised questions of whether he could ever have a 'true' middle school with flexible scheduling to accommodate integrated curriculum. This raised several important questions for Jim. Was he destined to be able to implement only parts of the concept? Would this be good enough, better than the system they already had? Would partial implementation of the concept improve student achievement and enjoyment? He commented:

I realise that it [the middle school development] is going to take longer than expected...there are so many barriers in the way...sometimes I feel I am moving in porridge...there is so much to do (Jim, JN3159).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) **Jim's desire for autonomy from the senior college and the restraints and restrictions imposed on the middle school development by being part of a full school.**
- ii) **Jim's growing awareness of the enormity of the task and the possible length of the implementation process.**

The research activities planned for Term Two included my continued attendance at team meetings to get feedback on change actions, feedback and discussion of the teacher survey findings, team interviews about teaming and meetings, provision of literature on middle schooling to teachers and discussion of this, and a written parent survey to ascertain parents' understanding of the concepts and their perceptions of the middle school development direction. A parent evening was also planned to feed back and

discuss the results of the parent survey. Jim indicated that at our next meeting he would like to discuss possible ways to monitor the implementation of the middle schooling concept to ascertain whether it was making a difference to student achievement.

Pam, the deputy principal of Matai School, also asked to talk with me about integrated curriculum. She was very interested in this aspect of the concept and appeared to have taken responsibility for educating the teachers on this topic. I agreed to supply Jim with readings on parent involvement in middle schooling and Pam with readings on heterogeneous grouping and integrated curriculum. We arranged to discuss the readings on my next visit.

2.3. May 2002 Visit

By the May visit I had received the completed teacher surveys and had collated the results in preparation for feedback to and discussion with the staff. In brief, the survey indicated that the majority of the teachers had a sound understanding of the rationale and principles of the middle schooling concept, and that there was a high level of consensus on the types of values they wished the middle school to hold. On the question of what actions the staff would like to put in place in the next two years, the most frequent replies concerned integrated curriculum, autonomy from senior college and the establishment of their own identity for the middle school, and clarification of staff roles and responsibilities. My agreed role at the staff discussion meeting was to feed back the findings of the survey and facilitate discussion on the findings. The two topics that generated the most discussion were heterogeneous grouping and parent participation. About half of the teachers voiced concern over the removal of the current system of streaming.

Why do we need to change this [streaming]? It works well for teachers and students. Why are we changing things that have worked well in the past, is it just for the sake of change? (Year 8 Teacher, Y81318).

A small group (4 teachers) suggested that the parents should be consulted on this issue as they said the literature was undecided on best grouping arrangements for students of this age. The teachers also voiced concern over having parents in the school and possibly in their classrooms. Their concern focused on parents being critical, telling

them what to do, and getting in the way. It is interesting to note that the key early concerns of the teachers had to do with two issues, heterogeneous grouping and parent involvement, that could be seen as quite tangential to core middle schooling principles.

A third issue that generated discussion was the nature of the middle schooling concept. Comments were expressed about the size of this innovation and how it differed from other changes they had put in place.

The more I think about it [the middle schooling concept] the more I realise that this is like no other change we have put in place. This is much, much bigger, far more complicated (Year 8 Teacher, Y83100).

It [the middle schooling concept] is much bigger than I think any of us realised. This could take years to do and remember that all these changes are on top of what we do everyday. It is all extra work (Year 9 Teacher, Y93166).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) Teacher continued lack of understanding as to what several of the concept components might look like in action.**
- ii) Teacher concern over the inclusion and implementation of two key aspects of the concept, heterogeneous grouping and parent involvement.**
- iii) Teacher growing awareness of the different nature of this particular innovation.**

Jim opened our monthly update interview with the comment, “There have been some really significant happenings since you were last down...things that are going to be really good for the middle school” (JN4123). By this he was referring to talks he had had with the Head of School that indicated the middle school was to get new buildings that would give it a sense of identity, place and semi-autonomy from the senior college. Another event, one which Jim saw as having positive outcomes for the middle school, was the establishment of a management review. Through this process Jim hoped that he would get comparable status to the other heads of schools (Head of Primary and the Head of Senior College). This in turn would give the middle school more status, and him more say on staffing and funding. The establishment of Development Committees was another new move since my previous visit to the school. In an effort to include staff more in the decision-making processes, Jim had set up seven committees and he had

given staff the choice of which committees they wished to be on. The committees covered the gifted and talented programme, the graduation system, advisory programmes, learning support, assessment, exploratory teaching and curriculum integration. Advisory programmes are advocated by many middle schooling proponents (Jackson & Davis, 2000). They are learning programmes which aim to improve the social skills and behaviour of students. When asked how teachers would find time for these committees, Jim replied that every second fortnightly staff meeting would be given over to these matters. When asked why he was putting the emphasis on structural change as opposed to cultural or curriculum change, Jim replied that the middle school development was hampered by existing structures that needed to be removed or changed before new systems could be put in place. He also felt that changing structures first would help get teacher commitment to the middle school implementation. He added that the staff would need more education on strategies such as exploration and co-operative teaching before they would be ready to implement curriculum changes. He said, "I have the big vision in my head but I still have to get that across to them...they need to see some change in place to get motivated" (JN4101C).

On asking several teachers what they thought about the Development Committees and how the establishment of these would impact on the implementation process, I received mainly ambivalent comments such as the following:

They are just more work for us. They are a good idea, get us talking about these things. We need to do it but we just haven't got time. I am already struggling to keep up with everything and we aren't even half way through the year (Year 8 Teacher, Y83513).

Total waste of time. I know what will happen...we will spend all our time talking about these things and then they [the management team] will just tell us what they want done. It always happens that way so why don't they just tell us what they want in the first place and let us get on with our work (Year 9 Teacher, Y93514).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) Jim had the 'big picture' in his head but was unable to communicate this to the teachers at this point.**

- ii) **Jim's attention to structural as opposed to cultural and curriculum aspects of the concept.**
- iii) **Jim's difficulty gaining the operational commitment of all staff to the changes.**
- iv) **The establishment of development committees to give the teachers more say in decision-making was meeting with teacher resistance.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUE:

- i) **The increasing tension between teacher resistance to time taken out of teaching and the need to secure their interest and involvement in the action research.**

2.4. June 2002 Visit

At the beginning of June (6th) I visited the school to hold an update interview with Jim and to attend the team meetings. Unfortunately Jim was unwell so that interview did not take place, but I attended the team meetings. The purpose of my attendance at the team meetings was to facilitate further discussion on the staff survey findings. The year 7 team said they had no comment and that they were happy with the results of the survey. Year 8 teachers said they still felt unsure of where they were going, of the bigger vision, of what all the concept principles would look like in practice and how they would fit together.

I'm still not sure where we are going. Here it is half way through the year and nothing seems clearer yet. The more talk we do, the more complicated it all seems (Year 8 Teacher, Y823110).

The year 8 team also asked for names of middle schools that they could visit to view good middle schooling practice. The year 9 team commented that the survey and follow-up discussion had clarified some of their thinking, but that it had made them realise there was "still much to be done". As one teacher commented:

It has only just hit me how big this thing [the implementation process] is... it is going to take years to put in place (Year 9 Teacher, Y925157).

Other teachers nodded their heads in agreement, or verbally endorsed this statement.

There is so much to do it seems...all these changes to make and they are big changes, major changes. I feel worried when I think about all the work

and the upheaval it is going to cause. Will it be worth it in the end? Will things actually be better for the kids? I'm not sure (Year 9 Teacher, Y925150).

I did not attend the year 10 team meeting as their place and role in the middle school was still undecided. My informal conversations with year 10 teachers showed that they were still opposed to being part of the middle school.

I don't know why he [Jim] wants us in his middle school. We don't want it, we want to stay in the Senior College. Our kids need discipline and specialist teaching (Year 10 Teacher, Y103411).

He has a fight on his hands if he thinks we are going to be part of his middle school. I'm not going to team teach and do integrated curriculum. I will leave my job before I will do that. I'm secondary trained...I'm not going to do that namby pamby primary stuff (Year 10 Teacher, Y1064123).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) Teacher lack of 'bigger picture' of where the implementation was going.**
- ii) Teacher lack of understanding about the interconnected nature of the components of the concept.**
- iii) Lack of models of good middle schooling practice for teachers to visit and consider.**
- iv) Growing awareness of the size and enormity of the implementation task.**
- v) Lack of clarity over the role of year 10 in the middle school.**
- vi) Evidence of teacher (year 10) resistance to the changes.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:

- i) The reluctance of many of the teachers to be involved in the action research, citing lack of time as the main reason.**
- ii) My growing concern over my inability to carry out full action cycles.**

Between the May and June visits, Jim, Pam and I drafted and circulated a written parent survey (Appendix 6). This survey was in response to Jim's suggestion that he would like to ascertain the level of parental knowledge and interest in the concept as a baseline for future parent education and participation. The intention was to gather baseline data via the survey and to then follow up the survey with focus group interviews with the parents. The survey was distributed to parents via the school newsletter, and students returned responses to the school office. The completed surveys were forwarded directly

to me for collation and initial analysis. My comments were circulated to Jim and Pam for comment and amendment. On 25 June a parent evening was held. My role at this meeting was to feed back the results of the survey and facilitate discussion on the findings. While the survey had only a 27.3% response rate, approximately 160 parents attended the evening, which was a very high attendance rate compared to usual parent evenings. In brief, the findings of the parent survey were that the parents were reasonably well informed about middle schooling principles, but said they would like more information about integrated curriculum, flexible timetables, exploratory learning, advisory programmes and parent involvement. A small group of parents asked to see research to support the move towards middle schooling practices and in particular integrated curriculum and mixed ability grouping; and a few parents questioned the need for autonomy from the senior college.

It [the middle schooling concept] sounds really good, the type of education I want for my child. I like that it is based on the needs of the students, not just subjects and what the teachers think they need (Parent, PM563).

It all makes good sense, reflects our Christian faith and beliefs. I like that the kids will have less teachers, move around less and get more care and attention (Parent, PM542).

The other issues parents raised most questions about were advisory programmes, heterogeneous grouping and homework. In particular, the parents expressed concern about the content of the advisory programmes and who might deliver them, and they also questioned why streaming should be reduced or abandoned.

We have always had streaming, it is good for the students. They [the students] feel better being in a class with kids of the same level, especially in subjects like Maths (Parent, PM429).

Streaming is good, they all know where they stand, what they can do. They need to know their level of ability, the truth. They might as well get used to knowing there always be someone that is better than us. That's life (Parent, PM135).

Overall, Jim felt that the evening had been very positive and productive in that it had shown that the parents had appreciated being involved, had liked being consulted, and that the process had identified some areas that he and his staff would need to discuss and work on. The following day the teachers expressed very little interest in hearing about the outcomes of the parent meeting although I attempted to initiate discussion about the meeting.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) The parents expressed the need for more education on several of the concept components and what they would involve in practice.**
- ii) The parents wanted evidence which showed that the concept would make a difference to student achievement.**
- iii) The parents indicated that they had enjoyed and appreciated being part of the decision-making process.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:

- i) Jim had told the staff they did not have to attend the parent evening so most did not. He said he had done this to save them attending an additional meeting.**
- ii) Jim decided that we would not use follow up parent focus interviews as he felt the feedback at the evening had provided all the information he needed for planning parent education and participation.**
- iii) The teachers showed very little interest in hearing about the outcomes of the parent meeting.**

2.5. August/September 2002 Visits

At our monthly update meeting in August (2nd), Jim reported that the main issue he was pondering was how to assess whether the middle school development was making a difference to student achievement. This issue had arisen from teacher and parent requests to produce evidence to show that adoption of the middle schooling concept makes a difference to student achievement. It should be noted that Jim had raised this issue back in March but nothing further had come of it until this point.

Jim was also thinking about the Jackson and Davis (2000) comment that there can be no half measures when adopting the concept. Jackson and Davis argue that if you want to raise student achievement, you cannot pick out certain parts of the concept you want to implement. Rather, they claim, you must implement the full concept with fidelity. This

claim would appear to be an optimistic assertion on the part of Jackson and Davis because it was not possible to find research to support it.

At this meeting, Jim also commented on the slow pace of implementation, how the end of the first year was in sight, and how he felt he had achieved little. With regard to this comment, he added that he was still unsure of the place of year 10 in the middle school and that he was concerned by the continuing resistance of the year 10 teachers to even talk about their possible role in the middle school.

Jim asked that I conduct a full staff group interview in early September to ascertain staff perceptions of the middle school development. It was decided to hold a full group discussion rather than individual interviews as Jim and Pam felt that the teachers might not be willing to give up the time for interviews but that they would probably be agreeable to a discussion over a provided lunch. The staff interview was held over a staff lunch on the 6th of September. Most teachers from years 7, 8, 9 and 10 were present. I asked them firstly what was working well with the middle school development. They replied that a sense of identity had been established, the leadership was strong, team meetings were beneficial for sharing ideas, and most students appeared to be more settled and better behaved with home-rooming.

When asked what was not working so well with the development, the year 10 staff present were very vocal about their place and role in the middle school. They again expressed their concern that year 10, with its upcoming NCEA requirements, was unsuited for the middle schooling principles of home-rooming, flexible timetables and integrated curriculum. They said that they were wasting time being at meetings like this, and they claimed that many of the year 9 students were “unruly and unsettled” with the new teaming structure. Another concern, which received strong support from all year levels, was that of meetings. They complained that there were too many meetings and that the time they took up left them with less time for preparation and teaching. The majority of the teachers also felt that many meetings were not well run, that many of the issues they were expected to discuss could have been decided by management, and that the development committee meetings were “a waste of time”.

We are getting sick and tired of all the meetings. I know they [management] want us to take part in the planning and decision-making, and that is well and good, but they don't seem to realise, we just don't have time. If they [management] want us to do that they have to make time, get relievers in or something like that (Year 9 Teacher, Y943178).

Not all of us want to be involved in the planning and discussion. Some of us would just prefer to be told what to do and then let us get on with it (Year 8 Teacher, Y81517).

All this talking, that is all we ever seem to do. There's not much happening, not much action. When are we going to stop talking and get on with some of the things they say we are going to do? (Year 9 Teacher, Y96119).

The third issue, which provoked strong comment, was that of roles and responsibilities within the middle school. A number of teachers felt that some staff members had too many roles, and they asked that they be given a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the principal and the deputy principal as they said they did not know what these staff members did. The final noteworthy issue was the feeling from approximately half of the teachers that they were being asked to do too much at once and that the pace of change was too fast and demanding. This was an interesting comment because, while the teachers were asked to attend many meetings about understanding, planning and implementing the middle schooling concept, they still had only put in place teaming. In the year 8 and 9 teams, team teaching was a structure rather than a way of teaching. Only the year 7 team had commenced putting integrated curriculum into practice.

I met with Jim and Pam after the meeting to discuss the teacher comments, as neither was present at the meeting. Jim was particularly disheartened and disappointed with some of the comments. In particular, he was surprised by the intensity of feeling the year 10 staff had expressed about being part of the middle school. He was also disappointed by the comment that the pace of change was too great. In fact he said the only thing that had changed was teaming, and he added that they are “not anywhere near doing that properly yet” (JN6137). He added that they were really only still at the stage

of learning about and planning the middle schooling development. He wondered what would happen when they realised how many more changes they would be asked to make. He also wondered if these comments meant that the teachers were not really committed to the concept and that perhaps they were only paying lip service to it. He said he had hoped that by now some of the teachers would have taken responsibility for the change and that they would be driving parts of it themselves. But this had not happened and he had no indication to suggest it might take place in the near future. This made him wonder what he had to do to encourage a collaborative culture in which teachers want to take on new or extra responsibilities for the good of the students.

Pam was disappointed to think that the teachers might have been suggesting that Jim's and her roles were in some way "mysterious". She felt that they had worked hard to explain and demonstrate their new roles to the teachers.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) The need for evidence that the concept makes a difference to student achievement.**
- ii) Jim's need to clarify the totality of the middle schooling concept, what parts they would include, and to share this understanding with the staff.**
- iii) The need to clarify the role of year 10 in the middle school.**
- iv) The growing level of staff resistance to the concept and too many meetings.**
- v) The low level of teacher commitment to the changes.**
- vi) The difficulties experienced when attempting to share leadership with teachers.**
- vii) The growing teacher awareness of the size and complexity of the innovation.**

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:

- i) In an effort to save staff time and effort, and to reduce and avoid teacher dissent, Jim and Pam were virtually the sole decision makers in the action research project.**
- ii) My inability to carry out any full cycles of research with the teachers.**

Between the August and September visits, Jim and I had both attended the Australian Middle Schooling Annual Conference in Adelaide. While at the conference we had had the opportunity to visit local middle schools. On our return from the conference, we reflected on and shared our experiences with Pam and other staff members. In particular we commented on the high level of enthusiasm and support for the middle schooling concept in Australia. This was evidenced in the high levels of state funding put into

providing purpose-built middle schools and renovating old style schools to facilitate teaming and exploratory learning. The high level of state support was also evident in the provision of middle schooling advisors, and state funded and supported middle schooling principal and teacher networks. Jim had approached and been accepted as a member of the Australian Middle Years network as he felt the support would be invaluable because there were no New Zealand middle school support networks.

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) The lack of New Zealand government support and funding for the middle schooling concept and middle schools.**
- ii) The lack of New Zealand middle school support networks.**

2.6. October 2002 Visit

My next visit to the school was in mid October. The main purposes of this visit were to have an update interview with Jim, discuss curriculum integration with Pam, and to attend the team meetings so that I would be available if the teachers wished to discuss any aspects of the implementation. At the update meeting Jim reported that he had held discussions with the year 10 team and had cleared up several misunderstandings about the development. In particular, the year 10 staff thought they were expected to implement a fully integrated curriculum. Jim had explained this was not so, that rather they would only be required to introduce a few integrated units into their current practices. He reported that they had also reached agreement for the year 10 staff to decide whether or not to attend staff meetings after they had read the agenda to see if any of the matters to be raised affected them. Jim acknowledged that while they had reached agreement on these matters, several of the staff members were still not in favour of year 10 being part of the middle school. He was still unsure what the year 10 role would be and asked me to supply him with literature on transition and grade span configurations. It could be argued that by agreeing to the year 10 teachers only having to put in place a partially integrated curriculum and only having to attend staff meetings when they wished to, Jim was backing down on his commitment to have the year 10 team as fully integrated members of the middle school. Jim's actions could also indicate that he was reconsidering whether he thought there was even a place for year 10 in the middle school.

At this meeting Jim reported that the Management Review had taken place and that it looked likely that his position as principal of the middle school would receive more status, more funding and more say in the management of the full school. He was very heartened by this as he saw it as a move towards him having direct input into staffing, curriculum and timetabling matters, all issues which the middle school had had little say on in the past. He said it also looked likely that his teaching component would be reduced in 2003, freeing him up to have the time and energy “to really drive the middle school development” (JN7145).

At our meeting, Pam and I discussed the integrated curriculum literature I had sent her, and she outlined the professional development she had organised for staff on this topic. She had engaged the services of College of Education staff, who had explained what curriculum integration was, and who had helped plan possible units for the teachers to use. Pam reported that most of the staff, with the exception of the year 10 teachers, were enthused and ready to try some form of integration. The year 7 teachers had trialled a modified form of integration during the year and they had shared their experiences with the other teachers in the school as part of the professional development. Pam reported that the professional development had encouraged and enthused teachers to the extent that “they want to do something different...there is a kind of air of excitement about the place...about the [middle school] changes” (PT5116).

I attended each of the team meetings on this visit but no members of staff wished to discuss the middle school development. Rather, they were preoccupied with end of year matters such as assessment and reporting.

We just haven't got time to think about all of that at the moment. We have got reports to get out and then parent interviews. Anyway there isn't anything to discuss, we haven't done anything, we're still just talking (Year 8 Teacher, Y83479).

EMERGING ISSUES:

- i) **Some understanding had been established about the role of year 10 in middle school.**
- ii) **Some of the teachers were establishing clarity about integrated curriculum.**

- iii) Very little change had taken place. The teachers were still at the point of clarifying their understanding of the concept and they were coming to grips with the atypical nature of the innovation.

RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:

- i) Minimal collaboration was taking place in the research. The only fully active members were Jim, Pam and myself.
- ii) It had become impossible to use any form of action research cycle.

In summary, the following table brings together all of the emerging issues and the research method issues that were impacting on the action research study nine months into the research period.

Table 5.2: Summary of Emerging Issues and Research Method Issues

EMERGING ISSUES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim's difficulties with communicating his 'big picture' vision of the middle school to the teachers. • Jim's desire for shared leadership, involving collaboration and shared decision-making and the teacher resistance to this. • The teachers' lack of understanding of each component of the concept and how they would be operationalised. • The limited amount of time Jim was able to devote to leading the change efforts due to his teaching load. • Jim's difficulties with securing the operational commitment of all teachers to the changes. • The teachers' concern that the middle school planning meetings were detracting from their core business of teaching and learning. • The teachers' growing disinterest, apathy and in some cases resistance to the changes. • Lack of clarity as to the role of year 10 in the middle school. • The lack of support, from the senior college, for the middle school. • Jim and Pam and some of the teachers' growing awareness of the size and complexity of the innovation and the implications this had for the implementation process.
RESEARCH METHOD ISSUES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher concern at the amount of time and effort the research activities were taking out of their teaching time. • Restricted access to staff. • Lack of sustained time at the school.

In view of the growing number of both emerging and research method issues that were impacting on the progress of the action research study, the research methodology was reviewed. The emerging issues from this first phase of the data gathering served to inform both the direction and the focus questions for the second phase of the data

gathering. They are revisited and discussed more fully in Chapter 6 along with the data from the second phase of the data gathering.

3. Research Review

Having persisted for nine months with action research as the primary data gathering method, it had become increasingly obvious that this form of research was untenable. It had become increasingly difficult to secure staff interest and participation in the action research and this meant that it was impossible to carry out full action research cycles. On reflection, it had not been possible to carry out full action research at any stage of phase one. The two main reasons for this were teacher misunderstanding and confusion about the innovation, and teacher resistance to the changes. It could be that there were also larger issues impacting on this issue. It was possible that the teachers were not willing partners in either the decision to embark on the middle schooling adoption process, or the decision to allow me to conduct the action research. On reflection, we needed to ask whether the teachers knew enough about either commitment at the beginning of the process.

From the outset of the research period the teachers struggled with forming a shared understanding of the middle schooling concept, and vision of what the concept would look like in practice in their classrooms. This struggle was compounded by persistent teacher resistance to meetings which were intended to clarify these issues through shared decision-making, but which many of the teachers saw as a waste of time and detracting from their teaching time. While the teachers generally said they agreed with adopting the middle school concept, their actions suggested that they were not as much in favour and as committed as they professed. Their reluctance to engage in the very conversations and discussions which should have served to clarify the shared understanding and vision meant that it was very difficult to engage the teachers in any sustained cycles of action research.

While having said at the beginning of the year that they thought the research would be useful in helping them to understand, make decisions and implement the concept, the research came to be seen as additional work and time consuming. They made this claim even though they never actively engaged in full research cycles. When Jim attempted to

move the teachers on by insisting that they commence implementing team teaching in some cases and integrated curriculum in other cases, this mandated move met with resistance also. Thus, by the end of the first nine months of the research period, the attitude of many of the teachers towards the changes was at such a point of cynicism that there was minimal interest in engaging in any activities that had to do with implementing the concept. Thus, it was necessary to reconsider the direction of the research.

While the first nine months of the research period had not served the purpose that been intended, the data gathering and reflection had been useful because it had identified many lessons about middle schooling implementation, and in particular it had signalled three main issues that were impacting significantly on the implementation process.

4. Shift in Research Methodology

Given that the primary purpose of this study was to study a single case intensively in order to identify factors that might illuminate the process of implementation of the middle schooling concept, the first nine months of the research had identified one particular emerging factor, the complex and challenging nature of the innovation, a factor which appeared to be worthy of in depth consideration because of the significant and unexpected impact it was having on the implementation process. It was also decided to gather data on two other factors that were proving influential to implementation process. These two factors were leadership and teacher resistance to the changes. It was decided that grounded theory would be the most suitable research approach to use to investigate these three factors further.

During my November 2002 visit to the school, I spoke to Jim and Pam about the difficulties with the action research approach and they agreed to my shift in focus and methodology. It was agreed that I would not attempt to involve the teachers in further action research, but instead I would continue to help the school in line with my obligations under the Memorandum of Understanding. This meant that for the next fourteen months of the research, I continued to attend staff meetings and team meetings, interview teachers, help with the construction of surveys, and supply literature and lead discussions on it.

5. Phase II: November 2002 – December 2003

Phase II of the research commenced with a return to the educational change and innovation literature. The purpose of the return at this point was specifically to investigate the research on leadership for change, teacher sub-cultures and teacher resistance and how these factors impact on educational change. I also wished to investigate any literature on the nature of innovations and whether the different nature of innovations may affect implementation processes. The findings from the first phase of data gathering and the review of the middle schooling and the educational change and innovation literature enabled me to develop focus questions to direct the second phase of the case study data gathering. The focus questions were grouped under the three issues that appeared to be having significant impact on the implementation process. Rather than documenting this section in the chronological order employed in the reporting of the first phase of the data gathering, the data in this section is recorded and analysed around the three groups of focus questions.

5.1. Phase II Data Gathering Questions

(A) Leadership – Focus Questions

- What model of leadership was Jim attempting to follow? Was it a coherent, self-conscious model? To what extent was he able to follow it? How did he operationalise the model? How did his behaviour depart from the model?
- What were the critical leadership tasks and the challenges he needed to meet in order to lead this innovation? How did he address them?

(B) Teacher Sub-Cultures and Teacher Resistance – Focus Questions

- Was there ever a fully-informed acceptance of the middle schooling concept by the staff?
- How and why did teacher resistance develop? How did it express itself?
- How did management, Jim and Pam, respond to the resistance?

(C) Nature of the Innovation – Focus Questions

- What were the characteristics and challenges of this innovation?

- To what extent was this innovation inherently more complex and challenging than other innovations a school or classroom might be confronted with?

These three groups of focus questions are discussed with supportive evidence provided from both phases of the data gathering.

5.2. Phase II Data Sources

Table 5.3: Phase II Data Sources at Matai School

Visit/Date	Data Sources
2002	
7-8 November 2002	Interview: Principal Interview: Heads of year 8 and 9 teams Interview: Year 8 teacher Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Meeting of Principal with Head of Full School Informal conversations with staff members
10-13 December 2002	Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Selected members of year 10 team Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Staff meeting Informal conversations with staff members Informal conversations with parents
2003	
25-26 February 2003	Interview: Head of Full School Interview: Deputy principal Interview: New Teacher Interview: Year 8 team Attended: Year 7, 9 team meetings Informal conversations with teachers Informal conversations with parents
18-21 March 2003	Interview: Principal Interview: Leaders of year 8, 9 teams Interview: Year 10 teachers (3) Interview: Year 8 teacher Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Staff meeting Informal conversations with teachers
10 April 2003	Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team teaching minutes Interview: Principal Interview: HOD English, Senior College

6-7 May 2003	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of Full School</p> <p>Interview: Leaders of year teams</p> <p>Interview: New Teacher</p> <p>Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings</p> <p>Attended: Staff meeting</p> <p>Professional Development: Led staff discussion on supplied literature</p> <p>Informal conversations with teachers</p>
29-30 May 2003	<p>Interview: Principal (x2)</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Leader year 9 team</p> <p>Interview: Year 9 teachers (2)</p> <p>Interview: Year 7 team</p> <p>Attended: Year 9 team meeting</p> <p>Informal conversations with teachers</p>
18-20 June 2003	<p>Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team meeting minutes</p> <p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of Full School</p> <p>Interview: Year 10 teachers (2)</p> <p>Attended: Year 8 team meeting</p> <p>Informal conversations with parents</p>
3-4 July 2003	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: Year 9 teacher</p> <p>Interview: Year 7 team</p> <p>Informal conversations with teachers</p>
12-15 August 2003	<p>Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team meeting minutes</p> <p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: HOD English Senior College</p> <p>Attended: Staff meeting</p> <p>Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings</p> <p>Informal conversations with teachers</p> <p>Informal conversations with parents</p>
27-28 August 2003	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Deputy Principal</p> <p>Interview: HOD Science Senior College</p> <p>Interview: HOD Mathematics Senior College</p> <p>Professional Development: Led discussion on supplied literature</p> <p>Attended: Year 9 team meeting</p> <p>Informal conversations with teachers</p>
9-12 September 2003	<p>Interview: Principal</p> <p>Interview: Head of Middle School</p> <p>Interview: Year 10 teachers (2)</p> <p>Interview: Leader year 7 team</p>

	Survey: Year 7, 8 teachers Attended: Year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Staff meeting Informal conversations with teachers
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21-24 October 2003	Documentation: Gathered newsletters and team meeting minutes Interview: Principal (x2) Interview: Deputy Principal Interview: Year 8 teacher Professional Development: Presented and led discussion on National Exemplars (formative assessment) Attended: Year 10 team meeting Attended: Year 8 team meeting Informal conversations with teachers
11-13 November 2003	Interview: Principal Interview: HOD Social Studies Senior College Attended: Year 8, 9 team meetings
26-27 November 2003	Documentation: Gathered final newsletters and team meeting minutes Interview: Principal Interview: Deputy Principal Concluding Interview: Members of year 7 team Concluding Interview: Members of year 8 team Concluding Interview: Members of year 9 team Informal conversations with teachers Informal conversations with parents
3-5 December 2003	Concluding Interview: Principal Concluding Interview: Deputy Principal Concluding Interview: Head of Full School Attended: Final for year 7, 8, 9 team meetings Attended: Final for year staff meeting. Presented report on research Informal conversations with teachers Informal conversations with parents

6. Leadership

The educational change and innovation literature (Fullan, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2001) tells us repeatedly that quality leadership is the key to successfully changing schools. Current school change theory tends to favour the use of transformational and empowering styles of change leadership. The literature (Clark & Clark, 1994; Dickinson, 2001; NMSA,

2001) also contends that schools which are best able to take on and sustain change are those which conceive leadership to be a shared, inclusive, democratic activity.

This section explores the first major factor that appeared to be impacting significantly on the implementation process at Matai School, that is, leadership. The discussion is presented in three sub-sections, which are made up of the focus questions generated from the literature and from the early research experiences of the case study school.

6.1. Leadership Model

What model of leadership was Jim attempting to follow? Was it a coherent, self-conscious model? To what extent was he able to follow it? How did he operationalise the model? How did his behaviour depart from the model?

The review of the literature found that there is very little information specifically on leading and managing the establishment of new middle schools. However, the middle schooling concept is founded on very strong principles of inclusion and participation which includes recommendations that leadership of middle schools be shared and involve all stakeholders including school staff, parents and students (Dickinson, 2001; Lounsbury, 1998).

The case study findings indicate that Jim had a clear view of the leadership model he wished to employ in the middle schooling developments. The findings also indicate that his leadership model was coherent and consistent with his beliefs about educational leadership. The findings further indicate that Jim was aware of his leadership ideals throughout the course of the research period, and that he referred back to and reflected on these in relation to what was happening in the school. But the findings also show that the teachers repeatedly challenged Jim's desire for a shared approach to leadership.

As reported in the first phase finding report, Jim had a clearly articulated leadership approach that he said he was going to use to lead the implementation process. Jim said that he wanted to use a "collaborative, inclusive shared approach" (JN3170). He commented that he had chosen this approach because it both fitted with his own

principles and beliefs about educational leadership and because it also fitted with the middle schooling concept of a holistic, inclusive education for all.

I've always tried to share leadership in my past positions. I've tried to include all my staff in some part of the planning and decision-making. I believe that teachers nowadays usually want to be part, they want a higher level of involvement than they did in the past (Jim, JN0024).

The middle schooling concept is all about collaboration, sharing, working together. I want that reflected in my leadership, everything I do (Jim, JN00414).

Jim reported that not only would this approach to leadership fit with his beliefs but that he felt it was the only practical way to approach the implementation process because “there is much to do, lots to think about, we need everyone taking a share in what has to be done. I can’t do it all myself” (JN0051). Jim was very aware of the workload he was taking on with his teaching commitments, his management obligations to the full school and his leadership role in the middle school developments.

This is going to be a really big year, I've got my teaching commitments which I hope I can negotiate to a lower level. I've got all my responsibilities to the full school management board and then I want to do my best to lead the middle school development. It is going to be really full on (Jim, JN00612).

Jim articulated his model of leadership to the staff on many occasions. During the adoption phase when the full staff worked with Pat Nolan from Massey University, Pat had articulated a concept of shared leadership and how it might be operationalised. Jim had told the teachers that this was the approach he would like to take and the staff had been involved in a short discussion about the forms their involvement might take. The forms of involvement they discussed were around shared decision-making, planning and review of the implementation process. Jim said that they would talk in more detail about these issues at a later date.

While the middle schooling literature (Clark & Clark, 1994; Dickinson, 2001) advocates strongly for a shared approach to leadership, it contains surprising few references to what this might look like in practice. The literature does contain an abundance of references to team teaching and integrated curriculum, which require forms of shared decision-making, but there are few references to how to operationalise shared leadership at the strategic level. While the middle schooling literature is light on how to share leadership with staff, there are many useful references that show to how to share leadership with parents (Rallis & Goldring, 2000; Jackson & Davis, 2000) and students (George & Grebing, 1992; Valentine, Maher, Quinne & Irvin, 1999).

At the beginning of the research period Jim told me that he was going to operationalise his shared leadership ideals by “giving the teachers every possible opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the developments” (JN00617). He said he would like the teachers to be involved in “all significant aspects of planning, putting in place and reviewing” of the middle school developments (JN00712). He said he would encourage involvement and participation by being open and showing that he listened to, trusted and respected staff opinion. He also said he would make himself more available to teachers so that they felt they could talk to him about the middle school developments at any time. Jim’s desire to include the staff in all aspects of the middle school developments is very much in line with Fullan and Hargreaves’ (1995) contention that for successful educational change to take place, teachers must be involved in all facets of the change process. It should be noted, however, that although Jim wished to include the staff in all aspects of the change process, there was one important aspect in which they were not involved, and that was the decision to adopt the middle schooling concept. The decision to adopt the full middle schooling concept was made before Jim was appointed to the school, and the teachers appeared to have had no involvement in the decision-making process.

Jim said that he was aware that the teachers would need time to talk together and to reflect on the middle school development, and he said he would try to make more time available for these meetings.

It is a fact of life, there are going to be more meetings. There have to be if they [the teachers] are to be involved in planning and reviewing the

developments. I will do my best to make time available for these meetings, but the bottom line is, if they [the teachers] want a middle school, and they say they do, then they have to make time to talk about it, plan, think about what we [the staff] are doing (Jim, JN00817).

This is a key statement. In this statement Jim was acknowledging that he was fully cognisant of one of the key requirements of whole-school change, the need for staff participation in planning and reviewing the school developments. He was also acknowledging that he fully understands the importance of making time for this key change activity.

It appeared from the early discussions that the staff was in favour of a shared leadership approach to the implementation process. Jim further reiterated his desire for shared inclusive leadership at many of the staff and team meetings held in the first six months of 2002. He also tried to initiate discussion on how shared leadership might look in practice in the first six months of 2002.

However, despite Jim clearly articulating why he would like shared leadership, and the teachers indicating that they wished to be part of the model, the teachers showed little interest in actually taking part from the beginning, and then later some showed resistance to actually being involved. The main reason given repeatedly for their reluctance to be involved was lack of time for the meetings that were needed for discussion and decision-making.

Jim continued to articulate his desire for shared leadership throughout the research period but he modified how this might look in practice to counteract the teachers' lack of interest and then resistance.

I still want full shared decision-making but I realise this is never going to happen. So I have decided that I have to try and give them more options, make it easier for them, find more time, perhaps only try to get them participating in things that are of real interest or direct relevance to them (Jim, JN00719).

Jim met this challenge to his ideals of shared leadership by changing meeting times to include more middle school discussions during school time rather than at the after-school staff meetings. He also attempted to diffuse the year 10 teachers' resistance to being part of the middle school discussions by letting them make the decision whether they would attend meetings based on whether they felt they would like to make a contribution to the items listed on the agenda. As a consequence of this decision, few year 10 teachers attended the staff meetings after this point.

It is interesting to note that to some degree Jim departed from his model of shared leadership by attempting to placate the teachers' disquiet about attendance at meetings by saying they did not need to attend the parent evening even though this meeting was likely to generate much discussion that would have been useful to shared planning of the middle school developments. As a consequence of this decision Jim and Pam were the only staff members in attendance. It could be wondered if, had Jim not actually said to the teachers that they did not need to attend the meeting and that he would report the findings of the evening back to them, would some have chosen to attend of their own volition? By saying that they need not attend, Jim was sanctioning the teachers' non-involvement in this event. It could be argued that the meeting was of sufficient importance that at least some of the teachers should have been in attendance to hear and speak with the parents. Information gained from exchanges with the parents may have been useful to the teachers' change roles of planning and reflection.

Jim and Pam's decision to set up Development Committees was another deliberate move to try to encourage the teachers to share leadership. The staff members were required to participate in at least two of the Committees.

Perhaps if they get to choose, they will choose the ones they are most interested in and that will make them more willing to put in the time needed to make decisions (Jim, JN5104).

But the teachers did not willingly become part of this decision-making strategy. Rather, some said that they had not had any say in the decision to set up the Development Committees and that they were not in favour of them.

I don't believe they [the Development Committees] are much use. He [Jim] is trying to make us plan things we don't even know much about and which some of us don't even agree with. I don't reckon they will work (Year 8 Teacher, Y825114).

Once again they [management] are telling us what they want us to do. They say this is all about sharing the planning, decisions but then they tell us what we have to do. They say we have choice and then they tell us we have to be on these Development Committees (Year 9 Teacher, Y95615).

The Development Committees failed to function as Jim and Pam had hoped during the course of the research. The teachers continued to thwart their progress by firstly taking a long time to decide which groups they would commit themselves to and then by making little effort to make the committees work. This included lack of organisation as to meeting times, agendas, roles and responsibilities and lack of attendance at meetings. Jim and Pam were very disappointed with the progress of the Development Committees.

I really thought they [the teachers] would like this approach. They say they want to make decisions, take some responsibility, but when we give them the chance they stuff around, don't get on with the job. Perhaps we should have talked more to them about setting up the committees, but it is so hard getting them together to talk these things through so I thought it would help if we made this decision and then let them get on with the decisions within each of their groups. I really feel as though we just can't win at the moment (Jim, JN6119).

It is really disappointing. Whatever we seem to do to get them [the teachers] involved, they don't want to do, make excuses, just ignore...it is really frustrating. It is so hard to make any progress at the moment. It seems like one step forward and two back at the moment (Pam, PT6108).

Jim and Pam's decision to set up the Development Committees could be seen as another departure from the shared leadership ideal Jim espoused. While Jim and Pam made this decision in an effort to try and force the teachers to play a larger role in the decision-making, it departed from their model of shared leadership which held that the teachers

would be involved in all significant decisions. This situation highlights the difficulty of deciding how to balance the desire for teacher involvement in decision-making and the time and commitment this requires.

Jim acknowledged that an inclusive, shared leadership approach would be new for many of the staff members at Matai School and that it might present some difficulties and challenges.

I don't think they have done this [shared leadership] much in the past. They seem to have had a pretty conservative set up round here. Hierarchical levels of management and not much working together. I realise that suddenly asking them to participate more might be challenging for some of them but I am hoping that it is what they will want given the opportunity, well at least the younger members anyway (Jim, JN4150).

Jim's acknowledgement that a shared approach to leadership would be a new approach for many of the staff members could be seen as an indicator that more consideration should have been given to the sequence of structural and cultural changes required by the middle school implementation process. Perhaps it would have been beneficial for the staff to have discussed the cultural changes required by both shared leadership and the middle schooling concept more fully at the time of discussing what the middle schooling concept might look like in practice. This discussion did not appear to take place in any depth either during the conversations with Pat Nolan from Massey University in 2001 or during the early implementation discussions of 2002.

Over the course of the research period, Jim referred back several times to his leadership ideals in the face of the challenges the teachers were making to his attempts to get them to take up the shared leadership opportunities he was offering. In the early stages of the implementation process Jim was disappointed that the teachers did not readily take up the opportunities to be involved in decision-making

I really can't figure it out. They say they want to be included [in the decision-making] but all they do is moan about the time it takes. What did they expect? Of course it will take time, effort, extra meetings. They say they want to do their best for the kids but they don't seem to want to

actually put in the effort it will take to change things around here...very frustrating (Jim, JN5489).

Maybe I was dreaming thinking they would want to be more involved [in decision-making]. They grizzle when I ask them to be involved and they grizzle when I try to help by making some of the decisions for them. What do they actually want? (Jim, JN6104A).

Nine months into the research period Jim commented:

We seem to be stuck, not making the progress I had hoped. I had such high hopes for shared leadership, but nothing much is happening. I am still convinced it is the way to go, the right thing, but only a few of the teachers really support me in this. Most don't seem to care, show much interest and there are a few like XX who seem to question everything I ask or try to do (Jim, JN7912).

During the last fourteen months of the study, Jim continued to struggle to move the teachers towards his espoused model of shared leadership. During this period he attempted to encourage decision-making at the individual team level but the teachers said that the purpose of these weekly meetings was not to discuss middle school development, but rather classroom planning, teaching and student pastoral matters. By the end of the research period Jim was still struggling to get most of the teachers into a shared model of leadership. But he appeared to have taken a step back and had eased off his initial push to put his preferred model in place. Towards the end of the research period Jim commented:

There is not much point in forcing them to do what they don't want to do. I have to think about other ways to make it [shared leadership] more attractive to them so that they want to be involved, but I don't know what they are at the moment (Jim, JN9017).

During the later stages of the research period Jim was acknowledging that he had had to depart from his first vision of a shared leadership role.

I have had to compromise. I now realise that they are not ready, not willing, maybe never will be ready for shared leadership. I am not sure how to move forward. Maybe I just have to work with the few [teachers] who are interested and just forgot the others for the time being, hoping that they will follow over time (Jim, JN6891).

Pam also commented during this period:

We [Jim and Pam] are being forced to make more of the decisions ourselves. We don't want to, but if we wait until they [the teachers] decide to take part we will never get this thing [the middle school development] on the road. I just hope that by putting some changes in place, like the teaming and integrated curriculum, they will get enthused and want to take a bigger role in deciding future moves. Well, that is what I hope, but I am not sure that it will actually happen that way (Pam, PT7781).

A conversation with Jim five months after the research period indicated that the majority of teachers were still not willingly taking part in significant middle school development decision-making.

The reported findings indicate that although Jim had a clear vision of the model of leadership he wished to use to facilitate the middle schooling developments, and that he articulated this model to his staff on repeated occasions, he was unable during the research period to get most of his teachers to commit to and take up the model. This forced Jim to reconsider his preferred approach on several occasions and he chose to depart from his principles in order to placate staff in a move that he hoped would eventually bring them around to accepting his approach. By the end of the research period the situation had changed little. The majority of the teachers were showing little interest in sharing the leadership in the ways that Jim had hoped, and a few were actively thwarting the efforts of Jim and Pam to encourage participation and involvement.

The case study findings indicate that Jim had a clear leadership model that he wished to employ in the middle schooling developments. This model was a shared, inclusive

model of leadership. Jim attempted to operationalise his model through articulating his leadership ideals to the staff, by providing staff with opportunities to share in leadership and by modelling the type of leadership he wished them to employ. Unfortunately, the teachers did not respond positively to the invitations to share leadership. Jim attempted to accommodate this apathy and at times resistance by departing from his model. At these times he exempted staff from attending meetings. In the absence of their participation in decision-making he made unilateral decisions.

6.2. Critical Leadership Tasks

What were the critical leadership tasks and challenges Jim needed to meet in order to lead this innovation? How did he address them?

The educational change and school leadership literature suggest that there are several critical tasks and challenges that leaders have to meet in order to lead the successful implementation of educational innovations. Over and above these critical tasks that are generic to most innovations, the middle schooling concept requires school leaders to meet a few additional critical tasks that pertain to only a few innovations.

The literature review found that current educational change and innovation theory tends to favour the use of transformational, empowering leadership to effect and sustain educational change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2001). According to Fullan (2002) and Sergiovanni (2001), the critical leadership tasks to which transformational leaders of educational change must pay particular attention, fall under three main areas:

- Vision building, sharing and maintenance;
- Building a collaborative change culture; and
- Vision implementation.

The additional critical task which leaders of middle schooling change need to address pertains to:

- The complex, multi-faceted and integrated nature of the innovation.

Each critical leadership task is now discussed with supporting evidence provided from the research.

6.2.1. Critical Leadership Task 1: Vision Building, Sharing and Maintenance

The educational change and innovation literature and the school development literature pays much attention to the importance of a school leader building, sharing and maintaining vision in educational change (Brower & Balch, 2005; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2002; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1993; Sergiovanni, 2001; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

According to these writers, the purpose of vision building is to inspire people and to direct and concentrate their efforts in pursuit of shared goals. These writers proffer the view that vision building should be an activity which is shared by all people involved in and affected by the change. Furthermore, they argue that vision building is an evolving activity that requires on-going reflection, review and monitoring.

Stoll and Fink contend school vision has two main levels. The higher of these two levels they describe as being “dreams of more beneficial futures for themselves [school leaders] and others” (1996, p. 111). At this level it is the role of the leader to articulate their vision and invite the rest of the staff to share in and develop the dream. Stoll and Fink describe the second main level of vision building as being the level where shared goals and purpose are formed, followed by creating a shared understanding of what the change might look like in practice.

Vision building for the case study school commenced before Jim was appointed to the position of principal of Matai School. In 2000 the school board decided that they wished to move their school-in-the-middle, which was a middle school in name only, to being a school based fully on the middle schooling concept. Jim was appointed from an outside school to bring about the required changes. From school documentation (minutes of Board of Trustees meetings), it appears that the decision to adopt the full middle schooling concept was made with little staff or parent input. This approach runs contrary to what the educational change and innovation literature tells us about the key factors for successful innovation adoption. Bolman and Deal (2002), Dalin (1998), Fullan (2001), Sergiovanni (2001) and Stoll and Fink (1996) all argue that successful innovation adoption must start with all of the people who will be affected by the change having a say in the decision whether or not to adopt the innovation. They all argue that

this is very important to ensure stakeholder interest and operational commitment to the innovation.

From the documentation, and from discussion with the Head of the Full School, it also appears that the board of trustees took little responsibility for developing the vision prior to Jim's arrival, and that when he arrived he was given full responsibility for doing this. Jim had no prior experience of the middle schooling concept, although he stated:

I had read quite a bit about it and liked the idea of what it stood for. It seemed to be about all the things I knew from my experience would be good for the students. It just felt right and I was really excited to have the opportunity to put it [the middle schooling concept] in place (Jim, JN00712).

It is interesting to note that, despite the middle schooling concept being founded on very strong principles of inclusion and involvement of staff and parents (Barratt, 1998; Dickinson, 2001; NMSA, 1995), the school board, which was made up of predominately school parents, did not choose to be part of the middle school vision building process either at the time of the decision to adopt the concept or at any other time during the implementation process. Board meeting documentation showed no further reference to middle schooling vision building after the initial decision was made to adopt the full concept.

During 2001 and prior to the research period, Jim reported that he had worked on creating his own vision for the middle school. He said he commenced by up-skilling himself about the concept, which he had done by reading middle schooling literature. As part of sharing and articulating his vision to the staff he had invited a middle schooling expert from Massey University, New Zealand, to address the staff. At these meetings, the staff discussed the rationale and principles of the concept and then thought about how the principles might be translated into action in their school. I attended these meetings and it appeared that the staff was generally enthusiastic about adopting the middle schooling concept. They also appeared to be enthusiastic and inspired about the opportunities that the concept offered them as teachers and the educational and social advantages that it offered the students.

It is all good...I like what it stands for, the interests of the students, that's what it should be about, thinking about what they need and want to know (Year 7 Teacher, Y720135).

It is kind of what we have been doing anyway, just more student focused, integrated, trying to put it all together to solve real problems and issues that the kids are interested in (Year 7 Teacher, Y73003).

While the rationale and principles of middle schooling were discussed thoroughly at the meetings with the middle schooling expert, less time and effort was given to how they might be translated into practice in this school, a very important aspect of vision building according to Fullan (2004). Rather, the staff was provided with literature to read about some of the principles, namely, team teaching and integrated curriculum, and my services were offered to provide additional reading material and discussion as requested by the staff members.

Similarly, it appears that no conversations were had at this time as to whether the current culture and core values of the school aligned with the ideology of the innovation, the middle schooling concept. Current educational change theory (Datnow, 2000a; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 1995; Sarason, 1990) tends to favour the view that the cultural aspects of educational change should be considered early in both the adoption and the vision building processes. In particular, they argue that early consideration should be given to the current culture of the school and the cultural requirements of the innovation in order to ascertain whether there is a match between the two cultures. These writers argue that if there is not a match then it is necessary at this early stage to consider what cultural changes are necessary to align the core values of the school with the ideology and culture of the innovation. According to Sarason (1990), if an alignment is not established between the core values of the school and the innovation they are implementing, then there is a high risk that the innovation will fail. In the case of the adoption of middle schooling, this is a very important consideration for the vision building and sharing process. The middle schooling concept is founded on ideals of shared leadership, democracy, collaboration and full and active partnership, while many, maybe most, schools that teach students in the middle years in New Zealand are founded on more traditional ideals of hierarchical leadership, teacher isolation and

privacy, and low levels of collaboration and parental involvement. It also appears that no formal discussion took place at these early meetings about the need to change the school culture from one of teaching in isolation to one of collaborative, interdisciplinary team teaching in line with the middle schooling principles.

Very few staff expressed concerns or doubts about adopting or implementing the concept at the early meetings. Rather, they appeared to be interested in hearing what the middle schooling concept had to offer and what it would mean in practice. The parents played no part in this early vision building but they had been informed, via newsletter, of the intended changes. It is likely that the parents may have been largely unaware of the extent of the changes planned as they may have thought they had a middle school already, as the name Matai Middle School indicated.

The real vision building appeared to have commenced in 2002 at the beginning of the research period. At this point Jim outlined to me his vision for the middle school, as reported in the Phase I report. He also said that he had shared this vision with the management team and all of the staff members at a staff meeting in February. Jim said he now wanted to engage the staff members in discussion about what the principles would look like in action at each year level.

I want to give them lots of opportunities to think and talk about what these things will look like in their own teams, classrooms. I don't want to just tell them. They must own these changes, they must be comfortable with what they are doing, where they are going (Jim, JN2145).

It would appear that, apart from Jim and Pam, few other staff members had played a significant role in building the bigger picture vision for the middle school developments. Rather, management had developed the big picture vision and the teachers were invited to participate in developing the vision for how the concept's principles would be translated into action in the school, and in their own teams and classrooms in particular. It could be argued that under Jim's espoused desire for full staff participation in decision-making, the staff should have been invited to be involved in this very important step of an implementation process. It could also be argued that for teachers to feel ownership of the innovation, and to feel that the changes were in theirs

and the students' best interests, they should have played a major role in building the vision.

Although Jim said he had shared his vision for the middle school with the full staff, several staff members commented to me, during the first three months of the research, that they were unsure of "where they were going and why" (Year 8 Teacher, Y83309). "I am still not clear about why we are doing this and where we are going" (Year 9 Teacher, Y945780). These comments indicate that not all staff members fully understood or shared Jim's vision for the middle school. While the teachers made these comments to me, they did not appear to make them directly to Jim and Pam in the early stages of the research, so these key people may not have been aware of the lack of shared understanding.

It should be noted that the staff made no direct comment at this point about the fact that they had had little input into the initial vision building for the new school. This was to change further into the change process when some of the teachers began to say that they were not going to implement some of the changes because they did not agree with them and because they had not had a say in deciding on what they wanted for the new middle school.

During February and March 2002, Jim held three after-school staff meetings to discuss the concept principles and how these might be translated into practice. In particular, the teachers discussed interdisciplinary team teaching and how each of the teams might put this in place in their teams. The year teams also held their own meetings at which they were asked to discuss further how they would put interdisciplinary team teaching in place in each of their teams. The year 7 team did not appear to discuss team teaching further, and the year 10 did not discuss it at all at this point because they were still unsure whether they were going to be part of the middle school. While the separate teams discussed their vision for team teaching at each of their own levels and shared their goals with management, they did not appear to share these visions with the other teams as might have been expected in order to establish a full school shared understanding of team teaching.

The matter of the inclusion of year 10 in the middle school was an unresolved point throughout the research period. The age grade span for middle schools is a much debated topic in the middle schooling literature. The earlier literature (NMSA, 1982; Mills, 1990) supported a three-year age span and most American middle schools follow this model. But more recent literature (Chadbourne, 2001; Nolan, Brown, Stewart & Beane, 1999) favours a four-year grade span.

Jim wanted year 10 to be part of the middle school as he said he felt year 10 should be “a bridge between the middle school and the senior college” (JN2569). He also felt that the middle school was better equipped in teaching knowledge and style to deliver this transition programme. “I believe most year 10 students still need an interactive style, hands-on kind of learning” (Jim, JN3649). But the year 10 teachers strongly defended their right to remain part of the senior college. There did not appear to be any clear directive from either the Board of Trustees or the Head of the Full School on this matter. This disagreement served to stall Jim’s plans and efforts to include and involve the year 10 teachers in the vision building and sharing process. The ill feeling of the year 10 teachers appeared to hinder Jim’s ability to build up some of the other teachers’ interest and commitment to the vision building process.

I am sure some of the other teachers, are influenced by what they [the year 10 teachers] are saying. They [the year 10 teachers] are pretty vocal, influential. I wouldn't be surprised if they are going around behind the scenes causing trouble, stirring them [the other teachers] up (Jim, JN1011).

As the first year progressed, Jim held fewer full staff meetings that were dedicated solely to discussing the concept vision and what it would look like in practice. Rather, he incorporated small amounts of vision building into the regular staff meetings, and then he would ask me to follow up these discussions by seeking feedback on the vision building issues at the individual team meetings. I found the teachers reluctant to discuss vision matters at team meetings, stating that they did not have time for such matters as the meetings were meant to be for planning and pastoral issues.

By May 2002, Jim was experiencing opposition from to the on-going discussions about the concept from some teachers. In particular, some of the teachers were complaining about having to discuss concept matters in team meetings as they said these meetings were for discussing issues to do with student welfare and performance.

We shouldn't be discussing these things [team teaching] at team meetings. These meetings are for planning and talking about what the students are doing...pastoral matters, reports things like that, not the changes (Year 9 Teacher, Y96710).

As a consequence of teacher reluctance to engage in discussions about the concept, some teachers complained that they were still unsure about what the concept involved and what each of the principles would look like in practice and how the components would be integrated and connected together.

This pattern of few full meetings being dedicated to vision building continued into the second year of the study (2003). Similarly, little time at team meetings was being used to discuss and plan the changes. As a consequence, fewer and fewer teachers were actually engaged in the vision building decision-making process. Instead, they waited to be told what they had to do, and then many complained about the decisions that had been made and they felt were being forced on them.

I knew this would happen. They [management] would end up making the decisions and we would just have to do what they decided. It is always like that around here. They pretend they are including us in the decision-making but really they have made up their minds and they are going to make us do what they want anyway. It's just a total waste of everyone's time (Year 9 Teacher, Y92617).

I really like being involved in the decision-making about where we are going, what we are doing. I want to be part. I want a say. It is really important that we [the teachers] have our say...we are the ones that have to do it, make it work, so we should tell them [management] what we think would be best (Year 7 Teacher, Y722155).

In May 2002, Jim and Pam set up Development Committees as a way of forcing the teachers to engage in decision-making about aspects of the concept vision. Each Development Committee was allocated a topic, such as integrated curriculum, which they were required to discuss and to develop recommendations for what it might look like in the context of the new middle school.

I hope this will force them to show some interest, take responsibility for what we are trying to do. It seems like the only way to get them engaged, by making them...I let them choose which committee they wanted to go on so they feel they have some choices, but basically I want to get them talking together, involved in decision-making (Jim, JN5891).

During the second year of the study, 2003, Jim continued to try and engage the teachers in vision building mainly at the team and Development Committee levels, but he met with increasing resistance as the time went on. The teachers continued to claim that there were too many meetings, that the meetings took them away from their core business of teaching and learning, and that the meetings were a waste of time because management had already made up their minds as to what they wanted and they would be told what to do despite what they might decide in the teacher meetings. During the second year some of the teachers also continued to claim that they still did not understand some of the principles of the concept. The year 10 team continued to resist taking part in any aspect of the vision building.

It should be noted that the decision to establish the Development Committees had been made by Jim and Pam with no teacher input. Some teacher comment was later made about this unilateral decision-making process and how they (the teachers) would not be involved in these committees because they had played no part in the decision to set them up. By the end of the second year, there was still no evidence of an action plan for the implementation process. Rather, things were just happening as the small management team of Jim and Pam made decisions.

Parents were only once formally included in the vision building during the two-year study. This involvement took the form of a postal parent survey about their knowledge of the concept. The survey was followed up with an invitation to attend a feedback

meeting at the school, during which they were offered the opportunity to express their feelings and views about the concept. However, the feedback meeting offered only limited opportunity for the parents to be involved in vision building and then only in the form of asking them to describe the desired attributes of a middle level student and the type of education required to attain these attributes. Over the two-year study period, the parents were regularly informed, via the Middle School Newsletter, of the middle school developments, such as when teachers had attended courses to do with the developments, but the parents were not again involved in any formalised vision building. However, the parents were asked periodically, via the newsletter, to provide feedback on some issues such as the proposal to remove streaming from year 7 in 2004, but little or no feedback was received.

During the second year of the study, Jim began to question his own vision for the middle school. In particular, he began to question whether the full middle schooling concept could ever be instigated in a year 1-13 school, as was the case with their middle school.

I am not sure you can ever have a full middle school in a situation like ours [a year 1-13 school], without there being radical structural change. Year 7 and 8 can be done but it is really difficult doing it [putting in place the middle schooling principles] at years 9 and 10. They are pulled in different directions, both the teachers and the kids...sometimes senior college and sometimes middle school (Jim, JN7378).

If I ever want a full middle school it would have to be autonomous or at least semi-autonomous from the rest [of the full school]. This is all so difficult. Ideally you would just start from the ground up, proper buildings, teachers who wanted to be part of the concept and parents who supported the idea (Jim, JN7902).

Despite their efforts to include the full staff in vision building for the middle school development, by the end of the study period, the only two people fully engaged in vision building were Jim and Pam. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that once the dream level of vision has been considered, further vision should evolve from action. But in the

case of Matai School, there was very little change action taking place so it became increasingly difficult for Jim and Pam to engage the staff in on-going vision building. As a consequence of the slow implementation process, vision review and maintenance were never considered.

The case findings indicate that the critical leadership task of vision building had begun before Jim took up his position as principal of Matai School. Prior to Jim's arrival the school board had made the decision to adopt the middle schooling concept with very little input from either staff or parents. On his arrival Jim was given the task of building, sharing and maintaining a vision for the new middle school. This proved to be challenging. In particular, Jim had difficulty engaging the staff in discussions about how they would translate the concept into action. This lack of engagement resulted in some staff feeling unsure about what they were doing. For some, this uncertainty turned into disinterest and apathy towards the concept. Jim attempted to address the lack of staff interest by holding meetings in school time rather than after school. He also asked that vision building discussions be carried out at team meetings rather than at separate development meetings. These moves to accommodate staff displeasure did little to encourage them to participate in vision building. By the end of the study period there were only two staff members actively involved in the vision building process.

6.2.2. Critical Leadership Task 2: Building a Collaborative Change Culture

The educational change and innovation literature suggest that a critical task of change leadership is building and maintaining a change culture in the school. According to Evans (1996), no innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of people and place, that is the culture of the organisation. Middleton and Hill (1996) describe culture as an organisation's system of meanings, its norms, values and beliefs. Deal and Kennedy put it bluntly when they contend that "when culture works against you, it's nearly impossible to get anything done" (1983, p. 4).

It is the role of the school leader to build and maintain a change culture if they wish to effect lasting change. While the middle schooling literature provides an array of information on how to lead established middle schools, it provides very little information on how to lead and manage the establishment of new middle schools and, in particular, how to move towards and build a collaborative change culture in new middle

schools. This means that leaders who are establishing new middle schools must use generic theories of cultural change to guide their actions.

Short and Greer (2002) describe the characteristics of a change culture as being communities that are open to change, encourage risk taking and constructive dissent, and schools that have a climate of experimentation and a history of successful innovation. Rosenholtz (1989) and Hargreaves (2002) contend that the characteristics of change cultures are similar to those of collaborative cultures, which are linked with inclusive leadership, continuous learning for all, change and continuous improvement. Fullan (2002), Hall and Hord (2006) and Hargreaves (2002) also tell us that successful change cultures are characterised by leaders who are knowledgeable about change processes, put much emphasis on building open honest relationships between all people affected by the change, and encourage and model the values of trust, participation and risk taking.

Jim appeared to be quite knowledgeable about collaborative cultures and he had definite views on the type of school culture he wished to move his new middle school towards. Early in the study period Jim commented:

I want a climate of trust and honesty. I am going to be more open and honest in my dealings with staff and parents in the hope that the staff will do the same in return. I want us to talk more to each other, work together more, learn from each other, share what we are thinking and what we are doing (Jim, JN00933).

Jim further commented:

These teachers need to feel trusted and respected more. I need to show them that I will support them taking risks, trying new things. We have got big challenges ahead and they are going to have to move out of their comfort zones, way out for some people, so they need to know that I will help and support them to try new things (Jim, JN11468).

Jim also showed that he was aware that building relationships was a critical aspect of his building a change culture for the new middle school.

I know that I need to work really hard at building up strong, trusting relationships. I haven't been here very long and I think some of them [the teachers] are still a bit unsure of me and what I might want them to do. They haven't been used to much change, well not change on this scale so I have to get them to trust me, come with me (Jim, JN12455).

Jim's comment above may have referred in part to his age. He was considerably younger than many of the teachers he had been brought in to lead. Also he had several members on his staff that had been in the same positions for fifteen or more years. He commented several times that he felt some of the staff saw him as an "upstart" (Jim, JN21277) and a "Johnny-come-lately" (Jim, JN40913) whom some felt was not up to the job.

While Jim's comments indicated that he was aware of the importance of relationship building if he wished to establish a culture that could support and effect change, his actions indicated that he was less sure how to achieve this goal. Our discussions indicated that he had not sought, nor did he wish to seek, literature on this topic. Rather, it appeared that he was working from his own beliefs and past experiences. He appeared to feel that if he modelled and treated his teachers with the respect, openness and honesty that he wished them to use, then they would do so back to him and to other staff members. This was not the case. This approach only worked for about half of the teachers. The other half either took no notice and failed to change their behaviour or were sceptical about what he was doing and why he was doing it.

I am not sure why he wants us to do this [talk more to him and other teachers]? Why is he asking us to be more open, tell him what we are doing and what we are thinking? Is he just trying to check up on us? (Year 9 Teacher, Y93498).

He [Jim] wants us to talk more to each other. Tell each other, and him more about what we are doing. We have always done that, what more does he want? And more importantly what is he trying to achieve? I don't want to share all my good ideas with the others, that's what makes me a good

teacher, that's why parents want their kids in my class (Year 9 Teacher, Y924562).

It would appear from these comments and several others in a similar vein that Jim had either not taken full cognisance of or had underestimated the teachers' understanding of and commitment to the school changes.

Part of Jim's leadership philosophy centred on shared, inclusive leadership and full opportunity to participate in decision-making. Jim held a strong belief that he wanted his staff to work and learn together, in line with his own beliefs about effective school communities, but also because it aligned with the central tenets of the middle schooling concept. Like his beliefs about relationship building for school change, Jim appeared to believe that teachers would work together collaboratively if offered the opportunity. The literature (Nias, Southworth & Yeomans, 1989) tells us, however, that many teachers do not wish to work together collaboratively, and even if they do, many need help and assistance to learn how to do this. It appears that in the teaching profession we sometimes make the assumption that because teaching is a social, people-based profession, then teachers will know how to collaborate with each other. This overlooks the fact that most teachers came through schools, are trained in institutions, and work in school systems where isolation and privacy are the norm. Most teachers also work in systems that reward individual endeavour and achievement over group achievement. Evans (1996) argues that until this situation changes, it is going to be very difficult to get teachers to move towards more collaborative environments.

Matai School did not have a history of collaboration. With the exception of the year 7 team, the school in the middle functioned under very traditional practices of teacher privacy and isolation. Therefore, inclusion, participation and sharing were new concepts for the majority of the staff members. Schein (1992) argues that it is not easy to change organisations that have strong cultures that have served them well in the past. Jim agreed that Matai School had a strong traditional culture that had served them well, but he argued that:

It is time they changed. Education has moved on. We now know that students are better served in a more democratic, sharing environment, well

that is students in the middle in particular. Things change, we need to move with the time if it is going to be better for our kids (Jim, JN5688).

However, he did also comment that he was aware that change to a more inclusive, participatory form of education would be difficult for some of his staff.

I know I have some challenges ahead. Some of these people like things the way they are, teaching on their own, doing their own thing. But I don't think it's the best way for our kids, or the teachers for that matter. They [the teachers] will also benefit from sharing and learning together. But they are not used to this, so it will be hard for some to change, move on (Jim, JN56921).

Even though the literature emphasises the point that successful change cultures encourage risk taking (Schein, 1992) there was little evidence of this taking place at Matai School. Jim was aware that the school had a very long and strong tradition of “solid traditional education” (Jim, JN00725) that did not push the boundaries or encourage risk taking. Jim tried to encourage self-responsibility and low-level risk taking by giving the teachers opportunities to decide how each team would implement activities such as team teaching. Jim commented:

I want them to decide how to do it [team teaching] for themselves. I don't want to tell them what I want, how to do it. I haven't got all the answers anyway. I want them to talk about it together, decide on a way forward, try it and then learn from their mistakes (Jim, JN51788).

Only one team, year 7, took the opportunity to experiment with new approaches and strategies for team teaching. They appeared to be the only group of teachers who got on well with each other, enjoyed each other's company and had established a culture of trust and openness within their team before the beginning of the study period. The year 8 and 9 teams appeared less willing to talk and work together and, in particular, to plan and try innovative approaches. These two teams contained the older staff members, whom the literature (Sikes, 1992) tells us may be less motivated and inclined to take risks and accept change. A noticeable number of the members of the year 8 and 9 teams,

as evidenced in the comment below, appeared to be waiting to be told what to do rather than taking the initiative to plan and trial different ways for moving forward.

If we wait long enough, we will be told what to do without all the hassles. The others can do all of that, and then tell us what worked best. Anyway I haven't got the time for all that talking, planning. I need all the time I have got for my own teaching (Year 9 Teacher, Y967145).

Jim told me that during his time at the school, these two teams had a poor history of being innovative or of trying things for themselves. Jim said they were “good solid teachers” (JN6014) who tended to use the methods they had used for years and only tried new ones when directed to do so or when other teachers had tried them first and told them what had worked and what had not.

With regard to the teachers’ lack of interest in working collaboratively and to taking risks and trying new approaches to teaching and learning, it could be asked whether sufficient time had been put into establishing whether the teachers understood and truly valued the proposed changes. It could also be asked whether the teachers were fully committed to and clearly saw positive reasons for changing to the full middle schooling concept.

Finally, as already discussed, Jim attempted to encourage more collaborative practice and to build relationships by offering his teachers opportunities to take on leadership roles and to share in decision-making. Unfortunately his attempts had minimal success for reasons such as staff disinterest, reluctance to attend meetings, staff scepticism as to his motives, and staff resistance to being part of the changes. Jim had clearly stated that he would like to have both parental and student participation in his collaborative culture. However, he took provided few opportunities to advance this during the two years of the case study. Although not stated, this may have been because his time and effort was so taken up with attempting to overcome the challenges of getting the teachers to collaborate and share leadership that he had very little time to seek parental and student involvement as well.

These findings indicate that building a collaborative change culture presented Jim with a number of challenges that impacted on the progress of the implementation process. Jim indicated that he had a clear vision of the type of collaborative culture he wished to move his middle school towards. He believed that if he modelled openness, sharing and respect, his staff would also model that kind of behaviour. This did not prove to be the case. Many of the teachers did not appear to notice these behaviours and other teachers were cynical of Jim's approach and intent. Jim attempted to address the staff reluctance to change by offering them more opportunities to share in planning and decision-making, but most of his efforts met with little success. It would appear that factors such as the age of the staff and their lack of previous experience with collaboration hindered Jim's attempts to build a collaborative culture in the middle school.

6.2.3. Critical Leadership Task 3: Vision Implementation

The educational change and innovation literature indicates that a further critical aspect of change leadership is to provide focus and direction in the implementation process. Fullan (2002) speaks of the need for change leaders to provide connectedness and coherence. Brower and Balch (2005) and Schlechty (2001) add that change leaders need to provide clarity and focus in the change process.

Fullan (2001) describes implementation as the putting into practice of an idea or a set of structures that are new to the people who are implementing them. He adds that it is this stage of the vision development, the translation of rhetoric into reality, which is the most difficult part of any change process. It is the role of the school leader to guide and focus the implementation process. Unfortunately, the change literature provides little guidance on how school leaders should lead large change like the development of new types of schools. The review of the literature also found that the change literature provides little guidance on the implementation of multiple innovations.

Similarly, the educational change and innovation literature provides no clear guidance on whether schools should use an action plan to implement major, whole-school change such as the middle schooling concept. Stanford (1998) contends that rationally constructed implementation plans and strategies rarely work because they are being implemented into school systems that are complex, non-linear and non-rational. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that schools have to be able to live with high levels of flexibility,

risk and uncertainty if they chose to move forward without some form of development plan. Fullan (2001) argues for a more moderate approach when he recommends the use of evolving implementation plans, plans which change and evolve from previous action and in accordance with a school's vision.

Jim said at the beginning of the implementation process that he did not have an overall plan for how he would like to see the changes implemented. While he had fixed views about wanting to put team teaching in place as the first change and as a vehicle for further change, he said he did not have any fixed views about the order of subsequent changes. Rather, he said that he would “wait and see how things evolved” (Jim, JN008214). By taking this approach, Jim was indicating that he was taking an evolving approach to implementation planning, an approach that would involve high levels of risk and uncertainty. At this early point in the implementation process, Jim gave no indication that he was aware of the difficulties and challenges this approach to implementation might involve. Jim said that he wanted the teachers to take much of the responsibility for planning the implementation process.

I want them [the teachers] to be involved in planning where we go and how we do it. We are all involved in this, I want them [the teachers] to play a big part in this, so that they own the process, take responsibility for the outcomes. Anyway I haven't got all of the answers. I need them to help me find them (Jim, JN1074).

However, during the two years of the case study, the teachers played little part in planning the implementation process, for a number of reasons. Firstly, discussion on how to operationalise the first two changes, team teaching and integrated curriculum took up most of the discussion time during the two years of the study. This meant that very little discussion was held on the future implementation process. Forward planning was also hindered by the teachers' reluctance to meet for additional planning meetings, and by the year 10 team's reluctance to be part of any part of the middle school development process.

It became evident after about eight months that some of the teachers found the lack of direction and the uncertainty unsettling and this in turn appeared to impact on their enthusiasm and commitment to the implementation process.

Some of the teachers seem to be unsettled by the whole process. They say they are not sure where they are going and why they are doing it [implementing the concept]. Mind you, they have had plenty of opportunity to talk these things through, but when we try to get them to do that, they say they are too busy, haven't got the time (Pam, PT10554).

I really don't like this not knowing what is happening next. We seem to do lots of talking, but we don't ever decide anything and get on with it. I like to know what is happening, what I am meant to do (Year 8 Teacher, Y83225).

I am getting really tired of all this middle school stuff. All we do is talk, we never actually seem to move on and do anything. Here it is nearly a year into the changes and what have we achieved, virtually zip...nothing (Year 9 Teacher, Y95983).

A very important aspect of any implementation process is consideration of the sequence of the proposed changes, and in particular the sequence of structural and cultural changes. This is a particularly important consideration in innovations like the middle schooling concept which contains multiple, complex structural and cultural changes. The educational change and innovation literature contains much debate about the sequencing of structural and cultural changes. Some writers (Evans, 1996; Middleton & Hill, 1996) contend that implementation should commence with consideration of cultural change because they argue that it is virtually impossible to make other lasting change unless the culture of the organisation is changed to accept the other changes. Others writers (Dalin, 1998) contend that it is not possible to change culture without changing structures to accommodate the cultural changes. This argument supports the notion that you cannot learn to collaborate unless you put in place a structural change such as team teaching that provides the environment for people to learn to collaborate.

Jim told me that his vision did not include fixed ideas about the sequence of the implementation process, other than he wanted to start with team teaching. He said that he had chosen team teaching because:

We need a vehicle for change so that we can get started. Team teaching gives us that. It gives us a starting point, a framework to fit the other changes around. Once they have got team teaching up and working, then we can think about other changes such as integrated curriculum (Jim, JN00410).

It appears that the decision to commence team teaching was made by Jim and Pam alone in the absence of consultation with the teachers. As a full group they did discuss what team teaching might mean in terms of sharing students, planning and assessment but it is not evident that there were any formal discussions about teacher collaboration and what this might look like in practice. It appears that the presumption was made that the teachers would both want and know how to work together, or that they would work it out as they went along.

During the course of the two-year study, no formal staff discussions took place about the cultural changes that were needed to align the school culture with the requirements of the middle schooling concept. Although Jim and Pam talked to me about their desire and the need to move the staff towards more participatory styles of leadership and teaching and learning, there appeared to be no discussion with the staff about how to achieve this. However, there was a little evidence of discussion around this topic at some of the team meetings. This discussion mainly took the form of role and responsibility allocation within the teams, decisions on how to share students for teaching and how to jointly plan and evaluate student work.

The decision to implement a second structural change, integrated curriculum, was also made by Jim and Pam without staff input. This decision appeared to be driven by Pam's personal interest in integrated curriculum and by her level of knowledge in this field. Pam had spent considerable time up-skilling and preparing herself for integrated curriculum and it appeared that this change was chosen because it was the one they were most prepared for.

Team teaching and integrated curriculum were the only two changes implemented during the two-year study. At the conclusion of the study no decisions had been made as to the next concept principle they would implement. This lack of decision appeared to be caused by the length of time it was taking to operationalise the form of the other principles, by some of the teachers' claims that they still did not understand what the concept was about, and by the teachers' growing lack of enthusiasm for and, in some cases, their increasing resistance to the changes.

Another important consideration in any implementation process is the scale and pace of the change (Fullan, 2001). The change literature (Senge *et al.*, 1999) suggests that the implementation process should commence with one or two less demanding tasks so that staff members get an early sense of success and achievement. Jim's experiences of starting the implementation process with team teaching are testament to the difficulties of commencing the implementation process with a large, demanding change. However, it could be asked which of the other middle schooling principles he might have chosen to start with as most of them are equally complex and demanding.

Consideration of the pace of implementation was a major issue for the management team of Matai School. Jim and Pam would have liked to have been able to put concurrent changes in place, but they became increasingly aware that the level of teacher energy, interest and commitment was seriously affecting their ability to move the implementation process forward at a faster pace.

We just can't move any faster, get into the next changes yet because the teachers are really slowing down, holding the process back. They say they haven't got time to talk about these things, but I am beginning to think they plain just don't want to (Pam, PT8431).

At the beginning of the second year of the implementation process, Jim commented:

I am really aware of the pace of change, the slow pace that is. I really thought we would be much further along than we are. But I have become much more conscious of not pushing them [the teachers] too much because they just don't seem capable or it is probably more like willing to move any faster. It is really frustrating but I just have to accept it (Jim, JN56195).

All school change requires on-going professional development and time for professional discussion, review and reflection on the changes (Fullan, 2001). Middle schooling change requires all these things for the lifespan of the innovation. On-going professional development and support have funding implications. Teachers need to be released for each of these activities and teacher release costs money. But without adequate professional development and support, teachers experience difficulty sustaining change.

Jim had engaged the services of a middle schooling expert from Massey University to provide professional development on the concept before the beginning of the implementation process. Professional development during the implementation process consisted mainly of a small number of externally facilitated sessions on integrated curriculum, staff visits to other schools and staff meetings led by the lead teachers. Obtaining professional assistance on middle schooling is a problem in New Zealand because there are few people who specialise in this field and we have few established middle schools to use as role models. Some of the staff at Matai School commented that they would have liked to have visited more established middle schools, and a few of them did, but the opportunities are very limited.

The critical leadership tasks discussed above pertain to all types of school change. As argued at the beginning of this section, middle schooling change imposes one further important critical leadership task that pertains to only a few innovations. This additional leadership task pertains to the need to pay special attention to the complex, multi-faceted and integrated nature of the middle schooling concept. This point will not be discussed at this juncture because it is going to be explored fully under the third set of focus questions, which pertain directly to the nature of the innovation.

The findings indicate that implementing the vision provided Jim with several challenges. Jim took an evolving rather than planned approach to the implementation process. This approach involves high levels of risk and uncertainty. Many of the teachers had difficulty dealing with this risk and uncertainty. Many reacted by doing little, working slowly, or refusing to co-operate. Jim attempted to overcome these reactions by either inviting more participation or by ignoring the teacher behaviour.

The findings also indicate that vision implementation was hindered by the staff perception that the pace of change was greater than they could manage. Jim was perplexed by these perceptions because during the two-year research period, most staff only partially implemented two changes. He attempted to address these concerns by slowing down the pace of implementation, although he would have preferred to implement concurrent changes.

6.3. Factors which Assisted or Hindered the Leadership Role

What factors assisted or hindered Jim in his leadership role?

The educational change and innovation literature argues repeatedly that leading change is a very demanding job that requires a leader who is passionate and fully committed to the changes (Dalin, 1998; Evans, 1996; Hall & Hord, 2006; Sarason, 1995). The literature (Dalin, 1998; McKay, 1995; Schein, 1992) also contends that leaders of change must have the support of their staff and supportive systems and infrastructures. On reflection it is difficult to identify many factors that assisted and supported Jim in his leadership role. On the other hand, it is easy to identify several key factors that significantly hindered and obstructed his ability to carry out his leadership tasks.

The two main factors that assisted Jim were his own passion and commitment to the middle school development and the assistance of his very supportive and hard working deputy principal, Pam. Jim believed fully in and was totally committed to the middle schooling concept.

I am really excited about having the opportunity to develop a proper middle school. I guess it really is the most exciting thing I have done in my career. It is something I believe strongly in but it is also exciting because it is new, different, something that has not been done a lot before in New Zealand (Jim, JN001049).

I have been really excited about the concept ever since I heard about it. It is all about everything that I knew was right for kids of this age. It is everything that I have done with kids of this age in my past teaching jobs. It

just confirms and puts together all the things I knew were good teaching for kids in the middle (Jim, JN001568).

I believe the concept is absolutely right for students of this age. It is all about listening to them, hearing what it is they want to learn and then providing exciting interactive learning experiences for them. It is also about their social and emotional needs and not just their learning needs. It is all about the learning needs of the whole person (Jim, JN003156).

While Jim's commitment to the concept never wavered during the course of the study, his energy and drive for the implementation process wavered as teacher lack of motivation, commitment and then resistance tested his commitment and patience.

Sometimes I feel really weary about the whole thing [the middle school developments]. Sometimes it really feels as though we are going nowhere, getting nowhere. I knew it would be demanding but I didn't really think it would be so hard, so energy sapping. Sometimes I really question why we are doing this, but then I think about the kids and how good it will be for them (Jim, JN71149).

The assistance and support of Pam was the other main factor that supported Jim in his leadership role. Pam was very enthusiastic about the concept and she helped Jim to motivate and enthuse the staff.

I experienced middle schooling in the States and I thought, wow if only we could do it here. So when the board said that that was what they wanted I couldn't wait to get started. Unfortunately not all of the staff seem as keen as I am but I am working hard to change their minds (Pam, PT004599).

Pam also regularly showed her support for Jim to the staff. At staff meetings she would state directly that she fully supported the recommendations that Jim made. Further into the study she also directly showed her support for Jim when he made a few unilateral decisions and then told the staff that that was what they were to do.

I am right behind Jim. He has the concept and the kids right in his heart. He wants the best for the kids. He believes passionately in what he is doing and I fully support him (Pam, PT61329).

While there were only these two main factors that appeared to assist Jim in carrying out his leadership tasks, there were a large number of factors that hindered Jim from achieving what he wished to. Those which had the greatest impact on his ability to carry out his critical leadership tasks centred on the schooling structure where the middle school was a school within the structure of a full year 1-13 school.

The middle schooling literature (Alexander, 1969; Oakes, Quartz, Hunter, Guiton & Lipton, 1993; Raebeck, 1998; Stewart & Nolan, 1992) very clearly supports the notion that middle schools should be autonomous, or at the least semi-autonomous from other schooling structures. It is argued that unless middle schools are separate from other structures, they suffer from resources, in the form of funding and staffing, being channelled both to the top and bottom levels of the school and away from the middle school. They also argue that middle schools attached to other schooling structures tend to lose their identity and take on the curriculum delivery styles of the school to which they are attached.

Matai Middle School was part of a full, year 1-13, schooling structure that also had an international college attached to it. The primary school was run as a semi-autonomous entity, but the middle school was attached to the senior school in several restrictive ways. These factors included a lack of independence from the senior school in management, timetabling, staffing, budgeting, curriculum and accommodation and resourcing, as well as a lack of formal authority over the team of teachers that would constitute the 'middle school'. The middle school came totally under the management auspices of the senior college. This connection severely constrained many of the decisions and actions the middle school was able to make. In particular, it restricted middle school decisions on staffing, budget, curriculum and buildings and equipment.

It should be noted that Jim felt the senior college management team supported the middle school developments but only in so far as these developments did not impinge on or impact in anyway on the workings of the senior college.

They [senior college management] really only tolerate us as long as we don't infringe into their space. They say they are in favour of the [middle school] developments but they really aren't interested in what we are doing. The only time they are interested is when I talk about staffing and ask them for money. Then they all clam up together and shut me out (Jim, JN58890).

The middle school shared nearly a third of its staff members with the senior college. Just over three quarters of the teachers who taught in the middle school were primary trained and the rest had secondary qualifications. This meant that some of the teachers were generalist teachers and the others were subject specialist teachers. This situation did not appear to present any special problems in itself.

However, the sharing of teachers with the senior college meant that the middle school had to fit in with the rigid, fifty-minute period mode of the senior college timetable. Both team teaching and integrated curriculum require teachers to co-teach a shared group of students. They also require extended periods of time. Therefore, the traditional timetabling approach of fifty-minute periods must be replaced with flexible block scheduling. The rigid timetabling system of the senior college imposed restrictions on the middle school as it made no allowances for the extended, flexible time periods needed for team teaching and integrated curriculum. Jim attempted to change the system so that most of the teachers would teach only in the middle school so that they could then put in place a timetabling system that met their own needs, but the senior college management team thwarted most of his efforts. Several of the middle school teachers indicated that they would like to teach only middle school students, but their wishes, although expressed to the senior college management team, were not actioned. Jim was very frustrated by his inability to change this situation and the impact it was having on the middle school development.

We are just never going to get anywhere until we have all our own teachers, teaching here in the middle school. I just can't make the changes work while we are tied into the senior system (Jim, JN84201).

Despite Jim's efforts to obtain some degree of freedom from the sharing of teachers and the imposed timetable of the senior college, little success had been achieved by the end of the study period.

Funding was also an issue. The middle school budget was tied into the senior school budget. At the beginning of the study period, the middle school had no budget of its own and was fully dependent on the goodwill of the senior college for its financial needs. While Jim sat on the senior management board, he was the only representative from the middle school so he had little power when it came to decisions about the middle school. Through lobbying, Jim was able to get this restrictive situation changed a little in the final months of the study. Through his persistent efforts, a small amount of funding was secured which was separate from senior management auspices. Most of this money was given to the year teams to use in ways they thought would help with the middle school development. Jim gave the money to the teams at a time when enthusiasm and commitment to the middle school developments were at a low.

I am hoping that by doing this [giving them the money] it will show them that I am supporting them. I hope it shows that I value them and trust them to use the money wisely for the betterment of the project (Jim, JN94327).

The teachers made few comments about the money they received and unfortunately the study period concluded before it was possible to observe how the teams used their funding.

The middle school curriculum was also tied into the senior college curriculum in that the college Heads of Departments were also in charge of the curriculum in the middle school. This was a constant source of irritation and frustration to Jim and Pam.

Integrated, exploratory curriculum is a central tenet of the middle schooling concept, as is the notion that middle schooling should be a generalist education with a minimum of subject specialisation (Beane, 1990; NMSA, 1982, 2001). As with all high schools in New Zealand, Matai's senior curriculum was founded on subject specialisation. This meant that their Heads of the Departments were not very amenable to the notion of exploratory education and integrated curriculum in the middle school. Therefore, they showed no interest in allowing the middle school teachers to teach only in the middle

school, an action which would have allowed the middle school to adopt more flexible scheduling arrangements to accommodate integrated curriculum. This reluctance to allow the middle school any autonomy from the senior college teaching and curriculum structures was a very large source of frustration to Jim and Pam and just over a third of the teachers.

I really would like to teach in just the middle school. I think it makes better sense for us to work with just the same group of students. And anyway the middle schooling concept says that the kids should have fewer teachers who know them better. And on top of that, it is really tiring running back and forth between the two schools (Year 9 Teacher, Y956163).

We can never put integrated curriculum in place properly while we have to share teachers and have to fit in with the senior timetable. We need freedom to use flexible scheduling and exploratory learning. You can't do exploratory learning in fifty minute periods. It's not even worth starting if you know you only have fifty minutes (Pam, PT77894).

It is just about driving me mad, all these ties to the senior college. I just can't change anything, get anything done. It is like moving in porridge. We will never have a true middle school until we break free of the senior college (Jim, JN1045).

The year 10 team and their role in the middle school was another factor that hindered Jim in his leadership role. Jim wished to have the year 10 students in the middle school because he believed that the middle schooling form of education was best suited to the needs of these students. However, the year 10 team were officially part of the senior college and had always been so. Because Jim was not their line manager it was very difficult for him to direct the year 10 teachers to do as he wished. The year 10 teachers also made it very clear that they did not wish to be part of the middle school because they considered themselves secondary teachers. There was no clear directive from either the school board or the Head of the Full School as to the year 10's role in the middle school. Jim was left trying to win over the year 10 teachers to the middle school, while

they staunchly resisted all of his efforts. This situation had not been resolved by the end of the study.

Ideally, team teaching and integrated curriculum are supported by the provision of buildings and equipment that allow for the use of flexible teaching methods (Beane, 1990; NMSA, 2001). In the early stages of the study, teaming and curriculum integration were restricted by the lack of suitable buildings. By the end of the study, Jim had secured more suitable building arrangements that allowed all members of a team to be accommodated in a common area. He had also managed to provide team meeting spaces in conjunction with the team teaching spaces. While these changes went some way to providing a more suitable teaching environment, they did not appear to make significant difference to teacher attitude or practice. Despite the changes, the teachers continued to be reluctant to work together and to discuss and share teaching experiences. Interviews with the teachers indicated that this resistance was due mainly to their lack of knowledge about collaboration and shared teaching. It should be noted that the study concluded not long after these changes were secured so it was not possible to see if they made lasting changes to teacher attitude and practice.

While all of these factors hindered Jim's ability to carry out his leadership tasks, they strengthened his resolve to obtain some degree of autonomy for the middle school and by the end of the study period he had managed to secure a measure of autonomy from the senior college. This took the form of his teaching load being lessened, limited separate funding for the middle school, fewer teachers with senior college and middle schooling teaching obligations, and the middle school being sited in buildings that were grouped together. Plans had also been drawn up to build a new, separate administration block for the middle school. This new building would give the middle school a sense of identity and also semi-autonomy from the senior college.

In summary, the findings show that there were few factors that assisted Jim in his leadership role and many that hindered his efforts. The factors that assisted Jim were his passion and commitment to the middle schooling development and the assistance of his deputy principal, Pam. The main factors that hindered his leadership centred around the schooling structure at Matai School. In particular, the senior college control of the middle school's staffing, timetable, curriculum, buildings and equipment greatly

hindered Jim's leadership. During the course of the study, Jim attempted to gain some control of his staffing, budget and buildings, but little progress was made. He felt that until he gained larger control over these factors he would never be able to establish a true middle school.

7. Teacher Sub-Cultures and Teacher Resistance

House (1981) was one of the first people to point out the political dimensions of educational change. House argued that educational change will inevitably involve conflicts of interest and that teachers may well resist and even sabotage the attempted change. Evans (1996) more recently added that, frequently, educational change overlooks the place of teachers in educational change, but that school management and wider society are quick to blame them when the change fails.

This section explores the second major factor that appeared to be impacting significantly on the implementation process at Matai School, that is, teacher sub-cultures and teacher resistance. The section is presented in four sub-sections, which address the focus questions generated from the literature and from the action research experiences of the case study school.

7.1. Informed Acceptance of the Concept

Was there ever fully-informed acceptance of the middle schooling concept by the staff and parents?

The recent literature on educational change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002) frequently claims that one of the factors that impact significantly on the success of an innovation is whether the staff have fully-informed acceptance of the innovation. By fully-informed acceptance, I am referring to the teachers making individual decisions to adopt and implement the innovation with a high level of understanding of the concept rationale and principles and how they would be operationalised in their classrooms. Fully-informed acceptance should also involve the teachers having an appreciation of the size and complexity of the innovation and the possible length of time required to implement it. Furthermore, Rozenholtz (1989) argues that fully-informed acceptance requires teachers to understand not only the structural changes they will be

required to make, but very importantly, also the cultural changes required to align the values of the staff and school with those of the innovation.

Fink (2000), Hargreaves (1994) and Sarason (1990) go further and say that not only must all staff have fully-informed acceptance of the innovation, but that they must also have been involved in the decision-making on whether to adopt the innovation. According to these writers, it is participation in the decision-making that serves to give teachers ownership of an innovation and commitment to the implementation process.

As already discussed, the staff at Matai School were not involved in the decision-making process regarding the adoption of the innovation. Rather, the school board made this decision and then appointed Jim from outside to implement the changes. This meant that the change was, in effect, imposed from above. Hopkins *et al.* (1993) argue that change which is imposed has a much greater chance of failure than change in which the people affected by the change have had a say in the decision-making process.

Jim explained that there had been two stages to the acceptance process at Matai School. The first step involved the staff accepting the school board's decision to adopt the middle schooling concept. The second stage followed somewhat later, with each teacher either consciously or unconsciously making the decision to accept the middle schooling concept and to commit themselves to implementing it in their classrooms and the school. The middle schooling concept is somewhat unusual in that it requires operational commitment to the innovation by the entire unit or team and then finally the full staff of the school. Such is the integrated, interconnected nature of the middle schooling concept that all teachers within a team at the least, and then finally all teachers in the school, must put all of the changes in place for the implementation to be successful. Most other innovations do not have this requirement.

Evans (1996) maintains that school leaders sometimes overlook the importance of the fully-informed acceptance step in the adoption process. He argues that many school leaders presume they have their staff's fully-informed acceptance of proposed changes when in fact they may not. He does add, however, that school leaders do not need to wait until they feel they have obtained the full acceptance of all staff members. He argues that this may never happen. But he does recommend that school leaders ensure

that the majority of their staff has fully-informed acceptance of the innovation before commencing to implement the changes.

At the beginning of the change process, the teachers at Matai School made little comment about the manner in which the decision to adopt middle schooling had come about. Rather, they appeared to be excited and interested in adopting the middle schooling concept. At this point it appeared that, with the exception of the year 10 teachers, most of the other teachers had accepted the board's decision to adopt the concept. During the two-year research period, the year 10 teachers never showed acceptance of the school board's decision to adopt the middle schooling concept.

It is more difficult to ascertain if the staff members gave fully-informed acceptance to the concept at an individual level. There was never any formal process or discussion within the school to ascertain this. My own informal conversations with some of the teachers during the first six months of the implementation process indicated that most of them felt informed enough to commit themselves to the changes.

The professional development, both with Pat [Nolan] and our own stuff [delivered by Jim and Pam] has been really informative. I feel ready to get into it...I am really looking forward to trying some of these things, seeing what actual difference they make (Year 8 Teacher, Y834344).

I think I know what it is all about. I understand the general principles and what we are hoping to do. I think it is all good, great for the kids and hopefully for us [the teachers] too (Year 9 Teacher, Y923561).

Interviews with the year 7 teachers indicated that they were fully committed to the changes from the beginning of the implementation period. Interviews six months into the implementation period indicated that three of the four year 8 teachers were committed to the concept and approximately half of the year 9 teachers. It can be concluded that at this early stage, the majority of the teachers felt they were as informed as they needed to be to commit themselves to the concept.

Jim did not appear to be aware of the critical importance of strong continuing support from the staff to the success of the innovation. Neither Jim nor Pam talked much about the level of staff acceptance. Nor did they make any formal attempts to ascertain the level of staff acceptance of the concept. Rather, they appeared to presume that most of the year 7, 8, and 9 teachers were supportive and committed to the changes.

Nine months into the implementation process, interview comments from year 8 and 9 staff teachers indicated that nearly a half of the teachers felt they were ill informed about the concept and, in particular, about how all of the concept principles would be operationalised. They also indicated that they were ill informed about the size and complexity of the concept.

I still feel I don't know enough about all of this [how they were going to operationalise the concept into their classrooms]. We have only really started, got teaming kind of up and running, and we haven't even talked about all the other things we have to change. I would really like to know about what the rest of the changes involve (Year 8 Teacher, Y824109).

The more I get to know, the more questions I seem to have about it [how the concept would be operationalised into the classrooms]. We are only just beginning to find out, realise how complex this thing is. I worry about how it all has to be integrated across the team. It sounds easy enough, but I see all kinds of difficulties ahead. Just trying to get all of us working and talking with each other will be a nightmare (Year 9 Teacher, Y945871).

I am just beginning to understand how big this all is. I think it is bigger than any of us realised. I am worried about how many changes we are going to be asked to make next year and I also worry about how long this will all take if we don't get on with it (Year 9 Teacher, Y966240).

There appeared to be a hiatus of comments pertaining to the level of and completeness of concept knowledge in the period from approximately August to December of 2002. However, comments about the level of and completeness of concept knowledge continued to be expressed over the final fifteen months of the project but in lesser

numbers. So while it appeared that the majority of the year 7, 8, and 9 teachers had made fully-informed acceptance of the concept at around the six month mark, these later comments would indicate that, for some, acceptance and commitment had not been fully informed. At the point when staff members were making these comments about not being fully informed about the concept, a small number (4) of the staff started making comments about the quantity and quality of the professional development they had received on the middle schooling concept.

Professional development about the concept commenced approximately six months after the staff had been told that they would be adopting the concept. This took the form of two addresses by a middle schooling expert from Massey University and talks from Jim and Pam about the concept rationale and principles. At these meetings the staff was offered opportunities to question and discuss the concept but very little discussion took place about how the principles would be operationalised in their school and in their classrooms. Jim's comment when asked why this was so was:

We will talk more about those things [how the principles would be operationalised] as we go along. I want them to firstly understand what it is all about and then we will discuss the finer detail as it comes necessary to understand each part more fully (Jim, JN00256).

By taking this stance, Jim indicated that he did not feel it was necessary to establish a complete, shared understanding and vision of how the concept would look in action before they commenced the implementation process. This is contrary to the educational change literature (Fullan, 2001; Hopkins *et al.*, 1993; Raebeck, 1998), which argues that it is necessary to establish a shared understanding of the innovation and how it will look like in action early in the implementation process. In the case of Matai School, it appears that most of the staff made the decision to accept and commit to the concept with a clear understanding of the concept rationale and principles, but not of how the principles would be operationalised in the school.

At the six-month point critical comments started to be made about how the decision to adopt the concept had been made.

We didn't have a say in whether we wanted to be part of this [the middle schooling developments]. We were just told it was going to happen. That's hardly the best way to do things if they want us to buy into their idea (Year 9 Teacher, Y95714).

It would have been better if we had had a say in going ahead...taking on middle schooling. I think it would have helped us understand it more, feel we really wanted to make it happen. As it is, many of us feel kind of ambivalent about the whole thing [the middle school developments] (Year 8 Teacher, Y83719).

If we had had a say in this [the decision to adopt the concept] we would have made it very plain and clear that we weren't going to have a bar of it. And we still aren't no matter what he [Jim] thinks or tries to make us do (Year 10 Teacher, Y105744).

Successful adoption of middle schooling requires a high level of interest and commitment from the parent community (Barratt, 1998; Jackson & Davis, 2000). Contrary to popular rhetoric, this is a relatively unusual requirement for school-based change. A great many educational innovations are not dependent on the support they receive from their parent community. Innovations such as the introduction of a new Maths programme, or a new way of organising the school timetable may be implemented with very little parental awareness, knowledge or support. However, because middle schooling is whole-school change, and because in New Zealand it is a chosen, rather than mandated change, parental support is vital to its success.

Parental interest and acceptance of the concept must be gained from the beginning of the adoption process because normally the agreement of the parent community is required before a school can change its status to that of a middle school. In the case of Matai School, the school was not changing its class; they were already a middle school in name. Therefore, the Board of Trustees was not required to go through the formal change-of-class consultation process to attain the approval of the parents and wider community to become a middle school. Rather, in this case, the Board of Trustees was

able to make the decision to adopt a middle schooling orientation without the knowledge or approval of the parents.

Under normal circumstances, the change of status consultation process requires Boards of Trustees to inform the school community of the proposed change and then to canvas their support for the change. This process can arouse community interest and enthusiasm. Having aroused community interest, it is important to continue to nurture and develop the initial interest into commitment because the middle schooling concept requires high levels of parental involvement for the lifespan of the innovation. This requirement is founded on the belief that parental involvement in the education of middle level students is “an important determinant of a student outcomes throughout their children’s academic careers” (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 197).

The parents of Matai School had little formal involvement in the middle school development during the two years of the research. The only opportunity they had to discuss the concept was at a parent meeting in June 2002. The parent evening was preceded by a postal parent survey which was designed to ascertain the level of parent knowledge about the concept so that future parent education could be planned. No further parent education was supplied over the next year and a half of the research.

Parent comment from the parent evening, reported in the Phase I section, showed that some parents felt they were not fully informed about the concept and that they would like additional information. With parents having only one education session in the research period and receiving a few other short updates on the development of the middle school via the school newsletter, it was difficult for them to be well informed about the concept. The lack of parental interest and support evident in the two years of the research would seem to indicate that there was probably a low level of fully-informed parental acceptance of the concept.

The case findings indicate that it is likely there never was fully-informed acceptance of the middle schooling concept by the staff and parents. This lack of informed acceptance manifested itself in staff reluctance to be involved in the middle school planning and implementation. Jim appeared to be largely unaware of the critical importance of strong continuing support from the staff for the success of the innovation. Therefore, he did not

work on attempting to find out whether the staff members were fully informed and committed to the innovation. Instead, he appeared to assume that they were fully informed and committed to the innovation and that it was other factors that were contributing to their reluctance and disinterest in the middle schooling developments.

7.2. Teacher Resistance

How and why did teacher resistance develop and how did it express itself?

Fullan and Hargreaves (1995) contend that while educators are now paying more attention to the importance of teachers' role in bringing about educational change, many of the strategies used to encourage teacher change are limited, misguided, non-involving and oblivious to the real needs and concerns of teachers. They feel that in many cases the change strategies used are part of the change problem, rather than the solution to it.

Teacher resistance can take many forms, ranging from indifference or incompetence to wilful sabotage. Datnow (2000a) notes that teacher resistance can be either overt or covert. Overt forms of resistance are actions or words that are expressed openly and are seen or heard by others. Covert resistance takes the form of words and actions, which are unseen. Both covert and overt forms of resistance are used to delay, disrupt and, in some cases, sabotage the course of the change.

A small number of the teachers in the case study school appeared to be committed to the changes and their words and actions showed that they were attempting to implement the changes. However, a majority of the teachers displayed some form or forms of resistance to the changes during the two-year course of the research. This resistance took two main forms. The more frequently displayed form was passive resistance. This took the form of apathy, non-engagement and indifference to the changes. Applying Evans' Innovation Responsiveness Scale (1996), people who display these forms of resistance are termed 'cryogenics'. Evans says that these teachers do not care about the changes and are not usually trying to put them in place. He adds that they are often seen as lazy and apathetic. He adds that they are the hardest to change and usually cause school leaders the most grief.

The second and less frequently displayed form of resistance was overt resistance. With regards to the year 7, 8, and 9 teachers, overt resistance generally took the form of open displays of displeasure with the concept and the implementation process, non-attendance at meetings, and slowness, or refusal to do what asked. In the case of the year 10 teachers, overt resistance took the form of open, sometimes hostile, verbal displays and refusal to carry out actions.

Displays of passive resistance to the changes started to appear within the first four months of the implementation period. These displays took the form of the teachers being reluctant, or slow to talk about change issues that Jim asked them to discuss. This reluctance was most evident at the staff meetings at which Jim attempted to generate discussion about the proposed changes. A large number of the teachers were difficult to engage in the discussions and at times appeared disinterested. These teachers also tried to move the discussion onto other agenda items rather than spend time on the middle school development items. After one of the staff meetings that included middle school development as an agenda item, Jim commented:

Well that didn't go very well. They [the teachers] seemed really disinterested, distracted today. I just couldn't get them talking about the concept. They just seemed to want to get onto the easier agenda items, get finished, get home (Jim, JN015711).

Pam made the following comment after another staff meeting where she and Jim had attempted to lead the staff in discussion about integrated curriculum and how it might be operationalised in each of the teams.

They [the teachers] are really hard to motivate at the moment, get talking. They say they want a middle school but they just don't seem to want to talk about how they are going to do it. At times like this I really wonder how we are ever going to get moving, they seem tired already and we haven't really even got started (Pam, PT017265).

When Jim found the teachers reluctant to attend staff meetings that they saw as additional and time consuming, he asked them to discuss the middle school development at their team meetings. While the year 7 team engaged in some discussion

about the developments, the year 8 and 9 teams remained reluctant to do this as they said these meetings were for team issues, student achievement and pastoral care. Rather than discuss the issues they were asked to by Jim and Pam, they tended to keep putting them back in the meeting until they ran out of time or they simply overlooked them.

Several of the year 8 and 9 teachers also showed a reluctance to put actions into place when asked. Jim asked all of the year levels to commence team teaching at the beginning of 2002. The year 7 team had commenced team teaching in 2001 and had the first steps of teaming in place by 2002. The year 8 and 9 teams engaged in a few conversations at the staff meetings about what team teaching might look like, but by the end of the research period they had put little more in place than talking together about student pastoral matters and a few multi-class joint theme projects. They were not sharing students, co-jointly planning and evaluating work, or employing interdisciplinary teaching as would be expected in a fully operational team teaching situation (Clark, 1997). Reluctance to fully action teaming appeared to stem from a lack of knowledge about teaming and a general lack of interest and commitment to putting it in place. Rather than actively resisting putting team teaching in place, the teachers just did not get around to it, or only occasionally talked about it in a disinterested way.

Other actions the teams were asked to put in place, but which they either overlooked or made weak attempts to implement, were integrated curriculum and the Development Committees. Jim and Pam provided professional development on integrated curriculum and then asked the teams to discuss how they would implement integrated curriculum in each of the year teams. While the year 7 and 9 teams made some initial moves to discuss how they would do this, the year 8 appeared to avoid the topic. As one year 8 teacher said to me:

We haven't even got teaming up and running, so what's the point of even thinking about integrated curriculum? We don't even really know what we are supposed to be doing about teaming (Year 8 Teacher, Y827880).

The initial interest for integrated curriculum did not last long in the year 7 and 9 teams. By the end of the research period, the year 7 and 8 teams had put in place only an

elementary form of integrated curriculum, and the year 9 team were still talking but had not actioned anything in their classrooms.

The attempt to set up the Development Committees was also met with passive resistance. When Jim asked the teachers to nominate which two committees they would like to be part of, they were either very slow to do so, or did not do it at all. Jim had to force some of the staff to commit themselves to the committees. When the lists of people were finally completed and Jim had explained the purpose and specific tasks for each of the groups, he asked the groups to organise themselves to carry out the tasks.

Rather than openly complaining about their involvement in the Development Committees, the teachers showed passive resistance by not committing themselves to them, by not attending the meetings, by showing very low levels of interest and by just not getting the tasks done. By the end of the research period, none of the Development Committees were fully functional.

While covert forms of resistance mainly took the form of individual rather than collective forms of passive resistance, these did not appear to disturb or upset the teachers who were attempting to implement the changes. On the other hand, the overt forms of resistance displayed in the course of the research were sometimes volatile and distressing to some staff members. Most of the overt forms of resistance came from the year 10 teachers. The year 10 teachers' resistance centred on their displeasure that they had been told they were to be part of the middle school. They were also displeased that they had had no say on the decision to include them in the middle school.

We don't want to be part of the middle school, never have. We are secondary teachers and we want to stay part of the senior college (Year 10 Teacher, Y10379).

We didn't even get a say in whether we wanted to be part of the middle school. They just told us. Well that won't work...we won't do it (Year 10 Teacher, Y105791).

We are not primary teachers, we don't want to be. I am not going to teach integrated curriculum...don't even know what it is, but I am a science teacher and that is what I am going to teach (Year 10 Teacher, Y102792).

The year 10 teachers also showed overt forms of resistance in the form of loud, frequent and sometimes volatile outbursts at meetings, non-attendance at meetings and refusal to commit themselves to any of the changes.

Both the overt and covert forms of teacher resistance observed at Matai School impacted significantly on the implementation process. Both forms of resistance served to limit teacher interest and commitment to the developments, and they interrupted and dragged the process down to a very slow pace. The displays of overt resistance also caused distress both to management and to some of the staff members.

In summary, the case findings indicate that teacher resistance presented significant barriers to the implementation process. The most frequently displayed form of resistance was passive resistance. Initially, teacher resistance appeared to develop in response to a lack of understanding about the concept principles and how they would be operationalised and in response to the number of meetings teachers were asked to attend. It appeared that the resistance that took place later in the study period was due mainly to lack of interest in and commitment to the middle schooling concept. In the case of the year 10 teachers, their resistance was due mainly to their reluctance to be part of the middle school. The year 10 resistance took the form of displays of verbal displeasure and refusal to attend meetings. The resistance, which continued throughout the study period, mainly took the form of individual reluctance or slowness to make the required changes.

7.3. Response to the Teacher Resistance

How did management (Jim and Pam) respond to the resistance?

Evans (1996) argues that the measures school leaders use to overcome teacher resistance should depend on the reasons for the resistance, the form of the resistance, the number and strength of the resisters, whether the resisters are few or many, weak or

strong, vocal or quiet. Blasé and Blasé (1997) argue further that most school leaders are trained to be maintainers rather than innovators and change leaders, and in particular that they are not trained in what to do with teacher reaction to change.

According to Hall and Hord (2006), the first step in dealing with teacher resistance is to determine the reason for the apparent resistance. Hall and Hord argue that teachers must not only want to implement the change, but they must also fully understand what it involves and they must feel they can achieve it. They recommend that change leaders start this enquiry by asking whether the teachers are fully aware of why the school wishes to pursue a particular innovation. They also recommend that change leaders ask whether the teachers know what the innovation consists of, whether the principles and aims are clearly articulated, and whether the teachers understand them, and the process for implementing the changes into the school and into their classrooms.

Fullan (2004) states that effective leaders of change should learn to work with resistance rather than against it. He recommends that leaders seek out dissent while simultaneously establishing mechanisms and strategies for sorting out and reconciling the differences. Datnow (2000a) contends that change leaders should listen to the dissent because the teachers might be saying something important. The main response Jim and Pam made to the resistance was to try to accommodate and work with it.

This expert advice appears to be both naïve and banal. It seems to suggest that awareness and knowledge will generally breed assent and support. This is a very simplistic view of teacher resistance. Teacher resistance is a complex problem that involves much more than awareness and knowledge. It also involves personalities and personal interest, gender and politics (Evans, 1996).

As the first signs of resistance became evident at Matai School, Jim talked to Pam and me about his concerns. To my knowledge he did not address his concerns directly to the teachers. Jim and Pam talked about why the resistance to the additional meetings was occurring. Jim was particularly concerned about the teachers' reluctance to make time to attend the extra staff meetings to do with the middle school planning. They decided that the resistance was due mainly to workload issues, rather than resistance to the

concept itself and at this point, did not question whether the teachers were showing signs of resistance because they were unsure or not fully informed about the concept. They tried to accommodate the resistance to the additional meetings firstly by having fewer after-school meetings and by asking the teachers to discuss middle school development issues in team meetings. This was not successful because the teachers argued that these meetings were not for this purpose and so either discussed the issues very quickly and superficially or not at all.

Jim also attempted to accommodate the resistance to attendance at meetings by saying that the teachers did not need to attend the parent evening. As a consequence, none of the teachers attended the meeting. When I asked why they did not attend, I was offered the following comments:

I haven't got the time. We attend too many meetings already so I wasn't going to go to this one as well. Anyway I didn't think it would come up with anything useful. What the parents say isn't really that important, they don't have to do it [put the changes in place], we do (Year 9 Teacher, Y945660).

From what I hear it didn't achieve much. Just gave the parents a chance to find out a bit more about the concept and ask a few questions. We didn't need to be there to hear that. They [Jim and Pam] can tell us about it (Year 9 Teacher, Y95661).

He [Jim] said we didn't have to, so that was good enough for me, I didn't. We are expected to do enough during the day without going to things like that at night as well (Year 9 Teacher, Y915660).

Comments like these indicate that perhaps these teachers did not realise or appreciate the importance of parental support for the middle schooling concept.

Jim's response to the year 10 teachers' resistance appeared to take a slightly different form than that for the other teachers. When these teachers became very vocal about their inclusion in the middle school, Jim appeared to back off and ignore their protests, rather than accommodate or attempt to work with them. While arguing that he still felt the best

place for the year 10 pupils was in the middle school, he appeared to back off and not attempt to engage with the year 10 teachers for most of the second year of the research.

Jim's attempts to work with the year 8 and 9 teachers' resistance rather than meet it head-on were a conscious decision in line reflecting his own beliefs about leadership.

I am really trying to work with them...find ways to meet their concerns. I am not a person who likes confrontation. I think it is best to listen to them and then try to work together to find solutions (Jim, JN72441).

When Jim's attempts to work with the teacher resistance were not successful, he questioned whether he had taken the best approach in dealing with it.

I have tried so hard to work with them but nothing seems to please them. I have really listened to them, changed things, not forced them to do things the other teachers are doing and still they grizzle and moan. I sometimes wonder if it would have been better if I had just told them that they had to do things...but that's not me. I want us all to work together, I don't want to dictate to them (Jim, JN70432).

Jim also talked to me about other influences he thought might be affecting the teachers' ability to change. In particular, he talked about the age and stage of career of many of the teachers, and the strong, traditional culture of the school and the effect this might be having on the implementation process. Jim was aware that having a staff of predominately older teachers, some of whom had been at the school for a long time, might be a factor that was affecting the change process. He said that he knew he had to appoint younger teachers when the occasion arose because they would "not be so stuck in their ways" (Jim, JN7450). During the course of the research he had the opportunity to appoint two younger teachers and he was convinced that their presence would have a good effect on the older teachers.

I am really excited about them being here. They will be good for the other teachers. They have new ideas, new energy...they will shake the others up, make them rethink what they are doing (Jim, JN9356).

The research period ended before I was able to see if these younger teachers had the desired effect on the older teachers.

According to Schein (1992), organisations which have what are usually perceived to be strong cultures are often in fact inflexible and typically resistant to change. Jim and Pam both made comments that indicated that they were aware that the culture of Matai School could present them with problems and could hinder the teachers' ability to change.

This school is pretty traditional. These teachers haven't really got a history of much change, innovation, so I appreciate that this [the middle schooling concept] could seem unnecessary to them. Why change when they think they have been doing a good job anyway (Pam, PT71059).

These teachers have a strong culture, a pretty traditional one...one that has served them well in the past. They think they have been pretty successful, so they may well wonder why they should change (Jim, JN4791).

Despite Jim and Pam's perception that the strong culture of Matai School might be hindering the teachers' ability to change, they did not appear to take this into account when discussing and planning the middle school developments. It might have been expected, given that they acknowledged that the school had a strong traditional culture. They might have put more emphasis on ensuring the teachers fully understood the reasons for adopting the concept and the benefits it could bring to both the pupils and the teachers.

Given the nature of the adoption and implementation processes, the school culture and the demographics of the teachers at Matai School, it could be argued that the teachers' resistance to the changes was a reasonable response to a large set of vaguely expressed expectations. Bolman and Deal (2002) contend that schools rely on clarity and focus to bring about successful school change. The case research would suggest that clarity and focus were lacking in some aspects of the implementation process. It would appear that for some of the teachers, clarity of the purpose for why they were adopting the middle schooling concept might have been an issue. For some teachers clarity of how each of

the concept principles was to be operationalised in the school and in their classroom was an important issue. As the implementation process progressed, clarity about the nature of the innovation, and in particular the size and complexity of it, became an issue for a growing number of the teachers. As some of the teachers began to understand the full extent of the changes they were expected to make, and the possible time it might take to implement them, some (approximately 1/3rd) began to express concerns about being able to “keep up all this [change] for so long” (Year 8 Teacher, Y811739). “We had no idea about this [the extent or length of the change process] when we began. Don’t know if we would have started if we had” (Year 8 Teacher, Y816341).

Jim’s own lack of clarity about the direction of the implementation process and hence no talk of an action plan may have been unsettling for those teachers who needed to know where they were going and what would be expected of them.

Even he doesn’t know where he is going. One day we are talking about teaming and the next day it is parent involvement. I need to know the whole picture, exactly what it is I am going to be asked to do. I don’t like surprises (Year 9 Teacher, Y94705).

The lack of discussion and hence clarity about the type of school culture required by the middle schooling concept may also have contributed to the teachers’ resistance. Part of the professional development delivered to the teachers before the implementation process commenced, informed them of the requirement to move towards a collaborative, inclusive school culture to accommodate the middle schooling concept. But while they had been informed of this they did not appear to discuss what it would look like at the school and the team level, or how they would move towards this new culture. Rather, they moved into teaming situations and were expected to sort out how to work as a team. It would appear fair to assume that the vaguely expressed expectations discussed above may have contributed to the teacher resistance displayed at Matai School.

The case findings indicate that school management, Jim and Pam, responded to the resistance by attempting to accommodate it. They did this by changing and reducing meeting commitments and by saying that teachers did not need to attend certain

meetings. Jim took the approach of attempting to accommodate the resistance rather than confront it as he said it fitted with his beliefs about shared leadership and personal responsibility.

8. The Nature of the Middle Schooling Concept

Review of the educational change and innovation literature found very few references to the differing nature of innovations and the possible impact this might have on how innovations are implemented. Similarly, the review of the middle schooling literature offered very little indication that this particular innovation might present challenges which other, simpler innovations would not generate. The literature tends to treat all innovations as having a common set of implementation requirements. However, the experiences of the case school indicated that this innovation presented challenges that most of these staff members had not experienced before.

8.1. The Characteristics of the Innovation

Implementation of the middle schooling concept challenged the case school in many different ways. The greatest challenges came from the school members trying to make sense of the complex, multi-faceted nature of the concept and how it could be translated into action; attempting to take on a collaborative approach to teaching; implementing concurrent structural and cultural changes; and getting all staff members to work together and at a similar pace as required by the integrated, interconnected nature of the changes.

Understanding parts of the concept and being able to translate them into action were major challenges for many members of the case school. The review of the middle schooling literature found that the concept has a history of being poorly articulated (Toepfer, 1976). Close examination of the concept itself showed that some aspects are poorly defined and incomplete. Concept clarity and how to translate it into practice presented members of the case school with difficulties throughout the implementation process.

This integrated curriculum is really difficult. We don't really have a clear idea of what we are doing. We all have different ideas about it. We are kind

of doing our own thing without the whole team working together (Year 9 Teacher, Y937244).

What do they really want us to do? They tell us to team, but we don't really know what that means. We kind of plan together, but we still teach in isolation. I don't think that is what we are meant to be doing (Year 9 Teacher, Y91574).

The concept sounds really good in theory but as we get into it we are finding that parts are difficult to actually put into practice. There is a real lack of information about some parts (Deputy Principal, DP3710).

By the end of the research period, staff members were still expressing difficulties with translating the first two components of the concept, team teaching and integrated curriculum, into action.

One of the central tenets of the middle schooling concept is the requirement that students be taught in multi-discipline teams (Jackson & Davis, 2000; NMSA, 1995). This requirement to move towards a collaborative approach to teaching was one of the biggest challenges the members of Matai School grappled with. Team teaching required the teachers of the year 7, 8 and 9 students to jointly plan, teach, assess and provide pastoral care to a group of students in a manner which was new to most of the teachers. The principal and deputy principal made the unilateral decision that all year 7, 8 and 9 teachers would commence team teaching at the beginning of 2002. It did not appear that the teachers received any preparatory training for this requirement. Rather, the approach taken was that they were to develop their own methods to make collaborative teaching work. From the outset, some of the teachers expressed displeasure with the requirement to collaborate with other teachers.

We didn't even get a choice about this, we were just told that we had to start [team teaching] at the beginning of the year (Year 9 Teacher, Y920315).

Some of us don't really know what we're supposed to be doing. What does it [team teaching] really involve? (Year 8 Teacher, Y810492).

Even in the later stages of the research period, the teaming process was still progressing slowly with only the year 7 team practising what could be called near full team teaching. The other teams were still struggling with issues of how to operationalise teaming and of resistance to the requirement.

We just haven't got time for team planning and assessment. We need extra time, time out of class not after school (Year 9 Teacher, Y945412).

Some of us just don't want to do it. We think kids are best taught in their own classroom with their own teacher (Year 9 Teacher, Y95682).

The middle schooling concept requires teachers to make both structural and cultural changes (Dickinson, 2001; Jackson & Davis, 2000). In the case of Matai School, the teachers were required to make these changes concurrently. This was evidenced in the requirement that they implemented team teaching and integrated curriculum at the same time. Both team teaching and integrated curriculum required teachers to make changes to timetables, use of rooms, and to collaborate over planning, teaching and assessment. These multiple, concurrent changes presented some teachers with considerable challenges. In particular, some of the teachers felt overwhelmed by the demands being placed on them.

There is just so much going on. We are trying to do all of these things, make all of these changes, but it is all too much. We need to slow down, do just one thing at a time (Year 8 Teacher, Y83748).

We only seem to get started on one thing and then we are asked to start changing other things. We really need to learn how to work together first before we try to make other changes (Year 9 Teacher, Y94610).

Jim appeared to be aware that the teachers were finding the implementation of multiple changes challenging but he took the approach that they would feel ownership of the changes if they worked through the process for themselves rather than having intervention from management. Also, given both Jim and Pam's high teaching loads, they did not have a lot of time to help each team at an operational level. Providing help and support on how to operationalise the changes was also hampered by the teachers'

reluctance to attend meetings after school. The provision of substantial in-school professional development time was not possible because of the budget limitations.

Not only does the middle schooling concept require multiple changes, but it also requires all teachers, or at the least, all teachers in a team, to make the changes at the same time. This requirement presented challenges to the staff at Matai School because not all of the teachers in each team were ready, able or even willing to adopt the changes at the same time. But the integrated nature of the changes meant that they had to. This resulted in pressures and strains within teams as some members moved forward with the changes while others made little effort or in some cases sabotaged the changes.

It is so difficult at times. Some of us [some of the team] really want to get on but some of the others are just stuffing around (Year 9 Teacher, Y918442).

I never wanted to be part of a team. You waste so much time talking about everything. I just want to get on and do it like I always have (Year 9 Teacher, Y96435).

This [teaming] is never really going to work while we have some people who are for it and some that are against. Those that are against muck around and stop the rest of us getting on (Year 9 Teacher, Y92780).

The middle schooling concept is much larger and more complex than most other educational innovations and this size and complexity presented the members of Matai School with many challenges. Review of the middle schooling literature found only one direct reference to this feature of the concept. Brown and Saltman (2005) make reference to the complex nature of this innovation and Lesko (2005 cited in Brown and Saltman, 2005), makes passing reference to the unusual demands of this innovation. The management and staff of Matai School appeared to be unaware of the size and complexity of the innovation when they commenced the implementation process. No mention had been made about the size and complexity of the concept during the professional development the staff received prior to commencing the implementation process. However, some nine months into the process, the principal and several of the

staff started to make comments about the unusual size and complexity of this particular innovation.

This is much bigger than any of us realised. Although we had talked about it all, I don't think we made the connections about all there is to do and how long it might take (Year 8 Teacher, Y82741).

As another Matai teacher commented during the implementation process:

It's like nothing else we've done. It is so big, so demanding, it is going to take us years to do it all. I feel tired just at the thought of all of it (Year 9 Teacher, Y94833).

The principal of Matai School also acknowledged the size, complexity and resulting demands of the concept.

I guess it is much bigger than I realised. Well I mean...I knew what it was all about before we started, but you don't really get to grips with it until you are actually doing it. And then you realise how complex it is as you try to figure out what to do next and how to do it (Jim, JN7413).

The middle schooling literature supports the notion that successful middle schooling implementation requires supportive systems and infrastructures (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Stewart & Nolan, 1992). Matai School was unusual in that it was a middle school within a full year 1-13 school. As has already been stated, the senior college controlled Matai School's budget, allocation of teachers and direction of the curriculum. External control of these important systems placed restraints on many aspects of the implementation process. The lack of control over budget meant that professional development and money to employ relief teachers so that teachers could be released for meetings and professional development was limited. Budget constraints also meant that it was not possible to provide the kind of buildings that would have supported and fostered more collaborative approaches to teaching. The sharing of teachers with the senior college meant that it was not possible to put flexible timetabling in place to foster more interactive and integrated forms of teaching. Sharing of teachers with the senior college also meant that it was difficult to establish full teaming and collaborative

practices. Jim was aware of these constraints, but during the research period he was unable to initiate many changes to alleviate the situation. Jim was very aware that it would be difficult to achieve successful implementation of the concept under these circumstances.

I fully appreciate why they [middle schooling advocates] say you need to be either fully autonomous or at the least semi-autonomous from other schools to make middle schooling work. Look at us, stuck in the middle and controlled by the senior college. I am not now sure that we can ever have a fully functioning middle school in this situation (Jim, JN9572).

The case findings show that for the case school, the main challenge of this innovation concerned making sense of the concept and how to operationalise it. In particular, the teachers had difficulty implementing team teaching and integrated curriculum into their classrooms. Jim left the teams to implement these changes largely unassisted, in the belief that they would take ownership of the changes if they worked through the process in their own fashion. The other main challenge presented by the innovation was the growing realisation that this innovation was much larger and more complex than any innovation most of the teachers had experienced. Interviews with the teachers indicated that this realisation disturbed some of them and left them wondering if they could sustain a change process that was going to go on for some years. A further challenge to this innovation was the Matai School structure and the control the senior college had over the middle schooling developments.

8.2. The Complexity and Challenges of the Innovation

As stated, with the exception of Brown and Saltman (2005) and Lesko (2005), no other references could be found which supported the notion that the middle schooling concept is more difficult and challenging than other innovations that a school like Matai School might have experienced. However, as time progressed, both the management and teachers of Matai School acknowledged that the middle schooling concept was more complex than any other innovation they had implemented.

I have been teaching for a long time and I have never experienced a change as complex as this. It is the integrated nature of the changes that makes this one so much more difficult (Year 8 Teacher, Y83699).

I am all for the concept but I have to admit that it is much more complex than anything else I have ever experienced. Mind you, that makes it all the more exciting, more of a challenge (Year 7 Teacher, Y72581).

I have been through a lot of changes both at this school and my last one. But I have to say this is more challenging than anything I have ever done before. It is the sheer size really. So much to do and over such a long time. It can be quite frightening to think about what we still have to do (Year 8 Teacher, Y82700).

Towards the end of the study period, Jim also acknowledged that this innovation was more demanding than anything else he had ever been involved in. He said that he had not realised how big and complex it was and he acknowledged that this lack of prior knowledge left him unprepared for the task.

Looking back I now realise that I really had no appreciation of the task I was taking on. I knew it [middle schooling] would be different to other changes I had led but I really had no idea of how different it would be. It has been a really steep learning curve. I've got close to giving up at times but in my heart I still know that when we get there it will be the best thing we can do for the students. So I just keep that in mind on the bad days (Jim, JN10625).

Towards the end of the research period Jim also acknowledged that he thought the middle schooling literature might not speak of the size and complexity of this innovation because it might "put people off. I sometimes ask myself if I would have started if I had known what I now know" (Jim, JN1142). Pam, the deputy principal, also acknowledged that this innovation made demands on staff that no other innovation, they had experienced, appeared to make.

You just don't appreciate the demands of this [the concept] until you get into it. None of us have had any experience like it so I guess we had nothing to warn us (Pam, PT2359).

The findings from the case show that the staff of Matai School found this innovation more complex and challenging than any other innovation they had implemented. It was the size of the innovation and the interconnected, integrated nature of the middle schooling concept that made it more challenging than other innovations they had experienced.

9. Conclusion

The case findings demonstrate that implementing middle schooling into Matai School was a process which met with many challenges, frustrations and few successes. The main factors which hindered the change process centred around the critical leadership tasks required to carry out change of this nature, the different forms of teacher resistance that were displayed, and the challenging nature of the middle schooling concept.

Chapter 6

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE FINDINGS

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings from the study of Matai School indicated that the main factors which hindered the middle school change process centred around the critical leadership tasks required to carry out change of this nature and the different forms of teacher reaction that were displayed. The purpose of this chapter is to cross check the experiences of Matai School with the experiences of two other established New Zealand middle schools. Cross-checking was used to investigate whether the experiences of Matai School were similar to the experiences of the other two schools. In particular, I was interested in follow up on the issues of leadership, teacher reaction, and the nature of the innovation.

The two established middle schools had been intermediates before they had moved to become middle schools. These schools were chosen because they were both similar in size to Matai, they had similar decile ratings to Matai School and because they both had had middle schooling status at least five years and therefore had been through much of the implementation process. In order to understand the implementation experiences of these two schools, I interviewed the principals, deputy principals (DPs), and one member of the Board of Trustees from each of these schools. I also informally interviewed several teachers from each of the schools. For the purposes of this report, the two other middle schools are renamed 'Rimu' and 'Kauri' to protect their anonymity.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. Section 1 considers the three schools' experiences of leadership and teacher reaction, while Section 2 considers the schools' experiences with the nature of the innovation.

2. Leadership and Teacher Reaction

The interviews with the members of the two established middle schools confirmed that many of the leadership tasks and the teachers' reactions to them at Matai School were

also the major issues that had challenged the implementation processes in the two schools. In particular, the two schools identified the following tasks as the factors which had had the greatest impact on their implementation processes:

- Establishing a shared understanding of the middle school concept and how it would be operationalised in their school and classrooms.
- Sharing leadership and sharing decision-making.
- Obtaining the interest and operational commitment of all staff members and the interest, support and involvement of parents.
- The need for appropriate and supportive infrastructures.

The interviews identified an additional issue that by the time of the end of the two-year study had not been an issue for Matai School. The additional issue identified was the need to maintain and foster the operational commitment of the staff to the concept over an extended period of time so that the innovation did not atrophy and die. This issue will be discussed along with the four points identified above.

This chapter takes each of the five key leadership tasks listed above and reports the findings of the interviews held with the school members. The staff reaction to the changes and the demands these placed on them are reported under each of the four key leadership tasks. The experiences of the two established schools are also compared with the experiences of Matai School.

2.1. Establishing a Shared Understanding of the Middle Schooling Concept

All of the three schools studied found that developing a shared understanding of the concept was a critical leadership task that presented each of the school leaders with difficult challenges. My interviews with the management members of both Rimu and Kauri Schools indicated that, as with Matai School, these people recognised that, for the adoption of the middle schooling concept to be successful, the members of the school community needed to share a common understanding of the principles of the innovation and its major elements. The principal of Rimu School reported that he had taken responsibility for arriving at an interpretation of middle schooling for his school, which he had then shared with Board of Trustees (BOT) members, staff and community members. The deputy principal said that the full staff had been involved in the process

of deciding how the components of the concept would be operationalised. She said that they had experienced particular difficulty clarifying an understanding of integrated curriculum and how it would be translated into practice. Despite five years of experience with an integrated curriculum and a supposed common understanding of the concept, she felt that teachers were still struggling with how to do it.

We all have different ideas about integrated curriculum...some of the teachers think integrated curriculum isn't worth all the work (DP Rimu School, DPR214).

She also said that, despite it being five years since they began implementing middle schooling, the only features of the concept they had operationalised were the teaming of teachers, some integrated curriculum and flexible scheduling, and the beginnings of an advisory programme. She believed that the slow rate of change was due in part to conflicting views over how to operationalise some of the other concept components.

We have spent so much time talking about what we are going to do, how we might do it, but looking back we have really done more talking than doing (DP Rimu School, DPR214).

We seemed to always be talking about the changes, what they would look like, how we would put them in place. Some of us still aren't really sure of what we are meant to be doing. I still don't really understand this integrated curriculum, how you connect it all. It seems kind of contrived to me (Teacher Rimu School, TR7235).

My discussion with a BOT member of Rimu School indicated that she had a good understanding of the middle schooling rationale and principles but that she had less understanding of how the principles would be operationalised into the school.

He [the principal] keeps us well informed about how they are getting on. It [the concept] is really complex, really complicated (BOT Member Rimu School, BTR271).

From talking with the staff members of Kauri School it was apparent that some of them were still struggling to form a common understanding of the middle schooling principles. In particular, there were differences between how the principal and deputy principal viewed teaming and integrated curriculum. The principal viewed teaming as little more than a physical arrangement of siting students of a similar age in a common area, whereas the deputy principal saw teaming as teachers collectively teaching and caring for the needs of a single group of students. The deputy principal said that most teams in the school were little more than structural arrangements while a few were attempting to work collaboratively. The deputy principal and a teacher also reported that there was little shared understanding of what an integrated curriculum should be.

It has been really difficult trying to get a common understanding of the concept. There are so many versions, so many interpretations...which ones are correct? (DP Kauri School, DPK316).

We've been at this [putting the changes in place] for four years or so and some of us still don't understand it all, well parts of it [the concept] really, like why we should try to involve parents more. It [the concept] is really complex, much more than most of us realised (Teacher Kauri School, TK4370).

The BOT member of Kauri School was knowledgeable about the intent and rationale of the concept but had little knowledge of how it was being translated into action in the school. Discussion with her showed that she believed middle schooling to be teams of teachers teaching separate subjects with “more options than at an intermediate school” (BOT Member Kauri School, BTK348).

These experiences of Rimu and Kauri Schools concur with the experiences of Matai School. These findings suggest that developing a shared understanding of the rationale and principles of the middle schooling concept and how they will be operationalised into a school is not an easy task.

2.2. Leadership

From the interviews it appeared that Rimu School had two strong visionary leaders in their principal and deputy principal. These people spoke of their understanding of middle schooling, their goals for translating it into practice and the strategies they had used and were using to ensure that all staff members were informed and supported in implementing middle schooling. The principal, in particular, demonstrated that he had taken on intellectual and educative roles as well as his management role. He spoke of his visiting middle school educators and schools in the US and Australia to gain a greater understanding of the innovation and then of sharing this information with the staff, BOT members and parents. He spoke of the importance of keeping up to date with middle schooling thinking and practice and of sharing this information with all members of his school community. The principal of Rimu School commented that he knew that the success of the implementation process was founded on his ability to “lead, direct and get everyone involved” (PR2511). He also commented:

I knew I had to provide strong leadership and at times that meant having to tell people they were going to do things, even though they clearly didn't want to, but we wouldn't have got some things done if I hadn't. Middle schooling is not straightforward, in fact it is really complex and demanding...an awful lot of hard work (Principal Rimu School, PR2510).

The deputy principal of Rimu School spoke of her educative role, which included sourcing and supplying staff with readings related to middle schooling philosophy and practice, and then leading “professional discussions” on the articles. She also spoke of her role as co-ordinator of parent education. She said that Rimu School realised the importance of “keeping parents informed” (DPR245) through regular communication, newsletters, education and involvement.

While the principal and deputy principal of Rimu School appeared to be very aware of the importance of strong leadership to the successful implementation of the middle schooling concept, the principal of Kauri School appeared to be less aware of this. Rather, it was his deputy principal who spoke more about this subject.

When you are making major changes like this you really need strong leadership because there are so many decisions to be made and you have to have a robust process for getting through them all (DP Kauri School, DPK360).

I sometimes look back and wonder if we might have got more done if we had taken a stronger line with some of the lazy teachers, the ones who held the process back...we didn't really, and it took a long time to get things done (DP Kauri School, DPK361).

The principal of Rimu School, like the principal of Matai School, had strong views on the importance of shared leadership in middle schools. But he said that they had really struggled with this all through their implementation process, and that he was still struggling with it.

The teachers said they wanted to be part of the planning and decision-making but not many of them really did. Just a few got involved and they have been really good, but most quickly backed out and kept out of the way...said they were too busy (Principal Rimu School, PR206).

The deputy principal of Rimu School commented that involving teachers in decision-making had been a challenge. She said that they were enthusiastic at the beginning, but when some of them realised that it would take additional time, and in particular out-of-school time, they became less inclined to participate.

Really it has come down to just a small core of four or five teachers who are really active [in decision-making]. The rest seem happy enough to have these folks make the decisions and then tell them what to do. Although I must say there has been a fair share of moans and groans from them over the years (DP Rimu School, DPR245).

Comments from teachers at Rimu School indicated that there were plenty of opportunities for teachers to take part in planning and decision-making, but their comments also indicate that not all teachers took up these opportunities.

It has been really great. I wasn't here at the beginning, but since I arrived [approximately two and a half years after the implementation process commenced]. I have been involved in planning teacher education, parent activities and the setting up of the student council. If you want to take part in decision-making, XXX [the principal] and YYY [the DP] really encourage and support you in the decisions you make (Teacher Rimu School, TR6284).

He [the principal] really tried to get us involved, but we had enough to do. Some of us prefer to be told what to do and then we get on and get it done (Teacher Rimu School, TR7274).

One of the teachers at Rimu School also commented:

We were quite enthusiastic, wanted to be part of it [planning and decision-making] until we realised just how big and complex this whole thing [the concept] is. After that we felt daunted and tired at the thought of all the work to be done (Teacher Rimu School, TR2249).

The principal and deputy principal of Kauri School appeared to consider shared planning and decision-making to be less important and they appeared to have taken on most of these roles themselves. The deputy principal appeared to be the more knowledgeable about middle schooling and she appeared to be the driving force and energy behind the implementation process. Five years after they had commenced their implementation process, it appeared that the principal and deputy principal of Kauri School were still making most of the decisions. As one teacher commented:

We don't bother [taking part in the decision-making]. They seem happy to make all of the decisions and we do what they tell us (Teacher Kauri School, TK4401).

It should be noted that, although Kauri school considered they were well on the way to adopting all of the middle schooling principles, their practices appeared to be little different from those of most intermediate schools.

It is interesting to note that both Rimu and Kauri Schools struggled to implement and sustain shared leadership and decision-making as had Matai School. Although much of the literature (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1993; Stoll & Fink, 1996) advocates the use of shared leadership in educational change, the findings of this study would suggest that shared leadership and decision-making may be harder to implement and sustain than the literature suggests.

2.3. Gaining the Interest and Operational Commitment of all Staff Members and the Interest, Support and Involvement of Parents

The experiences of Matai School showed that a critical leadership task that impacted significantly on the success of the implementation process was the ability of the school leader/s to obtain staff commitment to the innovation. In particular, this commitment was needed from the entire staff of the school or unit. The literature (Erb, 2000; Clark & Clark, 1994; Jackson & Davis, 2000) also indicated that the success of middle schooling concept also relied heavily on a high level of interest and commitment from the parent community.

The principal and deputy principal of Rimu School also spoke of the importance of this finding. The principal said that he was very aware of the need to secure the interest and operational commitment of all his staff to the innovation. He said that it would be impossible to undertake change on this scale without the interest and commitment of all teachers. He said that while most of the teachers had been supportive of the change from the beginning, a handful of teachers were not, but that he had decided to go ahead without their commitment.

I just thought, they are not going to stop the rest of us...we will get started and then work on those people (Principal Rimu School, PR257).

However, he did add that he took “special care” of the resistant teachers and took extra time to talk to them and listen to their concerns (PR2580). In the end, he said, some of them chose to leave and the others decided to work in with the rest of the team, although he reported that the teams these teachers were in were slower to change and had experienced more difficulties than the teams which contained no resisters.

The deputy principal of Rimu School also spoke of the importance of gaining the engagement of all staff members. She reported that they had initially got the commitment of teachers by giving them leadership roles and responsibilities such as leading professional discussion as part of the professional development programme. However, she said that they had commenced the implementation process without the commitment of some staff members and that these teachers had “held the process back”, but “we just had to get going without them” (DP Rimu School, DPR2611). She said that getting the interest and commitment of the parents had involved a lot of work, but that they (the staff), realised the importance of parental support to the success of the concept.

We are new, different...we must be open about what we are doing if we expect their [the parents'] support (DP Rimu School, DPR228).

We need their [the parents'] support. If they don't believe in what we are doing, they will grizzle and moan or remove their kids (DP Rimu School, DPR229).

She also said that gaining the interest and support of the parents for the project had been critical because the establishment of Rimu Middle School had been surrounded by controversy and hostility from a local high school. This meant that parents were caught up in the battle for student numbers, and therefore it was essential that parents were fully convinced that middle schooling was the best option for their children. The Rimu School BOT member interviewed also acknowledged the importance of gaining parental interest and support for the innovation because she said the parents had plenty of other schools to send their children to, so they had to be convinced that middle schooling was the best form of education for their child.

Both the principal and deputy principal of Kauri School acknowledged the importance of gaining operational commitment to the innovation from teachers. The deputy principal in particular spoke of the need for the majority of staff members to “be behind the changes to make them happen” (DP Kauri School, DPK358). She also said that “the concept is all about working together...being committed to what we are doing” (DP Kauri School, DPK372). Both the principal and deputy principal of Kauri School said that getting staff commitment had been more difficult than expected. The principal

commented that the actions of some of the teachers had “held back the progress [of the implementation process]” (Principal Kauri School, PK3421). The deputy principal said that she thought on reflection that they should have:

Taken more time, listened more to what the teachers were really saying. It might have smoothed the process a lot more, got it moving along, saved some of the unpleasantness we seemed to have. You know, teachers grizzling, little groups talking around behind the other’s backs, that sort of stuff (DP Kauri School, DPK369).

The deputy principal also spoke of the importance of parental interest and commitment to the innovation. She said the long consultation process had helped to establish parental interest and commitment to the concept. She said that some of the parents who were against the change had removed their children from the school but that most of the remaining parents appeared to be interested in and supportive of what they were doing.

The experiences of the two established middle schools showed that, while they agreed on the importance of obtaining the commitment and interest of both staff and parents, they had found, like Matai school, that this was not an easy thing to do. An interesting finding was that, despite each of the established schools being at least five years into middle schooling, some of the teachers’ comments indicated that they were still not fully committed to the concept.

2.4. The Need for Appropriate and Supportive Infrastructures

The final factor which both Rimu and Kauri schools identified as having significant impact of their implementation process, and which Matai school also experienced but to a much greater degree, was the need for supportive and appropriate systems and infrastructure within the school. Both Rimu and Kauri schools made the point that, for the move to middle schooling to be successful, there needs to be adequate funding for professional development and equipment and buildings.

The staff of Rimu School said that middle schooling imposes structural and system demands which differ from those in conventional schools. In particular, the principal spoke of the need to have a flexible approach to timetabling to accommodate teaming,

an integrated curriculum and shared leadership. He also spoke of the funding implications that these structures brought. In particular, he spoke of the need to provide funding for release time for professional development, team planning sessions and parent education.

The deputy principal of Kauri School also spoke of the importance of targeted funding to ensure “the concept will work” (DPK328). She said “you can’t make the concept work without sufficient funding” (DPK326). By this she was referring to her school’s need to provide the teachers with teacher meeting rooms, release time and more integrated curriculum resources. She felt that the success of middle schooling was hindered by the school’s current inability to provide these additional facilities and resources.

We expect the teachers to get on with teaming and integrated curriculum but we aren’t able to provide them with what they need to make it work (DP Kauri School, DPK375).

The deputy principal of Kauri School also spoke of the need for a school counsellor in line with the middle schooling principle of support and advisory programmes for middle level students, but she said, “they had no hope” (DPK376) of getting one because they did not have the funding for such a person.

While both of the established schools spoke of the importance of having appropriate infrastructures and systems to make a successful move to middle schooling, the main difficulty these two schools had experienced was insufficient funding. Matai School also experienced this problem, but their lack of funds stemmed from their position as a school within a larger school where their budget was controlled by the senior college.

2.5. The Need to Foster and Maintain the Operational Commitment of all Staff and Parents for the Life of the Innovation

Both Rimu and Kauri schools spoke of the importance of securing and fostering the operational commitment of both staff and parents for the life of the innovation in order to ensure the innovation did not wither and die or regress to the type of education they had had before. Both schools also spoke of the special challenges this requirement

placed on them The principal of Rimu School said that he was fully aware that the survival of middle schooling in his school relied on him, the deputy principal and a few enthusiastic teachers “ driving and keeping the momentum up “ (PR2451).

He further commented:

I know this thing [the middle schooling concept] could easily tilt over and die if we don't keep up the interest in it. I keep employing new young teachers whenever I can because they bring in new life, energy to the concept, but I don't know what would happen if I left, or XXX [the deputy principal], I'm not sure it [the concept] would survive. I hope it would, but my gut feeling, if I am honest, is that it mightn't...I'm not sure we have enough other folk who are really passionate about the concept to keep it alive (Principal Rimu School, PR2455).

The deputy principal of Rimu School also expressed her concerns about the long-term survival of middle schooling at Rimu School.

You have to have a core of people who are really committed to this [middle schooling] to keep it going long-term. If you take away the key people, the ones who really believe in it I think it would die. We are really conscious of this and over the years we have tried really hard to keep up the interest, but it has been a real struggle with some teachers. It seems that with some of them, you only have to take your finger off the pulse, relax a bit and they're back doing some of their old things, you know, like heaps of stodgy book learning (DP Rimu School, DPR2729).

The principal and deputy principal of Kauri School expressed similar concerns to those of the Rimu School principal and deputy principal. In particular, the deputy principal of Kauri School said that she had real concerns about the long-term outlook for middle schooling at Kauri School. She said this was mainly because of the high turn over of staff the school experienced and how this resulted in a constant need to up-skill new teachers into middle schooling principles and practices.

This [the turn over of staff] is as real problem for us. It means we are always getting new teachers who have no experience in middle schooling. They are thrown straight into teams where the team members are expected to get the new people up to pace pretty quickly. But we see a big difference between how the teams handle this. Some of the more committed ones [teams] help the new people to learn about the concept and the different way of thinking and acting. But in some of the other teams you see the whole team slip a bit further back each time they get a new member. It's a constant struggle trying to keep them in middle schooling mode (DP Kauri School, DPK3210).

The deputy principal of Kauri School also spoke of the difficulties of keeping parents interested in middle schooling when they were only involved with the school for three years. To this end she made the following comment:

Three years is not long enough from the point of parent interest. It takes at least the first year to school them up about middle schooling, and just when they are getting interested their kids leave (DP Kauri School, DPK3224).

As stated, Matai School had not had to consider this issue because they were only two years into the implementation process.

3. The Nature of the Innovation

Each of the three schools studied found that implementing the middle schooling concept was more demanding and complex than they had expected and than they were prepared for. They also found that this particular innovation made greater and more challenging demands of their staff than they had experienced with any other innovations. Like Matai School, the two established middle schools had no prior knowledge of the demands of the concept.

We had no idea that it [the concept] would be so challenging. Perhaps on reflection we were pretty naive, but none of us had implemented anything this size so we had no appreciation of the issues we would face (Principal Rimu School, PR2311).

We were totally unprepared for the challenges we met. We had not read or heard anything about the demands of this innovation so we sailed in merrily and then wondered what we had struck (DP Kauri School, DPK664).

Both Rimu and Kauri School commented on the size of the concept compared to other innovations they had implemented. Like Matai School, they found middle schooling much larger and more complex than other innovations and because of this, much more demanding than other innovations they had implemented.

In hindsight we were quite unprepared for the demands of it [the concept]. It was just so much bigger and more complicated than anything any of us had been through before (Teacher Rimu School, TR5216).

This is the biggest thing most of us have ever done. We have all been through other changes but none of those were on the scale of this. Middle schooling requires you to change just about everything you were used to doing. That's a big ask, too big for some people (Teacher Kauri School, TK6377).

Not only did the size and complexity of the innovation place unusual demands on the staff of all three schools, all three schools found particular aspects of the innovation more demanding than most other innovations they had implemented.

Perhaps we didn't do our homework well enough, but we found, and to a certain degree we are still finding the integrated nature of the concept a real challenge. Having to make connections all the time is hard work and there is no let up (DP Kauri School, DPK422).

We've had a number of staff members leave since we began. They just couldn't get used to the level of collaboration needed. They didn't like sharing and working together so they had to go. I think the hardest part has been trying to keep the interest and enthusiasm of my group up for over five years. That has been really hard work. Most other changes you would have put well and truly into place in that time but not middle schooling. We

are still working on it and probably will be as long as we have middle schooling in our school (Team Leader Rimu School, TR7910).

Most of our teachers have struggled with putting in place multiple changes. But how could we have done it differently? It has been a long slow process as it is. But if we had waited until each change was well bedded in we would all be old and grey before we finished (Principal Rimu School, PR257).

I have never done anything else that has met with so much angst from teachers. It has been a combination of continual demands, continual changes, having to work in new ways. It has put tremendous pressure on some of our staff members (DP Kauri School, DPK446).

In conclusion, members of both Rimu and Kauri Schools commented that the middle schooling concept was the most difficult and taxing innovation they had ever tried to implement.

4. Conclusion

The experiences of the two established middle schools confirmed that their moves to middle schooling had met with many of the same challenges which Matai School had faced. In particular, they confirmed that leadership and the reaction of the staff members to the demands made of them had been the two main factors that had served to hinder and disrupt their middle schooling implementation processes. The two established schools also confirmed that their staffs had found particular aspects of the innovation more demanding than most other innovations they had implemented. In particular, they commented on the unexpected size and complexity of the innovation and the demands these two factors placed on staff enthusiasm and ability to sustain the process of change.

The two established schools also identified a further factor that they considered important to the successful adoption of middle schooling. That was, the need to retain the interest and commitment of the staff and parents for the life of the innovation. This had not been an issue for Matai School because they were only two years into the implementation process.

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss the findings from the case study in relation to the main research questions. The discussion will bring together the case findings and the relevant literature on middle schooling, education change leadership, and theories of educational change and innovation. The research was guided by two main research questions:

- How did this school implement the middle schooling concept?
- How might this experience illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling?

The case found that the three factors, which had the most significant impact on Matai School's implementation process, were leadership, teacher reaction to the changes, and the demanding nature of this particular innovation. Discussion of the case is presented in three sections with each section considering one of the three factors which seemed to be most influential in affecting the progress of the innovation. Section one discusses leadership, section two considers teacher behaviour and reaction to the changes and the third section discusses the nature of the middle schooling. The discussion considers each of these three factors in light of the research findings and the educational change and innovation literature in order to establish whether the research and the literature offers useful guidance for school leaders in similar situations to Matai School.

2. Change Leadership

The review of the educational change leadership literature found a large body of literature available on this topic. The main messages from the more recent change leadership literature can be synthesised into four main groups. These are that effective change leadership:

- Is transformational, empowering and shared (Bower & Balch, 2005; Fullan, 2002; Hall & Hord, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2001; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

- Seeks to establish collaborative school cultures with clear educational visions and processes (Rowling, 2003; Schlechty, 2001).
- Requires school leaders to be knowledgeable about the change process and in particular, leaders need to be knowledgeable about the possible range of teacher behaviour during the change process (Louis & Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1993).
- Ensures that a school has sufficient resources to support the change process (Fullan, 1993; Hall & Hord, 2006; Hargreaves, 1995).

It should be noted that these messages for change leaders are generic messages which refer to any type of school change or improvement and not only to large, whole-school change as was the case at Matai School. It could be asked whether large innovations that require whole-school change require the same style of change leadership as smaller, less complex changes which affect only a few people or a unit of people within in a school. My own experiences of educational change, which are supported by the experiences of the case school, show that while the change leadership messages are the same for whole and part school change, successful large, complex, whole-school change requires leaders to have a much greater awareness of change processes and possible teacher reaction than that required by smaller change.

2.1. Shared, Empowering, Transformational Leadership

The experiences of the case school showed that the principal was knowledgeable about and supported the contention that effective change leadership is participatory and shared. However, while he wished to share leadership, and in particular, decision-making, planning and monitoring of the change process with his staff, he was unable to encourage his staff to share many of these responsibilities. There are a number of possible reasons for this, some of which were beyond the control of the principal. One particular reason may have been the fact that the staff members had had no say in the decision to adopt middle schooling. This appeared to create barriers to change before the principal could commence the change process. Not having a history of collaboration was another barrier to shared leadership. It could be argued (Fullan, 2002; Neville, 1992) that the principal should have taken more time to change the culture before he started to implement structural change. However, he took the approach that the staff needed a structure in which to collaborate to give collaboration a context and meaning.

He hoped that by giving the teachers the opportunity to work together they would then move to sharing leadership at a more strategic level. Unfortunately, these approaches to encouraging shared leadership led to only a very limited number of staff members taking on leadership roles. As Argyris (1993) argues, it is one thing to articulate the desire for shared leadership, it is quite another to put the theory into action.

Rowling (2003), another change leadership writer, argues that the leader(s) must lead the way by modelling the behaviour they wish staff to adopt. It would be fair to say that both the principal and the deputy principal of Matai School began the change process by modelling and encouraging the type of participatory, shared leadership they wished the staff to adopt. These two leaders modelled inclusive, participatory behaviour to the staff at all times. They also went to great lengths to invite and encourage all members of staff to participate in both small group and large group decision-making and planning. The two leaders also put in place meeting processes which aimed to share leadership roles and responsibilities. But still these approaches to encourage shared leadership met with little success.

At Matai School it seems to have been a case of the staff not sharing the same values and beliefs about leadership as the principal and deputy principal. In particular, it appeared that school management assumed the teachers would wish to share leadership without them taking the time to investigate whether staff values aligned with management values about shared leadership. It may also have been a case of the staff members not having the necessary skills to take on more leadership roles and responsibilities.

Wagner and Robert (2006) argue that if leaders want staff members to take on leadership roles, such as participatory decision-making and group facilitation and mediation, they have to provide training and development in these leadership skills. While this argument makes sense in that one cannot expect people to take on roles for which they are not equipped, in the case of Matai School, it is unlikely that the provision of leadership training would have made any significant difference. These staff members did not want to take on, or were not ready for these roles. The lack of readiness can be attributed to a mixture of factors such as the age and career stage of the majority of the staff members, the non-involvement of the staff in the decision to adopt

middle schooling, and the possible lack of congruence between the values of many of the staff members and the values of the principal and the deputy principal. In short, it appeared that a significant group, possibly the majority of the staff, preferred to leave the leadership to those people who they said “were paid to be the leaders” (Year 9 Teacher, Y92710).

In view of the findings and in response to the question, what might the principal and deputy principal of Matai School have done differently to attain shared leadership, it is my contention that these people did the best they could with the situation they were in. While it could be argued that they could have worked more on the cultural aspects of change, and moved gradually towards shared leadership, the staff members did not appear to value collaboration. It could well have taken a very long time, if it was even possible, to move the majority of the teachers to full collaboration. If the principal had taken the approach of attending to this cultural change before he started on the structural changes, the whole change process would have become very prolonged probably and even more difficult to foster and sustain.

2.2. Clear Visions, Processes and Structures

The change literature (Brower & Balch, 2005; Datnow & Stringfield, 2000; Fullan, 2004) emphasises the point that change processes must be informed by vision, clarity and focus. The case research found that the leadership tasks that proved most challenging were related to vision building, developing a shared understanding of the concept and how it would be operationalised in the school. Brandt and Pryor (2005) argue strongly that school communities often overlook the importance of this first stage of change vision building and fail to give it sufficient importance and time.

The principal of the case study tried hard, particularly at the beginning of the change process, to include all staff in the development of a shared understanding of the concept and a vision of how this would be operationalised into the school and classrooms. At first, the staff members were agreeable and appeared to be enthusiastic about their part in this process. However, this attitude changed quite quickly as a growing number of staff members said they did not have the time for these meetings which they saw as

“taking us away from our core business of teaching and learning” (Year 9 Teacher, Y94421).

Obtaining shared vision at the case school was also hindered by lack of clarity about some aspects of the concept and, in particular, teaming and integrated curriculum. The principal took the approach that he would let the teams decide for themselves, within the aims and objectives of the concept, what teaming would look like at each of the year levels. To my knowledge, the staff had had only one brief discussion about teaming and that had centred on the purpose and not the possible actions involved. This left the year levels to trial and negotiate their own understanding of teaming. This approach worked for only one team, year 7, which was the smallest team with only three teachers. This approach did not work so well for year 8 which was made up of all older experienced teachers. Similarly, it did not work well for the year 9 team which had a greater number of teachers than the other teams, and included teachers who taught both in the middle school and the senior college.

On reflection, it could be argued that the principal and deputy principal should have given the teams less autonomy and instead worked alongside of them to form vision and actions. But the principal wished to give the team members the freedom to explore and build up their own understandings in the belief that teachers are more likely to own and take responsibility for actions that they have played a major role in deciding on. Teacher responsibility to establish ones own understanding and take responsibility for ones own actions is an approach to school management, which is supported by such writers as Fullan (2004), Sarason (1995) and Sergiovanni (2001).

It should also be remembered that the principal had a heavy teaching commitment and at this stage the deputy principal had very little release time either. So while the principal of Matai School carried out actions that are supported by the change leadership literature, these actions did not have the desired effect. Perhaps the normative literature on educational change does not pay adequate attention to the organisational context within which the change takes place.

2.3. Knowledge of the Change Process

Several change leadership writers (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000; Fullan, 2002; Louis & Miles, 1990; Neville, 1992) write of the importance of change leaders being knowledgeable about the educational change process and, in particular, possible teacher behaviour and reaction to educational change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1993). The findings of the case study show that the principal lacked some important knowledge of the change process. While he was reasonably knowledgeable about the stages of the change process, such as those outlined by Fullan (2002) and Lewin (1951) in their cycles of change, he appeared less knowledgeable about the possible ramifications of the stages of change and how he might deal with these. As already argued, although he indicated that he was aware of the need for cultural change, he appeared less sure about how to attend to this, particularly at the deeper level of values and beliefs. He appeared to work from the position that, if he modelled and fostered and encouraged participative and invitational behaviour at a level the teachers were not accustomed to, they would respond by modelling the behaviour in return. This approach avoided the difficult issue of addressing and reviewing the commonly held values and beliefs of the group.

Change writers such as Evans (1996), Fullan (2002) and Hargreaves (1998) share the view that avoiding, either consciously or unconsciously, the issues of identifying a groups' commonly held values and beliefs in order to ascertain their alignment with the values of an innovation is a very common occurrence in educational change. They further argue that this is a factor that frequently contributes to less-than-expected or hoped-for success in educational change. It could be asked whether having greater knowledge of this stage of the change process would have made any significant difference to the experiences of the case study school. It is my contention that had the principal of Matai School investigated the alignment of his staff's values and beliefs with those of the middle schooling concept he probably would have found a sizeable gulf. He would then have been faced with the difficult issue of deciding whether to abandon any hope of becoming a middle school or trying to change the staff's values before he commenced the middle schooling changes. Given the age of his staff and long length of service many had given to the case school, it is likely that a large number of the staff members would have held entrenched values. It is a case of hypothesising whether any greater progress would have been made had the principal spent time

attempting to change staff values and establishing a culture of change before he commenced the middle schooling changes, or doing as he did which was to attempt to change values by putting structural changes in place that required different values and actions. This situation was not a case of either approach being best, but rather that the experiences of the case school were exacerbated by the nature of the innovation that they were implementing.

The review of the middle schooling literature showed that there is a dearth of information and, in particular, case studies of the experiences schools have undergone when implementing the middle schooling concept. The review of the literature also showed that there is very little mention of the complex, demanding nature of this innovation and the demands and challenges this presents to schools. Therefore, had the principal of Matai School wished to become more knowledgeable about the middle schooling change process, he would have found very little information specific to middle schooling that would have provided useful guidance.

Finally, it could be argued that no amount of training and information about education change would have fully prepared the principal of Matai School for the experiences he faced. Neville (1992) writes of the difficulties of training school leaders for change. She argues that educational change is so complex and multi-faceted that it is very difficult to train leaders for change that involves the unexpected and unpredictable.

2.4. Adequate Resources

The change leadership literature (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000; Brandt & Pryor, 2005; Fullan, 1993; Neville, 1992) contends that change leaders must ensure they have adequate resources in the form of time, money and support to support the change process. These writers give little indication, however, as to how to quantify the term 'adequate'. The principal of the case study school had given consideration to monetary resources before commencing the implementation process and felt that he had budgeted adequately for professional development, teacher release and classroom resources. During the course of the study, he found that he needed more money for professional development and thus teacher release time as he found he needed to send key teachers to other parts of New Zealand and, in a few cases, to Australia to receive professional

development to progress the implementation. He had not budgeted for the off-site professional development because he had planned to use external experts to carry out professional development at the school. When he found that the pace of change was less than expected, and that there were low levels of motivation and energy for the change, he decided to reward those who were showing initiative and leading the change by sending them off site for specialist training. This happened around the middle of the second year of the study. The study did not go on long enough to see whether this approach to professional development paid dividends, though, I was able to experience the initial enthusiasm of these staff members when they returned and reported on their experiences.

There was no middle schooling literature available that could have warned him of the need for this provision. The case school also used up far larger amounts of funding in teacher release time than had been anticipated in order that teachers could attend in-school-time meetings rather than after-school meetings. There was no way that the principal of Matai School could have anticipated the lack of progress made at many of the early meetings and therefore the need for a much greater number of vision building and planning meetings. Similarly, there was no way that the principal could have anticipated the need to move from after-school meetings to more in-school-time meetings, incurring teacher release costs, to try to appease staff members concerns about the amount of time they were being asked to give to after-school meetings.

The purchase of resources in the form of teaching resources and additional buildings was an issue for the case study school, but only a lower order issue. During the course of the two-year research period the case school negotiated the building and renovation of some of their buildings, but the senior college, prior to the implementation process commencing, had allocated money for this. During the following two years, there were no requests for additional classroom resources so provision of this type of resource was not an issue during the research period.

While the literature may argue that successful change requires leaders to ensure there are adequate resources, it is very difficult for change leaders to anticipate the resources they will require for complex, unpredictable change. In this regard, the literature may give insufficient attention to the varied contexts in which organisational change takes

place, that is, that they have limited discretionary funds for additional professional development, teacher release and the purchase of resources. In the case of middle schooling change, anticipating what 'adequate resources' might mean is even more difficult, given the vast and rather vague set of needs and requirements of this innovation and the long time period the change process must be sustained over.

In summary, there is no shortage of change leadership theory available for leaders of middle schooling change. It is the worth of much of the literature which could be questioned. The experiences of the case study school show that middle schooling change is very complex and that the size of this innovation adds to the demands and complexity of the change leadership tasks. It appears that much of the change leadership still fails to deal with the reality and complexities of schools today and, in particular, with school leaders who are attempting to convert conventional schools into middle schools.

The educational change literature provides advice and guidance for leaders of change not only through specific change leadership theories but also through more generic theories of change which concentrate particularly on the process of change. But of course, these theories by their very nature also deal with aspects of leadership. The large body of literature on theories of change was reviewed to ascertain whether it would provide any further useful information that could help explain and offer an understanding of the experiences of the case study school.

In general, the review of the educational change literature provided little additional helpful guidance for Matai School or for other leaders in this situation. The review found that there is very little literature on educational change that provides useful advice on leading the development of new types of schools, and middle schools in particular. Therefore, leaders of schools like Matai and others who are moving to become new types of schools have to rely on generic theories of change, which go only some way to offering guidance on how new types of schools might be developed.

Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1993) divide theories of educational change into two different categories: 'adoptive' and 'adaptive'. The adoptive approach to change tends to disregard the context of the school within which the change is taking place. Adoptive

strategies are concerned with a top-down approach to change and external forces often motivate this type of change. On the other hand, adaptive models of change are more sensitive to the situation of the individual school. They are appreciative of the environment of the school within which the change is taking place and they acknowledge the need to develop the capacity to change within the school. These models also acknowledge the importance of identifying people's values and beliefs in order to determine and understand their approach to educational change.

Most of the more recent educational change models take an adaptive approach to change, recognising that teachers' values and beliefs are very important and that educational change does not take place in a logical, linear fashion. The educational literature provides many normative theories of educational change, but only a few provide guidance that is useful for schools that are moving to become new types of schools. But even here, a school leader is likely to find limited practical guidance in these theories.

House (1981) provided a theory of change that offers school leaders a framework for analysing a planned innovation. His Perspectives Theory of Educational Change provides three ways of thinking about change. They are the technological, the political and the cultural perspectives. This theory was one of the first theories to acknowledge the importance of the political dimension of change. While his theory is principally analytic, it does suggest where school leaders need to focus their attention.

If used, this theory may have helped Matai School to understand that the focus of the school's change process was mainly directed towards the technological aspects of the change and that they paid little regard to the other two important aspects of change. By following the technological perspective they were, as House argues, viewing change as a systematic, rational process that presumes school members have common interests and values and are passive consumers who will willingly change. Matai School's change process was not rational and systematic, and their experiences showed that the school members did not have common interests and values. Their experiences also showed that the staff members were not passive consumers who were willing to change.

Had Matai School leadership been aware of House's two other perspectives of change they might have been able to avert or lessen some of the problems they met with leadership and teacher reaction. In particular, they might have been alerted to the dissonance between the teachers' values and those of the innovation. They may have also been alerted to the power and influence of the politics and conflict that were taking place. But while the theory may have alerted the leaders to these important factors, the theory does not offer guidance on what to do to resolve these issues. Similarly, this theory does not acknowledge the importance of the context of change. Change processes are complex and every school brings a unique context to the situation. In the case of Matai School, these features included the fact that as it was a school within three schools, there was sharing of teachers, buildings and resources, and the lack of an autonomous budget. These factors combined to make Matai School's change context very complex. House's (1981) theory of change offers limited guidance for situations such as this.

Fullan (1991) has written extensively about educational change, much of which provides useful guidance for schools such as Matai. Fullan's (1991) theory appears to capture some of the ambivalence, paradoxes and uncertainty of change and in doing so offers schools like Matai some sound advice. Fullan's theory draws on analytic theory to suggest normative approaches to change. In brief, Fullan advises that schools need to be aware that change takes place over time. He suggests that effective change takes time and that school leaders in conjunction with their staff must set realistic timeframes to recognise that implementation occurs developmentally. At no time did the staff of Matai School talk about how long the adoption of middle schooling might take. Also, they did not appear to set any timeframes for the implementation. As a consequence, when staff members began to realise, part way through the process, that middle schooling is a very long change journey, many became dispirited and lost interest. By discussing the possible length of the change process at the beginning of the process, the staff members might have been in a better position to set realistic expectations. It could also be argued that with an innovation the size and complexity of middle schooling, informing the staff of the possible length of the implementation process (some schools report it can take up to ten years) staff members would be put off before commencing.

Fullan's second piece of change advice for school leaders is to embrace multiple perspectives. By this he is referring to the three perspectives outlined by House (1981). Fullan says that technical approaches are useful for planning, but school leaders need to address the political and cultural perspectives to gain deeper understanding and achieve lasting change.

Fullan's third change strategy refers to being self-conscious about the process of change. Fullan claims that no research ever makes it totally clear what will happen in a change process. Therefore, Fullan contends that school leaders should take care to listen to teachers, who are likely to know a great deal about change in students. He recommends that school leaders use these insights to conceptualise the school change that is taking place. In the case of Matai School, the principal attempted to engage the staff in planning and decision-making, but they resisted many of his efforts. He tried to include the staff by giving them opportunities to contribute ideas from their own experience, but they did not have a history of being involved in this way and were reluctant to do so. So, while Fullan argues that it is important to engage staff and to listen to them, this guidance does not take account of the context of the school and the staff members' previous experiences.

Fullan (1991) argues that school leaders must assume there will be resistance. He contends that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but that they are fundamental to successful change. The leaders of Matai School did not appear to be aware of this important facet of change and appeared to be ill-prepared for it. They did not appear to know what to do with on-going resistance and seemed to take the approach of ignoring it rather than using it. Ignoring the resistance resulted in discontent and low levels of interest and commitment to the changes.

Finally, Fullan argues that for change to be successful, school leaders must invest in their teachers and in their schools. By this he is referring to the need to establish organisational settings in schools which support the teachers through the process of change. Fullan says that these settings need to be organised around the shared realisation that change is a process whereby individuals alter and change their ways of thinking and doing. Teachers and schools are all different and these differences need to be taken account of. As already argued, Matai School appeared to concentrate

its change efforts mainly on the technological aspects of the process, with little focus being given to the people, political and cultural aspects of change. It was my impression that the staff at Matai School were largely unaware of the importance of the political and cultural aspects of change. An understanding of Fullan's theory of change might have alerted them to the importance of these other perspectives.

Fullan's (2001) typology of the 'Key Factors in the Implementation Process' also offers some useful guidance to schools which are moving to become new types of schools. This typology identifies nine key implementation factors which schools need to take cognisance of to effect lasting change. This theory places emphasis on the importance of the need for clarity about the characteristics of the change, a factor which Matai School struggled with. This theory also identifies the context of the change, including the school situation and the people, as another important consideration in the change process. When considering this factor, Fullan speaks of the importance of support for the school leaders. Matai School leaders had little support and guidance from their school board, and very little support from the leaders of the senior college which had so much control over their situation. On a local and national scale, there is little support for schools adopting the middle schooling concept because there are few established middle schools from whom they can seek support. Currently there is limited support for the concept at Ministry of Education level. Although difficult to find, awareness of the need to establish supportive structures and systems would guide other schools to seek, develop and foster relationships which would offer support and guidance for their school leaders, to help sustain them through the change process.

In his 'Key Factors in the Implementation Process' typology, Fullan is not attempting to tell implementers how to implement the innovation. Rather he is listing the factors school members need to consider and the choices they are likely to face in the course of the implementation process. It is useful for doing this.

3. Teacher Reaction to Change

Teachers' behaviour and reaction to the changes they were being asked to make was a major issue for the case study school. The educational change and innovation literature contains much information and advice on how to get teachers to adopt innovations and

what to do if they resist change. However, some of the advice offered on teacher resistance to change in the literature seems banal and naive, suggesting a linear and causal relationship between a single set of leadership actions and the teachers' response. This approach appears to be founded on a belief that teachers are passive and willing consumers of change. On the other hand, there is also some very useful literature on the human aspects of change. The difficulty for school leaders is having both the time and the inclination to sort out the useful information from the worthless information.

3.1. Cultural and Political Theories of Change

Of the theories of educational change which focus predominately on the cultural and political aspects of change, there are five particular theories that offer useful guidance for schools such as Matai. These are the theories of Evans (1996), Fullan (2004), Hall and Hord (2006), Neville (1992) and Argyris (1993). These five theorists tend to extract normative implications for change from analytic theories.

3.1.1. Evans' Innovation Responsiveness Scale (1996)

Evans' Innovation Responsiveness Scale (1996) acknowledges that teacher resistance is an inevitable factor of change. It provides a simple tool to identify typical teacher resistance behaviour and to indicate how readily this may be changed. The principal of the case study school appeared to be ill-prepared for the range and level of teacher resistance experienced. Evans' tool could have been useful for schools like Matai because it alerts the users to the range of behaviours they can expect to experience. It also alerts school leaders to the people they need to listen to and to work with if they wish to effect lasting change. This might have helped the Matai School leaders to identify the teachers to whom they needed to give more support and encouragement, and thus made it easier for the school leaders to address the conflict rather than avoid it.

3.1.2. Fullan (2004)

Fullan (2004) offers useful, practical information about teacher resistance and how to deal with it. He recommends that schools be aware they will experience teacher resistance to change and that they be prepared to listen to what the teachers have to say, respect ideas and previous experiences and work with them. The leaders of Matai School appeared to be largely unaware that they would experience teacher resistance, so

when they did, they were unprepared and ill equipped to deal with it. Fullan's advice may have prepared them and offered them practical suggestions regarding to how to deal with it before it became an issue that was too difficult to handle.

3.1.3. Hall and Hord's Concerns Based Adoption Model (2006)

Hall and Hord's (2006) Concerns Based Adoption Model also appears to offer schools like Matai sound advice about how to manage teachers who are experiencing difficulties accepting change. This model helps school leaders to identify the exact concerns and level of concern of their staff and provides practical advice on how to persuade them. It also includes a questionnaire which would have helped the Matai School leaders to construct a concerns profile of the teachers enabling them to identify and track the level of concern as individual teachers engaged with the new idea. The model would have served to show the teachers at Matai School that the school leaders listened to them and cared about their concerns. It would also have shown the teachers that the school leaders were actively trying to work with them to address their concerns. This may have lessened the extent to which some of the teachers at Matai School felt that the school leaders were not interested in what they thought or how they felt about the change process.

3.1.4. Neville (1992)

Neville (1992) is a New Zealand writer with an interest in middle schooling. Although her article 'Management of Change' is not specifically about middle schooling change, it contains advice which would be useful for schools such as the case study school. In particular, Neville provides practical advice on how to generate staff enthusiasm for change in order to minimise teacher resistance later in the process. Neville also identifies possible teacher behaviour, how change can affect individuals and how to help staff cope with change. She makes the point that it is very important to help teachers understand the change process before embarking on change, and argues that understanding the process and the possible effects on people is more valuable than any advice or help others may offer in time of change.

To my knowledge, the staff of the case study school did not formally discuss the change process at any stage during the research period. They did not discuss possible teacher reaction to change before commencing the change process, nor did they address this

issue when teacher resistance and apathy became evident. Rather, avoidance of the issue appeared to be the preferred strategy. The principal was surprised at the level and intensity of teacher resistance and appeared to be unprepared for how to deal with it. While he discussed this matter with the deputy principal, they did not address it with staff members.

Neville's article should appeal to busy school leaders because it is very readable, succinct and to the point and offers practical, credible guidance. Had the staff of the case study school considered the sort of advice offered in the article, they may have been in a better position to understand and deal with the teacher reactions they experienced. Articles such as this could have been used as the basis for professional development for all staff at Matai School, both before commencing and during the change process. Had they done this, awareness and knowledge of how to deal, as a staff, with these issues might have allowed them to deal with the negative behaviour and move on, rather than only being able to make very slow progress.

3.1.5. Argyris and Schon's Theories-of-Action and Theories-in-Use (1978)

The work of Argyris (1993) and Argyris and Schon (1978), and, in particular, their theory of action perspective, alerts us to another factor hindering the implementation process at Matai School: that the staff did not recognise the important distinction between espoused theories-of-action and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are the theories people give when they are asked how they will behave under certain circumstances. The other theories they use, according to Argyris and Schon are theories-in-use, which are the theories which actually govern what we do. Our theories-in-use may or may not be compatible with our espoused theories. Argyris and Schon contend that, to be able to make effective change, organisations need to have alignment between their espoused theories and theories-in-use.

In the case of Matai School the school leaders did not appear to realise the lack of congruence between their espoused theories and their theories-in-use. This lack of awareness resulted in the staff saying they were going to do one thing and then working in directions that were not compatible with this intention. Thus they repeatedly failed to achieve stated goals. If the school had been aware of Argyris and Schon's theory they may have been able to assess their change progress on the basis of their theories of

intent and action and, thus, have understood and identified the reasons for the slow and difficult progress. From this realisation they would have had a better chance of being able to work together to better align their intents and their actions.

However, it is one thing to identify the educational change theory that might offer guidance for schools such as Matai; it is another matter to get schools to seek it out and use it. While Matai School sought technical information about the middle schooling concept, they did not seek information about the political and cultural aspects of change. This lack of awareness and attention to the literature on the cultural and political aspects of education change seems to be very common in educational change processes. In my 18 years of leading and managing educational change in schools we never sought out literature about the human side of change. Whether the reason for this was lack of time, lack of awareness of the importance of gaining a wider understanding or a belief that we already understood the human side of change, we, like Matai School, never saw a need to seek information or help with the cultural and political aspects of school change. Given that middle schooling change is very complex, involving the implementation of interconnected, multiple innovations, it would seem necessary for the leaders of this type of change to be well informed about both the technical and the human aspects of school change.

Much of the normative literature on leadership and teacher reaction to change provides either a counsel of perfection or a tautological explanation for the success or failure of the innovation. With the former, leaders must be outstanding visionaries who manage to get everyone involved in decision-making and all staff are well-informed and committed to the change. With the latter, a lack of support from staff may indicate an imperfect understanding of the innovation; if only they had understood the innovation, everything would have proceeded smoothly. This approach means that failure can always be blamed on the leadership and/or teacher reaction without acknowledging other aspects of the situation.

In seeking a simple explanation for the failure of this innovation, it would be very easy to suggest that, had the principal of Matai School carried out his leadership role differently, the implementation process would have been more successful. It would be equally easy to attribute the lack of progress to the teachers' behaviour. But either

explanation would be to take a very simplistic and rather naïve approach to the matter. In the case of the leadership, the principal was an able, well-intentioned and committed principal who worked very hard to implement the innovation. He was well-supported by his deputy in this effort. In the case of the staff, the teachers were, it appeared, a typical group of New Zealand teachers working hard to achieve positive learning outcomes for their students. This was a staff that began the innovation with a positive attitude to the change and a commitment to make it work. It was only as they began to grapple with the operational implications of that commitment that their resolve began to weaken. It would be both inaccurate and unfair to attribute the failure of the innovation entirely to the actions or inactions of either group.

Increasingly, as I pursued my analysis of these two factors of leadership and teacher reaction to the changes, the data convinced that there was another factor at play in this case. It had to do with the sheer complexity and scale of the innovation that was being attempted at Matai School. It seems to have been a case of the challenge being greater than anticipated for the staff of Matai School. The data indicated that the school members were setting out to do something that was more than they could cope with. Unfortunately, the case study methodology to which I was committed permitted only a descriptive analysis of this additional factor rather than any more ambitious theory building.

4. The Nature of the Middle Schooling Concept

Throughout the developing case study, members of Matai School made a number of references to the size and complexity of this particular innovation. These comments were supported by comments from the staff at Rimu and Kauri Schools. These latter schools with their greater years of middle schooling experience were able to reflect on the change processes they had followed. Both schools identified the nature of the middle schooling concept itself as a factor which had impacted significantly on their implementation processes.

The educational change and innovation literature has little to say on the nature of innovations and how this might impact on how the innovations are implemented. Rather, as previously discussed, theories tend to focus on the process of innovation

rather than on the nature of the innovation itself. The review found that the literature tends to treat all innovations as having a common set of implementation requirements. The middle schooling literature was not much more helpful. The only references sourced that made any reference to the unusually demanding nature of the concept were Brown and Saltman (2005) and Lesko (2005). However, these writers only made passing reference to the unusual nature of the middle schooling innovation and the demands this placed on schools.

Despite the lack of supporting literature, it is my contention, supported by the experiences of Matai School and the two other established middle schools, that the unusually complex nature of the middle schooling concept had significant impact on the implementation process.

4.1. Complexity of the Middle Schooling Concept

The complexity of the concept is two-fold. Firstly, it lies in the multiple elements of the concept. Secondly, the complexity of this innovation is greatly increased by the conditions needed to support the adoption and implementation processes and the success and longevity of the concept.

4.1.1. Multiple Elements of the Concept

The main elements of the concept are:

- Team teaching.
- Integrated, multi-disciplinary curriculum.
- Co-operative, student centred and initiated learning.
- Flexible scheduling.

Team teaching requires groups of teachers to teach a shared group of student who are usually of the same year level. Team teaching requires teachers to work collaboratively, sharing the planning, teaching, evaluation and pastoral care of the group of students. Effective team teaching also involves peer observations and critique of teaching styles to improve practice. These are conditions which many teachers are not used to and are not comfortable with. My teaching and school leadership experience indicates that there are few teachers who really enjoy this type of teaching and even fewer who are really

good at it. Team teaching is something for which professional development is rarely offered. Rather, in most cases, schools have to develop their own models and practices by a process of trial and error. On top of these conditions, the staff of Matai School did not get the opportunity to decide whether they would like to be part of team teaching; rather, adopting the concept meant that all teachers had to become team teachers.

Integrated curriculum is a curriculum approach which is currently in favour in educational circles (Beane, 1990). But it is something which is easier to defend in the abstract than it is to prescribe in operational terms. Integrated curriculum requires teachers to think in a holistic way about curriculum intentions and outcomes in order to make connections between subject areas around a central theme. It is based on the assumption that we do not think and use information in discrete subject areas, but rather, solve problems in life by using knowledge from across many disciplines. Proponents of integrated teaching argue that teaching and learning should be founded on integrated principles. But teaching through an integrated curriculum is very demanding in practice and is an approach that many teachers are uncomfortable with as evidenced in the experiences of the case study school and the two established middle schools. Many teachers tend to argue that a subject approach to teaching allows them to give students a more thorough grounding in the principles of each subject area. Requiring teachers to use integrated curriculum in team teaching places many additional challenges, stresses and pressures on teachers which they would not experience with innovations that can be managed within the individual classroom.

The middle schooling concept also requires that teaching and learning be co-operative and student-initiated. Co-operative student learning complements the principles of team teaching and integrated curriculum which are based on the notion of learning being a joint activity requiring people to work together to make connections between their learning (Erb, 2000). Co-operative learning requires students to work with other students on most facets of their learning. The middle schooling concept also requires students to play a major role in the direction of their own learning. This means that students are to be involved in the planning and setting of their own learning objectives and success criteria, and the monitoring and review of their own progress. For most teachers, this level of student-initiated learning and co-operative learning is something they have not experienced before and for which they are often ill equipped. Not only are

they often ill prepared and require substantial professional development for this type of teaching, but many teachers do not wish to relinquish their control of the students' learning in the way they must with student-initiated learning.

The fourth central tenet of middle schooling is flexible timetabling. Flexible timetabling involves the use of different periods of time on different days of the week to accommodate the extended periods of time required for integrated curriculum. Flexible timetabling requires teachers to work in with the rest of their team, and possibly other teams, to negotiate timetables and use of teaching spaces that suit all members involved. In my experience, student-initiated integrated curriculum also involves teachers being flexible enough to change timetables at short notice. Not all teachers are comfortable with this level of uncertainty and flexibility.

Each of these four concept principles brings its own demands, but when all four innovations are combined, as is required with the middle schooling concept, the demands are greatly magnified. It is this level of complexity and demand which makes implementing the middle schooling concept particularly challenging.

4.1.2. Conditions Required to Support the Concept

These concept elements are made even more challenging by the demanding conditions that are necessary to support the middle implementation process and foster and sustain the life of the innovation. In particular, middle schooling implementation:

- Is whole-school change which requires major change to beliefs and values as well as practices.
- Involves the implementation of multiple, interconnected innovations.
- Requires major structural and cultural change.
- Requires a high level of interest and operational commitment from all staff members for the life of the innovation.
- Requires a high level of support and interest from the parents.
- Requires supportive and appropriate infrastructures.

Middle schooling change is whole-school change (Chadbourne, 2001; Dickinson, 2001). It requires all members of staff to make major changes to both their thinking and

actions. It also requires all staff members, or at the very least all members of a teaching team, to make these simultaneously. Middle schooling is founded on the central tenets of collaboration, shared leadership, peer review and critique, and joint planning, teaching and assessment. These tenets challenge the traditional beliefs and values of many teachers. In particular, they challenge the often-held beliefs of teachers that teaching is an individual activity that stands alone and which can take place largely unaffected by what the other teachers do. Most teachers are not used to this requirement of such a high level of collaboration, sharing and interaction and are challenged by it. Not only are many challenged by it, they frequently do not know how to collaborate. This study showed that it could be a mistake to assume that teachers want to collaborate and that they know how to. The staff at Matai School demonstrated that a significant number of them did not wish to work collaboratively and that they also did not know how to and both Rimu and Kauri Schools reinforced the assertion that getting staff to work collaboratively had been an on-going challenge.

Getting them [the teachers] to work together has been an uphill battle. They [the teachers] say they want to, but when you look at what they are actually doing, much of it is hardly collaborative. They talk to each other occasionally, maybe plan a bit, but most of the team meetings are about student care, that sort of stuff, not about shared teaching (DP Rimu School, DPR2581).

They want us to work together, in our teams that is, but not all of us want to and some of us older ones find it really difficult. The younger ones are all enthusiastic, want to try this and that, but we just want to get on with teaching the kids (Teacher Rimu School, TR2744).

We've tried working together, planning and teaching but it takes so much extra time. All the meetings, all the talking, we could have spent that time better getting on with teaching our own students (Teacher Kauri School, TRK3523).

Few other innovations require all the members of a staff to make comprehensive changes to their beliefs, values and professional practice. It has been argued (Evans,

1996; Sarason, 1990), that we never make significant change to our values, that we form and hold values for our lifetime. If this is the case, then attempting to take up an innovation like middle schooling may never be truly successful because there is a high likelihood that, for some of the teachers at least, there will always be a dissonance between their values and those of the innovations they are being required to implement.

The multi-faceted, interconnected nature of middle schooling makes demands on school staff at a level few other innovations require. In particular, this feature affects planning, sequencing of changes, pace of change, and the encouragement and support of teachers through the changes. Matai School staff appeared to be unaware of the scale of the commitment, the complexity of the change itself, or the length of time the implementation might take when they began their implementation process. They became more aware of the demanding nature of the innovation only over time.

Both Rimu and Kauri School staff also commented on the size and complexity of the concept and how this affected the pace of change and their on-going enthusiasm and interest levels through the process.

It [the middle schooling concept] is really complex. I don't know that you can fully understand that at the beginning, not until you get into it and then it just hits you, well it did us. This thing is a huge demanding beast that can sap all your energy and commitment (Principal Rimu School, PR2399).

It is huge, there is so much to change, you don't really realise that when you start. And you can only change things slowly because it is just too much to ask of most teachers. So that means you are in a constant state of change for many years (DP Kauri School, DPK3470).

The complexity of this particular innovation is further exacerbated by the need to develop a shared understanding of the concept rationale and principles and how it will be operationalised in the school and in the classrooms. The review of the middle schooling literature found that the middle schooling concept has a history of being poorly articulated. The review also showed that not only are the definitions vague and simplistic, but that they are incomplete and perhaps even misleading. In particular, they

overlook the complex nature of the concept and how this impacts on implementation. These definitions take limited account of the size, scope and challenges of adopting an innovation of this nature, and they take an unrealistic view of the nature of schools and the abilities of teachers. While the success of any educational innovation rests on the ability of staff members to understand, interpret and operationalise the innovation within classrooms (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1995), this requirement is made all the more difficult for middle school implementers because of the lack of clear concept definition.

The middle schooling concept also presents challenges which most other innovations do not face, when it requires schools to make both major structural and cultural change, often concurrently. The major structural changes include the teaming of students, flexible timetabling, and sometimes to the provision of new buildings with flexible teaching spaces. The major cultural changes include teachers working together in teams using inter-disciplinary, and co-operative and exploratory teaching methods. Collaboration under the middle schooling concept not only pertains to teachers, but it also means high levels of student involvement in their own learning and in school and community affairs. These structural and cultural requirements are of a much higher order than those required by most other innovations.

School-based innovations, however complex, do not take place in isolation from other pressures and expectations. These innovations will need to be managed alongside the welter of new and continuing requirements that any school must cope with. This means that teachers involved in the middle schooling implementation process will be required to live with a very high level of change and the resulting uncertainty, risk and pressure. The experiences of Matai School showed that not all teachers are able to handle high levels of change and pressure. At Matai School, the high levels of pressure resulted in teacher apathy, lack of progress and resistance. It should also be remembered that the Matai School staff was only two years into the implementation process by the end of the research period. If, as some commentators (McKay, 1995) suggest, the middle schooling process can take up to seven to ten years to implement, it is reasonable to wonder how the Matai School teachers were going to be able to cope with the level of change and pressure over such a long period. It is my contention that few other educational innovations require such high levels of concurrent structural and cultural change to be made. The experiences of Rimu and Kauri Schools were similar to those of

Matai with regard to the difficulties of implementing concurrent structural and cultural change.

The hardest part is knowing where to start. Do you start with structural change like teaming or do you address cultural issues first? The literature isn't much help. Some [writers] say one thing and the others say something else (Principal Rimu School, PR2313).

We started with teaming and I think that was a good choice. But on looking back I don't think we did enough about the cultural changes you need to support teaming. We just kind of thought they could work it out for themselves (DP Kauri School, DPK3368).

Successful middle schooling implementation requires high levels of interest and operational commitment from all members of staff. It cannot function well if only some of the teachers make the commitment. This is a requirement that few other innovations make. As argued, the nature of the concept principles and the inter-connected nature of this innovation mean that all teachers have to work together in teams. The success of the implementation process is heavily reliant on all member of each team moving in the same direction, at approximately the same pace. While some staff members may not be fully convinced of the benefits of middle schooling or some of the principles, it is important that change leaders secure the commitment of all teachers to the proposed changes. This does not mean that they must necessarily believe in the changes, but they must make the commitment to put them in place and not sabotage the efforts of the other staff members. The differing levels of teacher interest and commitment were very evident in Matai School. Both Rimu and Kauri Schools said that their implementation processes had also been hindered by this factor.

It is really difficult to get everyone moving along together. Some of the teachers are just naturally enthusiastic and agreeable and some of them are the hesitant kind who want to know every eventuality before they will start anything (Principal Rimu School, PR2479).

Some of the teachers almost went out of their way to hold it [the implementation process] up. We had some who weren't overly in favour of

the changes so they were forced to do them and some of them protested and held everything up for those that wanted to get on. I don't really know what you do about that. But it sure has made for some headaches and unpleasantness (DP Rimu School, DPR2810).

It's been really heavy going at times. In my team, three of the five teachers have been really enthusiastic, worked well, great value. But the other two, they are not so keen and they hold the rest of the team back (Team Leader Kauri School, TLK3720).

With middle schooling it is also necessary to sustain a high level of interest and operational commitment for the life of the innovation (Raebeck, 1998). The initial commitment to adopt middle schooling is simply the first step. Equally challenging is the daily re-affirmation of this commitment over the life of the innovation. Middle schooling will face many challenges to its viability during its lifespan. These challenges will take the form of the need to train and win the commitment of every newly appointed member of staff, the need to sustain a higher-than-average work load of each teacher in perpetuity, the need to ensure that the innovation remains the number one priority for most whole-of-school effort, and the fact that the innovation falls outside the mainstream means that it will need to be able to endure criticism. Few innovations will meet with so many on-going threats to their continued success or will require such high levels of commitment to sustain them. While Matai School had not reached the point where this was an issue, Both Rimu and Kauri Schools spoke of the difficulties of this requirement.

We are really conscious that middle schooling could easily die here, because of the pressure from the other schools around. Most of them, well really all of them would be only too pleased to see us belly up (Principal Rimu School, PR2937).

We always try to employ new young teachers. It is much easier to convince them of the values of middle schooling than older teachers. Once you have done that they are really enthusiastic and energetic and [they] push the rest of their team along. They are great value (DP Kauri School, DPK3589).

Some of the team don't really want to do this [middle schooling], and they make it hard for those of us that do. They always put up barriers and make things more difficult than they really are. Even when we think we have agreed to do something, they often don't get it done or they are really slow and that holds us all up. It can be really frustrating. We have to do these things together or it won't work (Teacher Rimu School, TR2015).

Not only does successful middle schooling require the support and operational commitment of all staff, it also requires a high level of interest and commitment from the parent community. This is a relatively unusual requirement for school-based change. A great many educational innovations are not dependent on the support of their parent community. Innovations such as the introduction of a new maths programme, or a new way of organising the school timetable may be implemented with very little parental awareness, knowledge or support. However, because middle schooling is a whole-school change drawing on a challenging set of beliefs and values about education, and because in New Zealand it is a chosen, rather than a mandated change, parental support is vital to its success.

Matai School was not required to gain parental interest to make the decision to become a middle school because it was a middle school in name already. During the two years of the case study the school did very little to gain and foster parental interest. On the other hand, both Rimu and Kauri Schools had had to gain parental interest and support in order to make the decision to adopt the concept.

We had to work really hard to get parent interest. There was a lot of bad press and negativity going round from the other schools, so we had to work extra hard to convince the parents that middle schooling would be the best thing for their children (Principal Rimu School, PR2136).

It wasn't easy. The parents were torn between what they knew and something they knew little about...well there aren't many examples in New Zealand for them to look to. They knew they didn't like what intermediates had to offer but they weren't sure about taking a risk on something they knew little about (DP Rimu School, DPR2502).

Our parents weren't that interested. We wanted them to be, but they just sat back pretty much except for a few who made a bit of noise. It was really hard to get them along to talk with so in the end the board pretty much made the decision for them (Principal Kauri School, PK3363).

Sustaining parental commitment to the middle schooling concept for the life of the innovation is a further challenge few other innovations are required to face. This requirement necessitates special considerations because long-term parental interest and commitment is likely to be tested in several ways. The parent community is an ever-changing body as children enter and leave a school. The ever-changing parent body also means that there has to be an on-going programme of parent recruitment and training for the involvement they are to have in the school. In order to sustain interest in the middle schooling through parent changes, it is necessary to run an on-going information and education programme (Baker, 2000; NMSA, 2001). This can be a costly, demanding and time consuming task. Baker (2000) reports that her research shows that it is difficult to maintain parent interest and involvement in middle level education because of the inherent tensions between teachers and parents, lack of parent knowledge about how they can be involved, insufficient time in teachers' timetables for parent involvement, and lack of teacher training in working with families.

Parental interest and commitment to middle schooling is also likely to be tested by pressure from other schools. The current free market policy of schooling in New Zealand has seen aggressive school marketing to attract and retain pupils. This was a issue for Rimu School.

We have to keep working really hard on our parents because if we don't they will go to the other schools and middle schooling here will die. So we keep up a constant program of parent education and we try to encourage them into the school at every opportunity to show them what we are doing (Principal Rimu School, PR2255).

A final characteristic that sets middle schooling apart from other innovations is its need for supportive and appropriate infrastructures. Middle schooling is founded on the concepts of team teaching and integrated, exploratory curriculum. Team teaching and

integrated curriculum require supportive and appropriate systems such as flexible scheduling and collective teaching and meeting spaces. Successful adoption of these principles also requires regular, on-going professional development, and in-school time for collective planning, review and assessment of work. Each of these requirements has significant funding and resourcing implications. While most innovations have some funding and resourcing implications, particular in the early phases of implementation, the successful implementation of middle schooling requires large amounts of money to sustain on-going professional development, teacher release time, and finance for appropriate joint teaching spaces. Matai School struggled with budget constraints that did not allow them to adequately finance teacher release time for team planning. They also struggled to finance changes to working spaces that would have supported team teaching. Rimu and Kauri Schools' experiences also concurred with the need for high levels of funding to support successful middle schooling.

We haven't really had enough money to fund decent professional development. And we could have done more if we had had money to bring in relief teachers so that teams could have had more planning time. We have made do...but I think we would have made more progress if we had had these things (DP Kauri School, DPK3711).

Things haven't been ideal. We are team teaching without our classrooms even being beside each other. We try to share resources and this is hopeless across two blocks. We really need more time for planning, talking to each other if they want teaming to work (Team Leader Rimu School, TR2842).

Not only do schools have to grapple with all the demands outlined above, but in New Zealand they have to do it virtually on their own, without guidance from literature and other school's experiences, but also in the absence of help and support from educational agencies such as the Ministry of Education. With middle schooling being such a new educational phenomenon in New Zealand there are few schools to turn to for comprehensive advice as most New Zealand middle schools are still in the process of becoming middle schools. Therefore, schools like Matai, Rimu and Kauri have all moved to become middle schools in a relatively isolated and unsupported manner.

While each of these schools sought advice from established overseas middle schools, they had little help and guidance from New Zealand sources. The management of all three schools commented on the loneliness of their implementation processes.

It has been quite a lonely process. We have been on our own most of the way. It would have been really good to have had other principals to talk to, share experiences with, just ask for help (Principal Rimu School, PR259).

I would have liked to have been able to visit other middle schools, see what they were doing, see how they handled things, got some advice. We had to sort out our own problems, make our own way. It has been really hard work and we aren't even there yet (DP Kauri School, DPK336).

Hopefully, the lack of guidance and support from New Zealand educational agencies is going to change. There are signs from the Ministry of Education (Benson, Senior Manager of Learning Policy Framework, personal interview, 11 December, 2003) and the New Zealand Association for Intermediates and Middle Schools (NZAIMS) (Sweeney, President NZAIMS, personal interview, 3 March, 2004) that things are changing. The Ministry of Education is indicating that they are interested in considering and supporting alternative education systems for middle years students. NZAIMS is also working to build up a support system for all forms of middle level education.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that leadership and teacher reaction to change offer some explanation as to why Matai School and also Kauri and Rimu Schools met many challenges and difficulties when implementing the middle schooling concept. However, it has also been argued that there appears to be a third factor that impacts significantly on the middle schooling implementation process and that is the complex and demanding nature of the middle schooling concept. In particular, the case school and the two established middle against which the case school's experiences were compared, all found the middle schooling concept to have two levels of complexity which made implementation particularly difficult. The first level of complexity lay in the multiple, integrated elements of the concept. The main elements of the concept are: team teaching; integrated, multi-disciplinary curriculum; co-operative, student centred and

initiated learning; and flexible scheduling. The second level of complexity comprised the additional conditions that are needed to support the adoption and implementation processes and the success and longevity of the concept. These conditions relate to the need to gain and sustain staff and parent interest, commitment and energy for the life of the innovation, and the need for appropriate infrastructures in a school.

The different nature of innovations and how this may impact on implementation processes is a factor which the educational change literature does not appear to acknowledge as being of importance, but which this study found to be noteworthy.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

1. Introduction

This final chapter draws on the case findings and discussion of the previous chapters in order to identify the conclusions that this study has to make about the middle schooling implementation process. It also discusses the implications these key lessons have for other schools which may wish to implement the middle schooling concept. This final chapter also comments on the contribution this study makes to the current body of middle schooling literature, reviews the research methodology used and makes recommendations for further research.

2. The Research Questions

The research was guided by two main research questions:

- How did this school implement the middle schooling concept?
- How might this experience illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling?

This study found that the case school encountered many difficulties and challenges when implementing the middle schooling concept. As a consequence of these barriers, they made slow progress with their implementation process. The number of challenges and the level of difficulty these challenges presented was something the school members had neither envisaged nor were prepared for.

The challenges centred on three main factors: leadership, teacher reaction to the changes, and the complex, demanding nature of the middle schooling concept. The main leadership challenges concerned vision building and sharing, changing the school culture to a more collaborative and shared approach to both teaching and leadership, and building and maintaining staff interest and commitment to the innovation and the change process. The teacher behaviour challenges centred on difficulty developing a shared understanding and vision for the concept, reluctance to commit to the concept and the changes this would involve, and reluctance to work together as a team.

During the course of the study a third factor emerged as having a significant impact on the implementation process. This was the complex and very demanding nature of the middle schooling concept. The case school found that this innovation was like no other they had implemented. They found the size, the integrated nature of the concept, and length of time it was going to take to implement the innovation daunting and, for some staff members, overwhelming.

The second research question asked how the experiences of the case school might illuminate the experience of other schools attempting to implement middle schooling. The experiences of the case school highlighted several significant points about the middle schooling implementation process. These points are drawn together in the following two sections.

3. Conclusions about the Middle Schooling Implementation Process

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that middle school implementation is an uncommonly complex and demanding process. In particular, the case study identified five key requirements that middle school implementers need to consider in order to implement the concept successfully. Failure to consider any of these requirements is likely to threaten the success of the innovation. The five requirements are:

- The need to develop a shared understanding of the concept rationale and principles and how these will be operationalised within the school;
- The need to develop a shared understanding of the complex, multi-faceted and integrated nature of the innovation and how this will impact on and influence the implementation process;
- The need for strong, visionary, shared leadership;
- The need to gain the interest and operational commitment of the entire staff and a high level of interest and commitment from the parent community, and the need to sustain this for the life of the innovation; and
- The need to develop supportive and appropriate infrastructures within the school to support the innovation.

Review of the middle schooling literature found that the middle school concept has a history of the principles being poorly articulated. This means that each school has to develop their own understanding of how they will operationalise the principles into their own particular context. The case study demonstrated that failure to develop a clearly articulated, shared understanding of the concept at the beginning of the implementation process can lead to difficulties with vision building, planning, decision-making and the collectively actioning of the principles. This study also found that it is necessary to adopt a flexible approach to developing an understanding of the concept and that schools need to be prepared to amend the understanding in light of experiences and knowledge gained in the course of the implementation process. To do this it is advisable to revisit and review the understanding on a regular basis.

This study found that not only must all school members share an understanding of the concept rationale and principles, but it is also critical that all members of the staff be fully cognisant of the complex and demanding nature of this particular innovation. In particular, staff members need to understand that this innovation is going to require changes to both their beliefs and actions on a scale which most other innovations do not require. Staff members also need to be aware that for the innovation to succeed, there must be alignment between the beliefs and values of the school and the staff and the values of the innovation. For some people this may mean having to make significant change. Staff members also need to develop an awareness of the implications the size and complexity of this innovation have for the timing, pace and possible duration of the full change process. Schools need to carefully consider how they are going to foster and support cultural change, especially the move to collaborative practice, and what they are going to do with teachers who may find this kind of change difficult or impossible.

The need for strong, visionary and, preferably, shared leadership was identified as being critical to successful implementation because the particular demands of this innovation require leadership that can translate the large list of requirements and expectations into practice. Shared leadership is preferable for this task because it aligns with the values of the concept and reinforces the collaborative beliefs of the concept. It also spreads and shares the large number of high level of leadership demands this innovation makes of school members.

The study also identified the need to gain the interest and commitment of all staff as an important factor to successful implementation. The case study found that failure to be aware of and to consciously work at gaining and maintaining the teachers' support and operational commitment greatly hindered the implementation process. This requirement also signals the need for school leaders to be aware that teacher resistance is a natural element of educational change and that they need to develop ways to acknowledge and work with teachers in order to implement the concept successfully. Successful implementation of the middle schooling concept in New Zealand also requires schools to gain and maintain a high level of interest and support from their parent community in order to resist pressure from both parents and other schools to return to a more traditional approach to education. The study found that it is one thing to get the innovation up and running, but that it takes a lot of energy and commitment to maintain the momentum. Failure to do so can mean that the innovation will atrophy and die. School leaders need to be aware that they will have to work at maintaining both staff and parent interest for the life of the innovation in order for it to survive.

The final requirement that this study identified as being critical to successful middle schooling implementation was the need for supportive and appropriate systems and infrastructures within the school. The middle schooling concept is founded on the concepts of team teaching and integrated, exploratory curriculum. Both team teaching and integrated curriculum require supportive and appropriate systems such as flexible scheduling and collective teaching and meeting spaces. The provision of appropriate teaching spaces has large funding implications for schools.

Given the high level of demand identified in these five requirements, it could be argued that middle schooling implementation is impossibly difficult and should not even be attempted. This thesis does not argue that position. Rather it contends that middle schooling is more complex and demanding than most other school-based innovations, and as such places demands on implementers that few other innovations make. It also contends that if potential implementers are aware of these requirements and the implications they have for practice, they will then have a better chance of achieving a positive outcome.

4. Implications for Middle Schooling Implementers

Each of the five requirements identified above has implications for the people who have the task of implementing the concept. The first requirement, the need for school communities to establish a shared understanding of both the concept rationale and principles and how they will be operationalised in their school, raises important issues of how much understanding the staff need to begin the process and who should be involved in the development of this understanding. This study has shown that school communities need to take sufficient time at the beginning of the implementation process to articulate, with the full staff, how they are going to operationalise at least the three central principles: teaming, integrated, exploratory curriculum, and flexible timetabling, in their school. This study also showed that it is important to involve all members of the staff in this process and the parents in at least some parts of the articulation process so that they develop an interest and commit to the innovation.

Prospective implementers need to be aware that establishing a shared understanding of the concept may take time, but as the experiences of the case study school showed, failure to establish this understanding at the beginning of the implementation process can mean misunderstandings, frustrations and teacher resistance throughout the implementation process. In association with discussions about the meaning of the concept, the full staff needs to be involved in discussions about not only the structural changes required by the concept, but also the cultural changes required. In particular, staff members need to ensure they do not assume that teachers know how to collaborate. Rather, they need to talk about collaboration, what it is, and in particular, what it will look like in their school and in their teams. It may also be necessary to access professional development on collaboration to assist teams to collaborate successfully. In order to ensure that the teachers' understanding of the concept aligns with their practice, staff should consider putting in place some form of regular review process that would check whether the teachers' espoused theories align with their theories-in-action. Initial conversations about the cultural changes required should take place before the implementation process commences.

The main implication for the second requirement, to develop an understanding of the nature of this innovation, is that adopters of the middle school concept need to be fully

cognisant of the size and demands of the concept before they embark on the implementation process. Full understanding of the demands of this innovation should make implementers aware of the need to set realistic expectations and timeframes for the implementation process. It should also prepare implementers to make informed decisions about the teachers' readiness for change and the pace of change. Awareness of the complexity of this innovation should also signal the need to consider whether the use of an action plan would help to focus and give direction to the implementation process. Awareness of the extent of the changes required with this innovation should also signal the need for careful consideration of the ordering and sequencing of the required changes. In particular, schools need to consider whether to commence the change process with structural or cultural change or possibly both at the same time.

The third requirement for successful middle school implementation is visionary, shared leadership. The experiences of the case study school demonstrated that in order to be visionary about the middle schooling implementation process, it is necessary to first have a clear understanding of the principles of the concept. This observation reinforces the point that schools need to take time at the beginning of the implementation process to establish a clearly articulated understanding of the rationale and at least the central tenets of middle schooling. The study also showed that establishing and maintaining shared leadership can be challenging and time consuming. It appears that for shared leadership to work, school members need to consider how they can give teachers time out of the classroom for these activities. It may also be necessary to consider the use of incentives and rewards such as release time and professional development, to sustain the shared leadership responsibilities. These kinds of rewards and incentives have funding implications. School members also need to consider contingency plans for when there are changes to key staff members, as there will be over such a long change process. This makes it very important to be continually training new people to take on shared leadership roles.

The issue of principal continuity was highlighted by the case study. The schools involved in the study all spoke of the need to plan for principal succession given that there are few middle school principals in New Zealand. Schools may need to consider training and mentoring potential leaders from within their own schools for principal succession. A further way to alleviate this situation would be for the existing New

Zealand middle schools to collaborate in recognising that this is a shared problem and by running a joint management professional development programme. The requirement to develop and foster staff interest and commitment in the concept and to sustain this for the life of the innovation places huge demands on school staff. The experiences of the case study school suggest that if school members do not carefully articulate what they understand the concept to mean in their school and only have a set of vague expectations, then this is likely to be a trigger for lack of teacher interest and possible apathetic and/or negative behaviour. Clarity and focus appear to be two key drivers for developing and maintaining teacher interest and commitment to the implementation process.

The experiences of the case school and the two established schools demonstrated that the middle schooling implementation process is likely to meet with some forms and degrees of teacher resistance at various stages throughout the process. How this is handled will reflect greatly on the progress of the implementation process. School members need to consider how they will deal with teachers who cannot, or who choose not to, make the necessary changes and, in doing so, hold back the implementation process of the whole team.

It may take as long as seven to ten years to implement the middle schooling concept. This is a very long time over which to sustain teacher interest, given that there is likely to be a considerable turnover of staff members during this period. School communities have to consider how they will build and maintain staff interest and commitment during the change period. They also have to sustain teacher interest for the life of the innovation in order to prevent the innovation withering and dying. The use of rewards and incentives, such as release time and professional development, may be one way to sustain teacher commitment. However, this study found that accessing professional development on middle schooling in New Zealand is difficult. This means that schools may have to access the services of private educational consultants or look to experiences and research from overseas. Australian middle schooling experience and expertise is building up at a much faster pace than that in New Zealand, so this is likely to be a useful source of professional development for developing New Zealand middle schools. However, these professional development options have funding implications for schools.

This study identified the need to gain and sustain parental interest as a key requirement for successful middle schooling implementation. The two established middle schools in the study found that to do this it was important to put in place on-going parent education programs and to offer frequent opportunities for the parent community to be involved in important decision-making and planning.

The study also highlighted the need for a regular review process that would monitor progress and highlight future actions needed to keep the implementation process focused and moving forwards. Preferably, this review process should be formulated at the beginning of the implementation process and be flexible to the direction and focus of the implementation process. A regular review process should be scheduled on an at least term-by-term basis in the early stages of the implementation process and then be moved out to half-yearly after about the first two years of implementation.

The final key requirement, the need to develop supportive and appropriate structures, highlights the need for new middle schools to be, at the least, semi-autonomous from other schooling structures so that they have a high level of control over budgets and staff selection and placement. The study also highlighted the need for schools to consider the types of buildings they ask their staff to team teach in. The experiences of the case study school showed that it is very difficult to team teach successfully without classrooms that are grouped together and without meeting spaces for the teachers. The experience of the case study school and the two established middle schools identified the need for in-class teacher release time for joint teacher planning and assessment as being very important. The teachers felt that they needed at least one-and-a-half hours per week per teacher to be able to do this successfully. This requires high levels of teacher release, which has funding implications.

The principal of the case study school identified external support for the principal as being very important during change of this size. He said that ideally this support would have come from principals of established middle schools. This is not an easy requirement to meet given the limited number of middle schools in New Zealand and the location of these schools. However, as has been suggested, some form of joint

middle school management programme could offer support and guidance to both aspiring and established middle school leaders.

5. The Contribution this Study makes to the Body of Knowledge on Middle Schooling

This study contributes to the very limited body of New Zealand-based literature on middle schooling implementation by providing prospective implementers with a study of one school's experiences and the lessons learnt about implementing middle schooling within the New Zealand schooling structure. In particular, it is hoped that this single case study, supported by the experiences of two other middle schools, has highlighted and provided some insight into the challenges other schools are likely to meet as they implement middle schooling. It is hoped that this insight will alert and prepare potential implementers to the key issues they need to consider both before they make the final decision to adopt the concept and during the implementation process.

6. Review of the Research Methodology

Decisions about the research method channelled and limited my conduct of the research and the line of inquiry. The original intention of the study was to carry out action research, but this was not possible. In retrospect, action research was probably never a viable option with this school.

When it was found that action research was unsustainable in the case school, the study was reframed as grounded theory. This shift was made to allow me to explore the notion that the nature of the middle schooling concept may have been a key factor in the success or failure of this innovation. However, a single case study could not support a robust grounded theory largely because the single case provided limited comparative data on which to base a challenging theory about middle schooling implementation. At this point the decision was made to re-interpret all of the gathered data as a simple case study of a school in change.

Single case methodology proved to be a more appropriate methodology for the purpose of the study. In particular, case study methodology served to identify and illuminate the

many decisions this school had to make when implementing change of this nature. It also identified the many challenges middle schooling implementation presented to the school members and how they attempted to resolved these issues.

However, the single case study approach was not without its limitations. Despite the decision to take a less interventionist role than that employed in action research, the case study school still wished to direct and control my data gathering through the last fourteen months of the study to meet their own need for feedback on the implementation process.

While it had been agreed at the beginning of the research period that data would be gathered not only from staff members but also from parents and students, this did not transpire to any large degree. It had been my original intention to interview and survey parents and students throughout the research period to ascertain their role in the implementation process and their thoughts and feelings towards what they were experiencing. This did not happen because the management of Matai School decided that they would like the early stages of the research to concentrate primarily on the experiences of the staff members with the intent of gradually introducing parental and student input into the study. While the study did include some parental data gathering in the first six months of the study, this did not continue because school management decided that they would like my assistance with helping them to understand the experiences of the staff who, by this time, were beginning to show the first signs of reluctance and frustration with the change process. This management directive limited my ability to be able to investigate and present a fuller account of the schools' implementation process experiences.

This study has highlighted some of the significant difficulties and limitations of using a research methodology which relies on the use of a researcher who is from outside the organisation being studied. Researchers in this position can be limited by access to participants, lack of control over the direction of the research and feelings of isolation. Each of these conditions can make outside researcher studies very difficult.

The slow pace of the implementation process also compromised the research design. While the length of the research period was two years, the slower than expected pace of

the change process at the school meant that I did not get to witness the establishment of the major middle school systems and processes. The only changes put in place during the research period were team teaching and the beginnings of integrated curriculum. It would have been very useful to see how they handled subsequent changes and the interconnections and integration these required with team teaching and integrated curriculum. A longer study period would also have enabled me to see how the school members involved the parents in middle schooling and how they managed to sustain the change process and challenges like repeated changes in staff members.

The use of a single case is always limiting in that the findings of the case cannot be generalised to a wider population. The thesis case study adopted Yin's (2003) and Bassey's (1999) position that the primary purpose of case study is to illuminate the experiences of others. Thus, the case study findings are expressed as generalisations in line with Bassey's fuzzy generalisations. These findings may resonate with the experiences of middle schooling implementation in other situations, but they should not be generalised to the wider population. However, the use of multi-cases of schools who were or had experienced the middle schooling implementation process would have made it possible to cross check the experiences of the case school with other schools to verify and confirm or refute the experiences. This approach would have strengthened the findings and made it more possible to apply them to a wider population.

The use of single case methodology also limited my ability to pursue more fully an interesting emerging trend in the findings. From quite early on in the research it was becoming apparent that it was the demanding nature of the innovation itself that was contributing to the problems the school was facing, as opposed to the more conventional explanations of a failure of leadership or teacher reaction to the changes. However, the single case methodology did not really allow me to explore this observation in any definitive way.

7. Further Research

This research challenged the assumption that all innovations have similar implementation requirements. This study demonstrated that middle schooling has a set of requirements that are particularly challenging. This finding raises the possibility that

the attributes of single innovations may be equally important in determining the success of their implementation as any standard set of process factors. As this finding has been made on the basis of a single case study it is worthy of further research to either confirm or refute this finding. Further research could employ multi-case study methodology, where the cases are chosen deliberately on the attributes of the innovations themselves but where, broadly speaking, common implementation strategies are employed. In order to consider the possible effect of the nature of the innovation on the implementation process, it would be interesting to examine a range of innovations that have already been implemented. The range should include whole-school and single class or syndicate innovations, small-scale change and complex, multi-faceted change such as middle schooling.

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APPENDIX 1

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN [REDACTED] School of [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] School")

AND MASSEY UNIVERSITY a body corporate established under the Massey University Act 1963 of Palmerston North, New Zealand, through the Graduate School of Education ("Massey").

BACKGROUND

1. This Memorandum of Understanding is to formalise the arrangements between the parties to conduct research on the development of the Middle School of [REDACTED] School, to be carried out by Margaret A. Brown, PhD candidate at Massey under the supervision of Associate Professor Pat Nolan, and Drs David Stewart and Jenny Poskitt.
2. Margaret Brown has been given approval by Massey University Human Ethics Committee to carry out the research as part of her PhD programme.

3. THE RESEARCH

- 3.1 Margaret Brown will conduct research, which monitors, analyses and reports the development of the Middle School at [REDACTED] School. The research will be a project carried out for [REDACTED] School, and will contribute to the PhD research of Margaret Brown at Massey University. It will culminate in a report for [REDACTED] School, and a PhD dissertation.

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCHER

Margaret Brown agrees to:

- Provide the Head of the Middle School with literature on middle schooling and school development theory;
- Participate in discussions about, and facilitate reflection on middle school concepts and precepts, and overseas research studies and experience;
- Design and implement data gathering procedures;
- Collect, collate and analyse the data;
- Ensure that research ethics are adhered to; and
- Regularly report to the school, and discuss the research findings with the school community.

3.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF [REDACTED] SCHOOL

[REDACTED] School agrees to:

- Grant the researcher free access to the school, staff meetings, classrooms, and selected documents;
- Release teachers and students for interviews and other data collection activities;
- Arrange the availability of parents to provide data and participate in other ways as appropriate; and



- Release the Head of Middle School for consultations and interviews and other research activities as appropriate.
- 3.4 Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall make either party liable for the actions of the other or constitute any partnership relationship between the parties.

4.0 PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

- 4.1 A Project Management Committee consisting of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Pat Nolan, Jenny Poskitt and Margaret Brown will be formed for the duration of the research. The Committee shall have the following responsibilities;
- a To oversee and give general direction to the research.
- 4.2. The Project Management Committee may consult such researchers, co-ordinators and related personnel as required for advisory purposes.
- 4.3 The Project Management Committee will meet at least six-monthly or as determined or required by either party.
- 4.4 The Project Management Committee may not interfere with the rights duties and obligations of the Parties.

5. FUNDING

The parties agree that they will share equally the cost of conducting the research. It is estimated that each party will pay approximately \$3,5000.

5. TERM OF THE AGREEMENT

It is mutually agreed that the research will formally commence on 1st February 2002 and continue to 31st July 2003, with data collection completed by this date. A date for submission of a final report to the school will be agreed during term 2 of the 2003 school year.

6. This understanding as to completion dates does not preclude the possibility of an ongoing relationship for the purposes of supporting and doing ongoing school development and research.

7. VARIATION

This Memorandum can only be varied by agreement in writing between the parties including agreement to terminate the relationship.

8. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 8.1 The Parties acknowledge that all materials produced in respect of the research (project materials) will be joint works being co-operatively produced by the Parties with input from each.



- 8.2 The Parties being joint authors of the project materials are entitled to the benefits of the moral rights provisions of the Copyright Act 1994.
- 8.3 In the event of any infringement or threatened infringement the parties agree to take proceedings jointly.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 Any Party shall treat as confidential, information which comes into its possession pursuant to, or as a result of, or in the performances of this agreement.
- 9.2 Any Party shall not, without the prior consent of the other:
- use any confidential information belonging to the other Party; or,
 - disclose any such confidential information to a third Party, other than for the purpose of carrying out this agreement.
- 9.3 Any Party shall on termination of this agreement return to the other forthwith any requested books, records, papers or other property belonging to the other party.
- 9.4 The operation of this clause shall survive the termination of this agreement but Clause 9.2 shall cease to apply in respect of any information which has been made public by either Party.

10. CONCERNS

The parties agree that where any concerns arise during the term of this agreement, they will first discuss them with each other with a view to resolving them.

DATED this eleventh day of March 2002

SIGNED for and on behalf of Massey University by:


Adrienne Cleland
Registrar
Massey University

In the presence of:



SIGNED for and on behalf of [REDACTED] School by:

[REDACTED] (BOT Chair)

In the presence of:

[REDACTED] (Principal)

APPENDIX 2

Transcript of Interview with Principal Matai School

Date: March 13th 2002

Purpose of Interview: To discuss Jim's values for the Middle School

M. As we agreed yesterday, we said we would talk about your values for the new school today and then at our next interview we will talk about how you plan to operationalise these values in your middle school.

J. Yes that sounds good. I've done quite a bit of thinking about this topic.

M. Ok so tell me what your values are.

J. My values for the middle school are not much different to how I think about teaching and schools of all kinds...well I guess there is more emphasis on collaboration for the middle school.

My first value is partnership. Partnership has always been a value of Matai School. It is in the prospectus and you hear people talking a lot about it. It is one of our Christian values. But I don't think it happens a lot in reality round this place. We give it lip service but our actions don't really show it.

I really want to build up a partnership between the teachers, between the 3 schools here at Matai, the teachers and the students and the teachers and the parents. Especially the teachers and the parents. I believe that is really crucial in a middle school, getting that parent involvement and support.

I've always tried to involve the parents, but there has been a bit of a reluctance here, well before I came and it is still here. Some, probably many of the teachers seem to view the parents as necessary evils rather than partners. But I want to change that and get parents involved and behind their kids education.

I also want to get the teachers working together a lot more. Working in partnership. That will come about by putting them into teams but I also want them to work across teams and with other teachers in the whole school.

I want to encourage a better partnership between the teachers and the students. At the moment it is pretty much I am the teacher and you are the student...I am going to tell you what you are going to learn. Well I want to change that and get the kids taking more responsibility for their own learning, get them planning lessons, evaluating that sort of stuff. I know some of the teachers are going to find that really hard. Letting go, letting the kids have some of the say, the control. But if we really want to make a change, give the kids every opportunity to achieve as we say we do, then we have to get them more involved.

(Jim answers phone)

Now where were we up to?

- M. You were telling me about your first value, partnership.
- J. Oh yes that's right...I think I have probably said all I want to say about that, except to say that I think partnership is a really core value underlying middle schooling.
- M. So what other values underpin your thinking about your new school?
- J. I guess my next most important, and they all tie back to partnership really, are respect and openness. These are things you would want to see in any teaching situation really, but I think they are really important in a middle school.
- M. Why is that?
- J. Well, effective middle schools rely on everyone working together, that's both physically and mentally. What I mean is...we live and work together in teams in a middle school. You don't have much space to yourself. You have to be with others most of the time. You can't shut yourself away in your own classroom in the way they used to. I want them to co-teach and peer review, all that kind of stuff. To live and work that close together you have to respect each other and be open and honest or it will never work.
- We are also going to plan together, we should involve the kids in the planning and teaching, what I mean is, students should have a real say in their education, be really involved, not just included occasionally. I know this is going to take some real doing. To be quite honest I don't know how some of our teachers are going to manage. But it is a value I have for the new school and hopefully we can work towards it.
- But to get kids involved we are going to have to show them that we trust and respect what they have to offer, treat them more like equals...well you know what I mean.
- I just wanted to say a bit more about openness. This place has been quite a closed book...people have kept to themselves, they're polite and all that sort of stuff, but they don't share their work, much about themselves really. I am going to try and change that...I will have to change that, encourage them to be more open if they are going to share and work together. I have no illusions, I know some of them will be difficult to change but I hope we can build up a climate in this place that makes them feel more comfortable and more able to be open. We will wait and see. Come back and ask me in a years time how we have progressed. (Laughing)
- M. So you have mentioned partnership, openness and trust, do you have any other values you would like to see underpinning what happens in the new school?
- J. I forgot to mention educating parents as part of my partnership value. I believe we have to educate parents so that they can support their kids learning

both here at school and at home. I would like us to hold classes about learning, maybe on some of the curriculum areas like maths. I think there would be real value in having speakers on topics like bringing up boys, educating boys. Yes, I am really interested in educating the parents more as well as having them around the school and particularly in the classes with their kids.

Another value would be honesty. I should have mentioned that with openness. But you have to have honesty with openness I believe. I feel people around here, well some of the people that is, say what they think they want me to hear and aren't really honest with me. I would rather hear what they really mean. I know it can hurt and be uncomfortable, but we can't make real progress, make change if we don't face up to some of the hard issues.

A parent wishing to speak with Jim interrupted the interview at this point. The interview was continued the next day.

APPENDIX 3

Staff Meeting Observations

23rd August 2002

Notes on section of meeting which dealt with the middle schooling development

Jim asked meeting how they are feeling about the MRS developments to date.

Replies:

- Y7T. - Going well / no problems
- Y8 - Teaming starting to work
- Y9 - Starting to happen - (teaming)
- Y8 - Nothing much happening really
- 103 Y9 - Need decent meeting rooms
- Y9 - Too many meetings like this on
- Y9 - Would be better if didn't have to teach in senior school as well.
- 34 Y7 - Need more time for joint planning - just haven't got time
- Y8 - Would be good to visit middle schools that are teaming to see / talk with other teachers
- Year 9 members agreed with this.

APPENDIX 4

Year 10 Team Meeting
21st March 2003

M- What role do you see for yourselves in the middle school?

- ① 11th place - we don't want to be part of it.
- ② He hasn't had much choice - no say in the matter.
- ④ We don't want to be part of the senior school - we are secondary teachers.
- ③ I don't really mind, but I would like to know more about what it would involve.
- ⑦ We're not interested in integrated curriculum.
- ③ Do we even know much about it? (Integrated curriculum).
- ② I don't want to be part of all the meetings they are having - we haven't got time.
- ③ I don't really know a lot about middle schooling - it might be ok if we knew more.
- ② I don't want to be part of their teams - I need flexibility I wouldn't have that.
- ⑦ Year 10 kids need the discipline "routine" of secondary school - they have to get ready for exams. I don't think middle school would prepare them for year 11 exams. You need to start preparing them for exams right from year 9. It is too late just to start in year 10.

APPENDIX 6

The Development of a Middle School: Parent Baseline Survey

We would like to find out what you know about middle schooling beliefs and practices so that we know what information to pass on to you. Please tick the circle that best fits your answer for each statement below. ☐

1. *How familiar are you with each of the following middle school beliefs?*

Familiar	Not At All Familiar	A Little Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar
a) Middle level students(Yrs 7-10) are a distinct group of students with needs that are different from both primary and secondary students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) These needs are best met in schools that are separate from other school levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Middle school students learn best when the curriculum is challenging, integrative and exploratory.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Middle schools need to have flexible timetables to best deliver a challenging, integrative curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Middle school students learn best when there is a high level of parent/ caregiver and community involvement in their learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. *How familiar are you with each of the following middle school teaching practices?*

a) Teaming of students and teachers- (the same group of students are assigned to a group of teachers who coordinate lessons for all classes).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Integrated lessons- (topics taught in one subject are connected with topics in other subjects).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Cooperative learning- (students work in groups to complete learning projects.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Exploratory activities- (students learn through numerous 'hands-on' activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Advisory programs- (Students meet regularly with a teacher to discuss social issues, goal setting, decision making skills, and other adolescent concerns)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Mixed ability grouping.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Please circle any of the above topics that you would like to learn more about.

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f

4. Please make comments or ask questions here.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I will share the results of this with you at the Parent Evening on the 25th June.

Regards

Margaret Brown (Massey University Researcher)